

BERKHAMSTED TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of a Meeting of the

FINANCE & POLICY COMMITTEE

held in the Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Berkhamsted

on **Monday 18 January 2016** at 7.30 pm

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Councillors D Collins Chair
 Mrs C Green Vice Chair
 S Bateman
 Mrs E Collins
 Mr G Stevens

EX OFFICIO Councillor T R Ritchie Town Mayor

ALSO PRESENT Councillor G Corry

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE:

OFFICER: Mrs Susan Johnson
 Acting Town Clerk

2 members of the public

OPENING MATTERS

FP 1/16 Apologies for absence

There were no apologies for absence.

FP 2/16 Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest regarding items on the agenda.

FP 3/16 Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 23 November 2015 were agreed and signed by the Chairman.

FP 4/16 Chair's Communications

The Rectory Lane Cemetery Project had received a Round 1 Pass from the Heritage Lottery Fund/Big Lottery to fund the Development Phase 2016. The Project thanked the Town Council for its support; and looked forward to receiving any ideas for its main Project. The Committee congratulated the Project on its success.

FP 5/16 Suspension of Standing Orders to allow public participation

The Committee suspended Standing Orders to allow members of the public to speak.

Ted Dyer of Woodlands Avenue understood that the item on removal of tree stumps (ref: FP 14/16ii) was to speed up the process of funding approval. He also hoped the recruitment of a permanent Town Clerk (ref: FP 20/16 iv) could start as soon as possible.

The meeting was reconvened.

The Chairman announced that Item **FP 14/16 (ii)** would be brought forward to this point, to give the opportunity for a member of the public to speak earlier. The discussion is recorded in its original position under FP 14/16.

FINANCIAL MATTERS

FP 6/16 Grant Applications

No applications had been received.

FP 7/16 Income and Expenditure

The Chair and Cllr Stevens had examined and were satisfied with the figures presented.

RESOLVED:

To note and approve the **Income and Expenditure and Variance Analysis** from 1 September 2015 to 31 December 2015, as shown on the attachments to the agenda.

FP 8/16 Items of Expenditure over £500

RESOLVED:

To note individual items of expenditure over £500 and credits received from 1 October to 31 December 2016, as shown on the attachments to the agenda.

FP 9/16 Investments

RESOLVED:

- (i) To note the **investment position** as at 31 December 2015, as shown on the attachments to the agenda.
- (ii) To reinvest the funds in the Saffron Building Society maturing on 9 February 2016 in the sum of £81,200 back into the Society for a period of one year.

FP 10/16 Signatories

RESOLVED:

- (i) To add Cllr Garrick Stevens and the Finance Officer to the list of signatories for the account with the Saffron Building Society
- (ii) To remove Karen Jones, Town Clerk, and John Higgins from the list of signatories for all accounts held in the name of the Council

FP 11/16 Estimates of Income & Expenditure 2016/17

The Chair answered questions and gave background to the figures presented to the Committee with reference to: withdrawal of part funding for a PCSO; refurbishment of the main Council Office; and plans coming from the Communications Group.

RESOLVED:

- (i) To approve the **draft budget proposals for 2016/17**
- (ii) To recommend to the Council meeting to be held on 25 January 2016 a Precept on the Council Tax for 2016/2017 of £21.50 for a Band D property
- (iii) To recommend to the Council meeting to be held on 25 January 2016 an application to Dacorum Borough Council for an amount of £3,135 for Concurrent Services; and a sum of £15,098 towards expenditure relating to the post of Town Warden

POLICY MATTERS

FP 12/16 Sector Led Body for External Audit

Following abolition of the Audit Commission a new body was being set up to administer External Audit for local councils, coming into force 1 April 2017. The Council considered whether to opt out of the Sector Led Body (SLB) for auditor procurement.

RESOLVED:

Not to opt out of the Sector Led Body procurement for External Audit

FP 13/16 Application to be listed on the Town Council's website

RESOLVED:

To allow the **Ashridge Karate Academy** to be listed on the Town Council's website

The Committee decided it should, as a general matter, also be diligent in overseeing whether extant website links should be maintained.

WORKING PARTY/GROUP REPORTS

FP 14/16 To receive any reports from Working Parties and Groups

- (i) There were no reports of meetings or information since the previous meeting of F&P Committee on 23 November 2015
- (ii) The Committee considered a request arising from the Allotment Management Committee (ref: AMT 42/15) to fund clearance of tree stumps and associated works at Sunnyside Old Allotments. Quotations were presented. The Council's contribution could be funded, if necessary, out of the Allotments Reserve Fund.

The Committee suspended Standing Orders to allow John Eaton of the Sunnyside Allotments Society (SAS) to speak. Mr Eaton gave background to the item with reference to ATM minutes, and recommended to the Committee the best quotations he had obtained for the work, which had been appended to the agenda. The Acting Clerk had advised that it was possible for the Council to place the orders as the land was wholly owned and managed by the Council. The SAS further pledged to contribute £500 to the cost of the project. The meeting was reconvened.

RESOLVED:

That the clearance of tree stumps and associated works be funded in the sum of approximately £1,000 excluding VAT, according to the estimates presented; and that a contribution to the costs be expected from the Sunnyside Allotments Society in the sum of £500.

YOUTH MATTERS

FP 15/16 Youth Town Council

RESOLVED

To receive the minutes of the Youth Town Council meeting held on 11 November 2015.

Cllr Stevens thought there should be encouragement for more students to join the YTC, particularly from Y8.

FP 16/16 EXCLUSION OF PRESS & PUBLIC

RESOLVED:

That under Section 1 of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 the public and press be excluded during the items in Part II of the agenda for this meeting, because it is likely that publicity would prejudice the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the

business or for other special reasons stated in the resolution, arising from the nature of the business or proceedings.

FP 17/16 Payroll provider

A meeting had been set up with the current payroll provider on Tuesday 26 January 2016, with a view to determining the present situation and the future.

FP 18/16 Lagley Meadow Youth Centre: Licence

Cllr Collins and the Clerk (reference FP 79/15) submitted a verbal report on negotiations with Happy Days Pre-school on the terms of its Licence.

Cllr Corry declared a personal interest in this item owing to living close by.

RESOLVED:

That Happy Days Pre-school be granted a variation in its Licence dated 13 August 2013 to allow it total control of the premises, 7 days per week, including any outside bookings, for 41 weeks of the year to coincide with its term dates. The new Licence rental would be £1,000 pcm from 1 February 2016.

The Town Warden would inspect the premises weekly; and the Town Clerk termly. Other details of payment and management would be determined following further discussion.

FP 19/16 Berkhamsted Civic Centre (2nd floor offices): new lease from Dacorum Borough Council

The draft new Lease provided by Dacorum Borough Council had been distributed with the agenda. There was debate. The Committee

RESOLVED:

- (i) To accept the terms of the Lease and the proposed rental level of £8,500 per annum.
- (ii) To seek clarification of the level of payment of Service Charges.

FP 20/16 Staffing Matters

RESOLVED:

- (i) To receive a report from the Support Services Group on its negotiations with the outgoing Clerk.
- (ii) To endorse the mutually agreed full and final settlement with the outgoing Clerk.

- (iii) To establish Terms of Reference for the Support Services Group to encompass recruitment, and appointment subject to ratification by Council, of a Town Clerk and any other staff, taking into account current laws covering Employment, Discrimination, Equality, Diversity and Disability.
- (iv) To begin at the earliest opportunity recruitment of a new Clerk.

FP 21/16 Close of Meeting

The meeting closed at 8.35 p.m.