

**MINUTES OF THE FINANCE, POLICY & ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE
MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 29 JUNE 2015 AT 7.30 PM IN THE ROBING
ROOM, THE CASTLE, HERTFORD**

PRESENT: The Deputy Mayor, Cllr P Ruffles, in the Chair at the start of the meeting

Councillors: P Boyle, R Deering, Miss C Geall, Mrs S Newton, Miss J Sartin and A Stevenson

IN ATTENDANCE: Ms P Carpenter, Civic Administration Manager
Mr S Davies, Finance Manager

94. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

Cllr Miss C Geall was elected Chairman for the forthcoming Civic Year. The Chairman then took the chair for the remainder of the meeting.

95. ELECTION OF VICE CHAIRMAN

Cllr R Deering was elected Vice Chairman for the forthcoming Civic Year.

96. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs D Abbott (work commitment), M Deards (work commitment) and Dr L Radford (domestic engagement)

97. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr P Ruffles	Declarable and DPI	All grant applications	Cllr Ruffles has connections with all grant applicants but specifically a DPI with the Horticultural Society.
Cllrs Miss C Geall and J Sartin	DPI	Hertford Museum, if discussed	Trustees

98. THE MINUTES

It was noted that several additions/amendments had been formally minuted at the Full Town Council meeting held on 30 March 2015 and that these should form part of the minutes of the meeting held on 16 March 2015.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

Having taken effect of the amendments noted at the Full Town Council meeting held on 30 March 2015, that The Minutes of the Finance, Policy & Administration Committee meeting held on Monday 16 March 2015 be approved as a correct record and the Chairman authorised to sign the same.

99. ACTION SHEET

Procedure note for BACs payments

The Finance Manager was requested to bring a formal procedure document to the next meeting of the Committee.

Investment Opportunities

It was noted that Hertfordshire County Council had been exploring different options for investment and had identified a Local Government Property Fund, which may be open to the Town Council to consider. The Finance Manager was asked to investigate.

Museum Lease

It was understood that the Museum's Solicitor had commented on various issues within the lease and the Clerk was asked to investigate whether these had been passed on to the Council.

Salary Apportionments

The Finance Manager was requested to liaise with the Chairman and Vice Chairman regarding the first nine months' salary apportionments, for inclusion within the current year's accounts.

Museum Business Plan

The Committee requested that the Museum be requested to submit a business plan to the next meeting of the Committee.

Note: Having declared a DPI, Cllrs Miss Geall and Miss Sartin left the room during this discussion.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- a) The action sheet be received and noted.

100. QUESTIONS AND/OR STATEMENTS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

None.

101. APPOINTMENT OF A DEPUTY LEADER

The Committee had received a report outlining a proposal for the formal appointment of a new political post of Deputy Leader of the Council. The Deputy Leader would be available to provide continuity in the event of the absence of the Leader.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- a) The Committee **recommends** to Full Town Council that a new role of Deputy Leader of the Council be included in the Council's Standing Orders, with the responsibility to act during periods of absence of the Leader.
- b) The Committee **recommends** to Full Town Council that Standing Order 3.1 be amended to reflect the new role.
- c) The Committee **recommends** to Full Town Council that section 2.7 of the Council's Constitution (Leader of the Council Protocol) be amended accordingly to reflect the new role.

102. **YEAR END ACCOUNTS 2014/15**

The Committee received full details and explanations of the Year End Accounts 2014/15 and noted that the Council achieved a small surplus overall in spite of maintaining a 0% budget increase for several years.

It was noted that the carry forward sum in relation to grants should be increased by £1,200 as the Friends of Evron had returned the grant cheque issued to them making the carry forward amount £3,387.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- a) The Committee **approves** the end of year financial statements as a fair and accurate record of the Council's financial position at the 31st March 2015.
- b) The Committee **recommends** that the Town Council approves the Accounting Statement and the Annual Governance Statement in the Annual Return for 2014/15.
- c) The Committee **approves** that a balance of £8,000 should be transferred from the General Reserve to the Election Reserve.
- d) The Committee **approves** that a balance of £530 should be transferred from the General Reserve to the Youth Town Council account.
- e) The Committee **approves** that a balance of £3,387 should be added to the Community Grants budget (code 7180) for 2015/16 which was the unspent budget remaining at the end of the year.

