

BERKHAMSTED TOWN COUNCIL

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MINUTES

FINANCE & POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING

held in the Main Hall, Civic Centre, Berkhamsted

on Monday 14th March 2022 at 7.30 pm

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Councillors: R. Freedman – Chair
G. Stevens – Vice Chair
A. Foster
J. Jones
N. Taylor

ALSO PRESENT:

Councillors: G. Corry
Officers: D. McGlynn, Deputy Town Clerk (Minutes)
D. Beescroft, Finance Officer
Members of Public: 2

FP 9/22 To receive Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Councillors P. de Hoest and P White.

FP 10/22 Declarations of Interest

- i. Cllrs J. Jones and A. Foster both declared an interest in item no. FP13/22 as both the Applicants were known to them;
- ii. No written requests for dispensations for declarable interests were received; and
- iii. No requests for dispensation were received.

FP 11/22 The **Minutes of the Previous Meeting** held on 4th January 2022 (previously circulated) were received and approved as a correct record and, as such, could be duly signed by the Chair.

FP 12/22 To suspend Standing Orders to allow public participation

- i. Grant application from Age UK Dacorum, support for the **Easter Discovery Trail** (£750) and support for a Dementia Seminar (£1000)

Standing Orders were suspended to allow the representative, Charlie Hussey, from Age UK Dacorum to present the case for the grant application of £750 to support a cross-generational Easter Discovery Trail to be held at the Rectory Lane Cemetery in conjunction with Friends of St Peter's and answer the Committee's questions about the event. Numbers expected to attend are approximately 500 and it is hoped that the event will raise awareness of and raise funds for both Age UK Dacorum and Rectory Lane Cemetery.

Standing Orders were reinstated. After due consideration, the Committee unanimously **approved** the award of a grant of £750 to Age UK to support Easter Discovery Trail in 2022.

Standing Orders were suspended to allow the representative, Charlie Hussey, from Age UK Dacorum to present the case for the grant application of £1000 to support an educational seminar entitled "Living with Dementia" to be held at the Berkhamsted Town Hall on 20th May 2022 and answer the Committee's questions about the event. Numbers expected to attend are 150, with many high-level speakers already booked to present.

Standing Orders were reinstated. After due consideration, the Committee unanimously **approved** to award a grant of £1000 out of the Council's Grants Budget to Age UK to support its "Living with Dementia" seminar in May 2022.

- ii. Grant application (£750) from **BerkoFest** for a **Childrens Authors Book Fair**

Standing Orders were suspended to allow the representative, Charlie Hussey, from Berkofest to present the case for a grant application of £750 to support a Children's Authors Book Fair in June 2022 and answer the Committee's questions about the event. It was explained that it had been decided to hold the Children's Authors Book Fair as a separate event to the Berkofest and the Book Fair for adults. It was confirmed that Berkofest is currently a Non-Profit Community Event, but is seeking to gain registered charity status.

Standing Orders were reinstated. After due consideration, the Committee unanimously **approved** to award a grant of £750 out of the Council's Grants Budget to to Age UK to support a BerkoFest Childrens Authors Book Fair in 2022.

- iii. Grant application (£3000) from Friends of **St Peter's**, support for establishing a **wildflower meadow and planting a native hedge** at the **Rectory Lane Cemetery**

Standing Orders were suspended to allow the representative, Kate Campbell, from Friends of St Peter's Rectory Lane Cemetery Project to present the case for a grant application of £3000 to support the establishment of a wildflower meadow and the planting of a native hedge at the Rectory Lane Cemetery and answer the

Committee's questions about the event. It was explained that the two projects would take around 4/5 years and will contribute towards both the mitigation of climate change and wildlife habitat loss by increasing biodiversity and make significant improvements to the site, enhancing the space for the public. The projects would also involve the local community, many of whom are volunteers.

Standing Orders were reinstated. After due consideration, the Committee unanimously **approved** to award a grant of £3000 out of the Council's Environmental Grants Budget to support Friends of St Peter's to support the establishment of a wildflower meadow and the planting of a native hedge at the Rectory Lane Cemetery.

It was suggested by the Committee that the Clerk makes enquiries as to whether Dacorum Borough Council might supply or provide funding for the hedge whips required for the project, rather than being paid for out of the Council's grant.

It was further suggested that the applicants provide regular reports and photos on the progress of the project so that these may be shared on the Council's website.

It was requested by the Committee, in respect of each grant made, that follow-up reports be provided to the Committee and that applicants, in future, provide more detailed information with the application form, including financial details.

FP 14/22 Income and Expenditure including Receipts and Payments Schedule

- (i) The Committee **noted** and **approved** the Income and Expenditure and Variance Analysis as at 28 February 2022.
- (ii) Payments and receipts schedules for the period up to the 28 February 2022 were sent to the Chair of F&P for scrutiny. No points were raised
- (iii) The balance sheet as at 28 February 2022 was **noted**.

FP 15/22 Detailed 2022/23 Budget Submission

The Committee **noted** the Final Budget and Precept request for 2022/23 as approved by FC on 10th January 2022.

FP 16/22 Draft tender for Christmas Lights

After due consideration, the Committee unanimously **approved** the draft Christmas Lights tender, subject to some minor, non-material amendments to the wording (previously indicated to the Town Clerk).

FP 17/22 Berkhamsted Town Council Hanging Baskets 2022/23

The Committee discussed the proposed programme for Hanging Baskets and floral displays in Berkhamsted for 2022/23. Two options were presented:

- (a) Summer and Winter baskets – Extended displays; and
- (b) Summer and Winter baskets – Extended displays with additional displays to the Victorian railings on Lower Kings Road, opposite Berkhamsted train station.

The Committee voted on both options. All members were in favour of Option (a) whilst only 2 Members were in favour of Option (b).

It was therefore decided that Option (a) the Extended Displays of Summer and Winter baskets be **approved**.

FP 18/22 Community Asset Investment Reserve

After due consideration, the Committee approved the mechanism for the creation of a separate Community Asset Investment Reserve, separate from General Reserves, in order to assist the Town Council when submitting applications for Assets of Community Value.

FP 19/22 FP 34/21 Redesignation of Fixed Asset Reserves Fund to Rolling Capital Fund

The Committee noted that the redesignation of Fixed Asset Reserves Fund to Rolling Capital Fund would be implemented in FY 2022/23, in accordance with the Committee’s decision made in May 2021 (ref. FP 34/21).

FP 20/22 Project Evaluation and authorisation

The Committee considered a proposal for a Project Evaluation and Authorisation Policy as put forward by Cllr R. Freedman. It was decided to present the new policy to Full Council with a **recommendation** that it be approved (subject to the removal of the word “undue” on p2 of the document).

FP 21/22 Close of meeting

The meeting closed at 21.54 pm

Signed: _____

Dated: _____

Date of next meeting:

TBC