

CHICHESTER CITY COUNCIL

MINUTES OF FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING

HELD ON TUESDAY 10 JUNE 2014 AT 5.30PM

- PRESENT : Councillors Bell, Campling, T Dignum, Plowman, Rankin, Scicluna
- EX OFFICIO : Councillor Woolley
- APOLOGIES : The Mayor (Councillor Hughes)
Deputy Mayor (Councillor Siggs)
Councillor French
- ALSO PRESENT : Councillor Budge
- ABSENT : Councillor Apel
- IN ATTENDANCE : Town Clerk, Finance Manager, Property Manager and Administration Manager

1 ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

It was proposed, seconded and RESOLVED that Councillor Plowman be appointed Chairman of the Finance Committee for the remainder of the Council Year. There were no other nominations.

2 ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIRMAN

It was proposed, seconded and RESOLVED that Councillor Campling be appointed Vice-Chairman of the Finance Committee for the remainder of the Council Year. There were no other nominations.

3 TO CONFIRM CHAIRMAN AND VICE-CHAIRMAN MEMBERSHIP OF SUB-COMMITTEES

In accordance with Standing Order 45, the Chairman and Vice-Chairman were asked to indicate membership of the Sub-Committees reporting to the Finance Committee namely the Personnel Sub-Committee and Property Sub-Committee.

The Chairman and Vice-Chairman indicated that they both wished to be members of the Property Sub-Committee and the Personnel Sub-Committee.

4 MINUTES

The Minutes of the Finance Committee Meeting held on 18 March 2014 having been circulated, were signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

5 HENTY FIELD - UPDATE

The Town Clerk's report on Henty Field had been circulated to all members. The report had included extracts of Minutes of when this matter was first discussed by the City Council and the subsequent negotiations with West Sussex County Council (Spring 2012) and the various issues that had been raised since that time, ie. condition of trees, boundaries, etc.

The current Heads of Terms Agreement being offered by West Sussex County Council to the City Council was for a lease of 25-years with a break-out clause after 10-years. The Agreement would not allow for the land to be used for other uses, eg. allotments. Therefore the City Council would be responsible for maintaining the land by cutting the grass and would have the consent to install litter bins, benches, etc, on the site if required.

Although costs were known for grass cutting, there would need to be extra costs factored in to cover any repairs caused by misuse/vandalism on the site.

At a meeting between Officers of the City Council and West Sussex County Council held on 3 June 2014, the County Council advised that they were not considering the re-development of this site at the current time and possibly not for the next 15 years.

The Committee discussed how this matter would be taken forward and it was proposed, seconded and RESOLVED that :

- (i) the City Council reject the current Heads of Terms Agreement being offered by West Sussex County Council;
- (ii) the City Council enter into negotiations with West Sussex County Council about Henty Field being obtained in perpetuity; and
- (iii) the use of Henty Fields for community purposes be further investigated with West Sussex County Council

6 CHURCHYARD AT ALL SAINTS, PORTFIELD

The Town Clerk's report was circulated to all members.

The Parochial Church Council (PCC) of St George's Whyke were requesting the City Council consider taking over the maintenance of the burial ground when an Order in Council is made to discontinue burials at All Saints Church, Portfield.

The PCC had completed the appropriate form 'Notice of Intention to apply to transfer maintenance responsibility (Part B(ii))' and the City Council were being requested to complete question B4 of the Notice "Does the Council have any objections to the closure of the burial ground, on the grounds given above at B1".

The Property Manager had visited the site and circulated photographs which showed the burial ground was overgrown with vegetation, graves were inaccessible or not visible and it was unable to assess whether there was any available space for additional burials. The boundary fences were also inaccessible due to dense foliage.

It was RESOLVED that the Parochial Church Council be informed that the City Council cannot answer question B4 until the site has been cleared and a further inspection by the Property Manager is undertaken.

