

MINUTES OF THE FINANCE, POLICY & ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE HELD ON MONDAY 21 JANUARY 2008 AT 7.30 PM IN THE ROBIN ROOM, THE CASTLE, HERTFORD

PRESENT: Councillor Miss C J Geall, in the Chair

Councillors J F Cook, J C Hedley, Mrs S M Newton, Mrs L E Radford and Miss J C S Sartin

IN ATTENDANCE: Councillor Mrs H P Durbin
P Butcher, Interim Town Clerk
S Davies, Finance and Administration Manager
Mrs M E Aldrich, Administrative Secretary

222. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE were received from Councillors P A Ruffles and Mrs B M Wrangles.

223. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Miss C J Geall declared a personal interest in any matters relating to Hertford Museum, as she was a patron.

Councillor Miss J C S Sartin declared a prejudicial interest in any matters relating to Hertford Museum, as she was a Trustee.

224. THE MINUTES of the Meetings held on 22 October and 17 December 2007 were approved as a correct record and the Chairman authorised to sign the same.

225. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES NOT DEALT WITH ELSEWHERE ON THE AGENDA

The Committee received and noted the Action Sheet.

Matters Arising

The Castle – Car Parking It was noted that the change in parking arrangements during the refurbishment works to The Castle had proved satisfactory. The Committee noted that further parking controls are being investigated to achieve additional parking spaces and to avoid casual parking.

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

There were no members of the public wishing to speak.

227. ASHLEY WEBB SHELTER – CASTLE GROUNDS

The Committee considered a report on the future of the Ashley Webb Shelter in the Castle Grounds. The shelter is currently the responsibility of East Herts Council as part of their wider responsibility for the Castle Grounds and the Head of Property Services had been able to provide very little information on the covenants originally

attached to the gift of the shelter. The structure is now in a very poor state of repair (notably the roof) and tends to attract people with anti-social behaviour to the detriment of other users of the Castle Grounds.

The Committee discussed the problems relating to the Ashley Webb Shelter and it was agreed that a letter should be sent to the Head of Property Services, East Herts Council to express concern at the deteriorating condition of the structure and the daily anti-social behaviour that took place around the shelter. The Town Council would also ask what positive action the District Council intends to take to protect visitors to the Castle Grounds from the dangers due to the condition of the structure and the anti-social behaviour taking place.

228. SEED WAREHOUSE – MUSEUM’S REQUEST FOR TEMPORARY USE OF OFFICE

Councillor Miss C J S Sartin left the room whilst this matter was discussed.

The Committee considered a request by Hertford Museum for temporary use of an office at the Seed Warehouse by their volunteers when the Museum is closed for refurbishment. At present the office requested is vacant and if agreed by the Town Council would contain desks, computers and boxes which could be cleared out fairly easily if tenants are obtained for this room. The room could be viewed by potential tenants when the Museum is in situ and it was felt that the space could be marketed more effectively when in use as an active office.

The Committee agreed that Hertford Museum be given temporary use of an office at the Seed Warehouse when the Museum closes for refurbishment.

229. FINANCE - PAYMENT SCHEDULES

The Committee received and noted the Payment Schedules to date.

230. BUDGET SUMMARY

The spreadsheets showing the 2007/08 base budget, expenditure to 31 December 2007 and predicted outcome were received and noted by the Committee.

231. BUDGET 2008/09 AND POTENTIAL PRECEPT

The Committee considered the report on the budget for 2008/09 and potential precept. It was reported that the other Committees had reviewed their budget and had made no significant changes.

The Committee agreed the following:

1. The Museum Trustees' request for a one-off grant of £5,000 in 2008/09 be granted.

2. The projected budget for 2008/09 be approved as set out in the budget summary, subject to adding projected income for Christmas Light donations of £1,000.
3. For precepting purposes, the year end balance at 31 March 2009 be assumed as £140,000.
4. To recommend to the Town Council on the 4 February 2008 a precept of £985,957 for the year 2008/09.
5. Once the outcome figures for the 2007/08 financial year are known the Committee will determine the actual balances that should be allocated to reserves with the Building and Maintenance Reserve having first call.
6. A report on the accruals situation be submitted to the next meeting.

The Committee was also advised that the Internal Auditor had now completed the internal audit of accounts for the year ended 31 March 2007 and details of the Annual Return were received and approved.

232. POLICING PLAN 2008-2011

It was agreed that this item be included in open session.

The Committee noted that a letter had been sent to the Chair of the Hertfordshire Police Authority with the Town Council's comments on the Policing Plan. This drew on comments received from Councillors Geall and Sartin. Members had been circulated with details of the Policing Plan on 19 December 2007 with a request for comments to meet the deadline of 21 January 2008.

The Committee endorsed the response to the Hertfordshire Police Authority on the draft policing priorities for 2008-2011.

233. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

It was agreed that in view of the confidential nature of the following items, which related to the business matters of other individuals and organisations, the public be excluded whilst the following items were discussed. This was in accordance with the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, as amended by the Local Government Act 1972.

234. STAFF – REVIEW OF ADMIN ARRANGEMENTS – SPECIAL MEETING

The Committee considered holding a special meeting to discuss the outcome from the review authorised under Minute 160 of this Committee held on 22 October 2007.

It was agreed that a special meeting of this Committee be held on Monday, 17 March 2008 at 7.00pm to consider the outcome of the review authorised under Minute 160.

235. STAFF – TOWN AND TOURIST INFORMATION CENTRE SUPERVISOR

The Committee received a report on the post of Town and Tourist Information Centre Supervisor. The report explained the opportunity to adjust the working hours of this post.

The Committee agreed that:

1. The Town and Tourist Information Centre Supervisor's post be made full time with immediate effect with no other adjustments to the pay scale or terms and conditions.
2. The post be renamed as the Town and Tourist Information Centre Manager.
3. Mrs Dawn Hale be offered the full time post as outlined in the report.
4. The part time arrangements at the Town and Tourist Information Centre be reviewed to confirm that cover for the opening hours of the T&TIC remained at an adequate level.

236. STAFF – TOWN CLERK – ONGOING SUPPORT

The Committee considered proposals for providing ongoing support to the new Town Clerk.

It was agreed that the proposals set out in the report be accepted.