Following the approvals above the balance of the General Reserve was £281,384.

General Reserve	281,384
Building Maintenance Reserve	114,660

CCTV Maintenance Reserve	42,802
Election Reserve	20,113
New Homes Bonus Reserve	259,846
LCTS Grant Reserve	62,996
Pinehurst Community Area Reserve	13,336
TOTAL RESERVES	795,136

Note: The Committee adjourned at 8pm to allow the Town Council to meet to approve the Year End Accounts.

The Committee reconvened at 20:40

Note: Prior to the discussion on the grant applications, Cllr Ruffles left the room, having previously declared a DPI.

103. COMMUNITY GRANT APPLICATION – ACTION FOR CHILDREN

An application had been received from Action for Children for funding of £1,200 towards the purchase of sensory bubble wall.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

The Committee **approves** a grant of £1,200

104. COMMUNITY GRANT APPLICATION – COUNTRY BUS RALLIES

An application for a grant of £650 had been requested to assist with funding of a Classic Bus Day in Hertford on 7th June. The retrospective nature of this application had been as a result of an administrative error and the Committee was therefore happy to consider it. The Committee requested that any future bus day be linked to a Town Council event and the company was requested to liaise with the Marketing and Events Manager to ensure that the two events can be linked. This would ensure greater publicity for the Classic Bus Day.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

The Committee **approves** a grant of £650

105. COMMUNITY GRANT APPLICATION – EAST HERTS DIVERSIONARY ACTIVITIES GROUP

An application for a grant of £1,000 had been requested to assist with funding towards the 2015 programme of events for young people

It was **RESOLVED** that:

The Committee **approves** a grant of £500

106. COMMUNITY GRANT APPLICATION – FRIENDS OF HERTFORD CASTLE

An application had been received from the Friends of Hertford Castle for £300 towards the purchase of television with DVD player to show the Friends of Hertford Castle DVD at Hertford Castle Open Days. It was noted that the Council owned a television of an appropriate size which would be made available to the Friends of Hertford Castle, and that a separate DVD player of suitable quality would be purchased on the Friends behalf. Should it become apparent that a second television is required, the Committee would be happy to consider its purchase.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

The Committee **approves** the purchase of a DVD player for the Friends of Hertford Castle for use on Castle Open Days.

107. COMMUNITY GRANT APPLICATION – FUTURE LIVING HERTFORD

An application had been received from Future Living, Hertford, towards the cost of a sensory garden at Vale House, with a terrace for the recovery tea rooms and a walkway area with wheelchair access. The Committee deferred consideration of this application for receipt of further information. The Committee was keen to point out that the grant application limit for £1,200, and not £5,000 as requested. Whilst minded to consider a contribution to the project, it was not clear on the application from how the Group would progress the matter if they did not raise the full £5,000. In the event of the funds not being raised, the Council wished to seek assurances as to how any grant from the Council would be used.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

This application be deferred pending the receipt of further information.

108. COMMUNITY GRANT APPLICATION – HERTFORD CHILDREN'S BOOK FESTIVAL

An application had been received for funding of £1,200 towards the cost of improving and updating the website.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

The Committee **approves** a grant of £1,200.

109. COMMUNITY GRANT APPLICATION – HERTFORD HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY

An application had been received from the Hertford Horticultural Society for £300 for prize money for the vegetable section at the September show.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

The Committee **approves** the grant of £300.

110. PERSONNEL SUB COMMITTEE

A copy of the minutes of the Personnel Sub Committee held on 1 June 2015 had been circulated to the Committee.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

The Committee **notes** the report of the Personnel Sub Committee held on 1 June 2015

111. ANNUAL REPORT

The Committee had received a copy of the Council's proposed Annual Report 2014/15. The report was adopted pending insertion of additional wording in the Mayor's section relating to WW1 commemoration, correction of a few spelling errors and an update of the Councillor photographs. The report would be displayed on the Council's website.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

That the Annual Report be adopted.