7 BUDGETS TO BE CARRIED FORWARD FROM 2013/2014 AND BUDGETS TRANSFERRED TO RESERVES

RESOLVED that the following budgets be carried forward from 2013/2014 to 2014/2015 financial year :

Discretionary Expense Finance		
- Discretionary Grants	£11,953.00	4116/103
Council House		
- Professional Fees	£ 9,053.00	4055/501

It was further RESOLVED that the following Underspends in 2013/2014 be transferred to Reserves :

Discretionary Exps Community Affairs		
- International Relations	£ 423	4185/201
- Joint Twinning - Chartres	£ 300	4186/201
- Joint Twinning - Ravenna	£ 342	4187/201
Administration		
- Staffing	£14,700	4001/101
- Staff Restructure Report	£ 2,250	4006/101
Buttermarket		
- Buttermarket Fees	£ 5,000	4055/502
Council House		
- Offset reduction in Tax Base	£16,835	4277/501
Council and Committees		
- General Power of Competence	£ 8,000	4008/110
St James Obelisk		
- Repairs	£ 100	4236/505

The Committee felt that the surplus of £36,528 in the 2013/2014 financial year should be transferred to Reserves and earmarked for the Council House, ie. build up Reserves for future projects.

It was therefore RESOLVED that £36,528 be transferred to Council House Reserves.

8 STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS 2013/2014

A copy of the Statement of Accounts 2013/2014 produced by DCK Beavers Ltd had been circulated to all members with the Agenda.

The Finance Manager answered questions that had been raised on Page 11 of the Statement of Accounts 2013/2014 on the variances and headings used under title 'Cash Inflows as follows :

Precept on the District Council - The Precept figure is lower in 2014 than 2013 because the City Council also receives the Council Tax benefit grant to offset the reduction in the tax base from the District Council of £58,932 in 2013/2014.

Cash received for services - This figure includes Council House income, Allotment income, Buttermarket income, and other income. The increase in income is largely due to the increase in Buttermarket income from 2012/2013 to 2013/2014.

Revenue Grants received - This figure includes the New Homes Bonus receipt from Chichester District Council of £100,000, Bus Shelter receipt from West Sussex County Council £3,400 (revenue only) and £58,932 Council Tax Benefit Grant from Chichester District Council.

It was RECOMMENDED to Full Council on Wednesday 25 June 2014 that the Statement of Accounts 2013/2014 be approved and signed.

9 AUDIT COMMISSION ANNUAL RETURN FOR YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2014

A copy of the Audit Commission Annual Return for Year Ended 31 March 2014 was circulated to all members with the Agenda together with a copy of the City Council's Internal Control Policy. This policy was an External Audit requirement and required approval each year.

The Committee were advised that the end of year figures had been extrapolated from the accounts. The Annual Return has to be received by the Auditors by 30 June 2014.

It was RECOMMENDED to Full Council on Wednesday 25 June 2014 that the Audit Commission Annual Return for Year Ended 31 March 2014 and the City Council's Internal Control Policy be approved and signed.

10 APPOINTMENT OF INTERNAL AUDITOR

The Committee noted that both these items were an External Audit requirement.

It was therefore RECOMMENDED to Full Council on Wednesday 25 June 2014 that the following be approved :

- (a) the appointment of Mr Stephen James as the City Council's Internal Auditor continue for the financial year ending 31 March 2015; and
- (b) the Audit Plan 2014/2015 and Audit Terms of reference which had been circulated with the Agenda

11 FINANCIAL REGULATIONS AND STANDING ORDERS

The Committee were advised that the Town Clerk and Finance Manager were drafting new Financial Regulations in accordance with the new National Association Local Council's Financial Regulations.

12 NEW BANKING PROCEDURES

The Finance Manager's report was circulated to all members with the Agenda.

The Finance Manager advised that Barclays Bank would be introducing bank charges later in the year and that this would have a significant impact on the City Council's cash and cheque transactions. The alternative to bank charges would be for the Council to do electronic banking.

The Finance Manager and Town Clerk would continue to review the City Council's banking arrangements and the possible introduction of electronic banking and report back to the Committee as appropriate.

13 ITEMS FOR INFORMATION ONLY

- (a) List of Cheques paid for March 2014

RESOLVED to note the cheques paid for March 2014.

- (b) List of Barclaycard Payments for March 2014

RESOLVED to note the Barclaycard payments for March 2014.

- (c) Finance Round Up

The Finance Manager advised that as the closedown of accounts took place on Wednesday 28 May 2014 it was not possible to produce Revenue and Capital Monitoring Reports for April 2014 in time for the meeting and therefore this information would be included on the Reports prepared for the August meeting.

The Finance Manager reported on her attendance at the Larger Council Conference held in Oxford on 27 and 28 March 2014 and said that the conference had been very interesting and informative.

14 ITEMS TO BE INCLUDED ON THE AGENDA FOR THE NEXT ORDINARY MEETING

- Henty Field
- Churchyard at All Saints, Portfield

15 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Tuesday 12 August 2014

The meeting closed at 6.25pm.