112. BENCHES, PARLIAMENT SQUARE

The Committee had been asked to consider additional funding from the New Homes Bonus for the siting of two benches at Parliament Square. The original ball park quotation received had been underestimated given that it had become apparent that the installation of the benches would have to be carried out by Ringway staff because Parliament Square was highway land.

Members requested that their disappointment be recorded at the very high increase in costs as a result of using Ringway as the installation contractor and that a letter be forwarded to Hertfordshire County Council expressing concern at the costs and delays relating to the use of Ringway on highway work. A discussion took place regarding the location of the benches and concern was expressed of the possibility of skateboarders using the benches inappropriately. It was understood that anti skate material could be added to the benches to prevent this

It was **RESOLVED** that:

The Committee **approves** additional funding from the New Homes Bonus of £2,116.

113. LOCAL GOVERNMENT SCHEME – EMPLOYER DISCRETIONARY POLICIES

The Committee had received a report and draft policy statement, outlining how the Council should exercise the discretion available to it within the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS), as required by the Local Government Pension Scheme Regulations 2013. The policy statement is a duplication of the one adopted by Hertfordshire County Council and many other local Councils.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

The Committee **recommends** to Full Town Council the Employer Discretion Policy (LGPS) for adoption within the Constitution.

114. ARTS HUB UPDATE

The Committee received a report seeking approval for additional funding of £4,000 towards the study to consider a feasibility of the creation of an Arts Hub in Hertford.

The interim feasibility study had been recently signed off and would be forwarded to members for information. It was also noted that the University of Hertfordshire had also donated £2,000 towards the study and preservation of the house of Alan Davey

It was **RESOLVED** that:

The Committee **approves** the proposal to increase the feasibility study funding by £4,000 to be funded from the New Homes Bonus.

115. IT SUPPORT UPDATE

The Committee received a verbal update from the Finance Manager regarding the installation of the new IT system which had been installed in May, causing minimal disruption to staff. The new system enabled remote access for staff as well as the 'out of office' service.

The Council had budgeted £10,000 towards the new server and system, with the installation costs being £5,850. The Council is currently on the company's premium level of support which provides unlimited remote servicing at a cost of £441.82 per month. However it was thought that in the near future, and once the system had been in for a while, the level of support could be reduced to the basic support service of £246.82 per month with additional support being provided by the Finance Manager.

The Finance Manager and Councillor Boyle were requested to ascertain the most appropriate time to change to the basic support service and update the Chairman and Vice Chairman.

Councillor Boyle and the Finance Manager were thanked for their work in this matter.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

The Committee **notes** the report.

Note: Cllr Stevenson left the meeting at 21:40

116. **FINANCE**

(a) **Bank Reconciliations**

The Committee received the bank reconciliation summary for February, March, April and May 2015.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

The Committee **notes** the bank reconciliation summary for February, March, April and May 2015.

(b) **Payment Schedules**

The Committee received the payment schedules for March, April and May 2015. A query was raised regarding a cheque payment for the installation of picnic furniture at the Pinehurst play area in April and it was noted that the furniture was not yet installed. Officers were requested to investigate.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

The Committee **notes** the payment schedules for March, April and May 2015.

(c) **Past due debtors**

The Committee noted that there were no debtors over 90 days.

(d) **Non Cheque Payments Second Half Year 2014/15**

The Committee received a schedule of Direct Debit and BACs payments made from 1 October 2014 – 31 March 2015.

It was **RESOLVED** that

- a) The Committee **notes** the schedule of Direct Debits and BACs payments from 1 October 2014 – 31 March 2015.

(e) Internal Audit

The Committee received a copy of the report from the Internal Audit report for 2014/15. It was noted that the Finance Manager was required to prepare documented procedures to support the activities undertaken within the Finance function.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

The Committee **notes** the report.

The meeting closed at 21:50