

MINUTES OF THE FLEET TOWN COUNCIL POLICY AND FINANCE COMMITTEE

20 December 2010 7.30pm
The Harlington

Councillors

Robert Schofield (Chair), Helen Perthen, Richard Appleton, Arthur Hurley, George Woods.
Also Cllrs Paul Einchcomb and Richard Appleton, who arrived late.

Also Present

Cllr Sue Fisher
Shar Roselman – Clerk

P & F DEC 2010 ITEM 1: APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received in advance from Councillor Appleton for a late arrival.

P & F DEC 2010 ITEM 2: DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr Woods declared a personal interest in agenda item 13 through friendships with the Lions.

P & F DEC 2010 ITEM 3: PUBLIC SESSION

No questions were raised.

P & F DEC 2010 ITEM 4: MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

Resolved to receive and approve as a correct record the minutes of the Policy and Finance meeting held on the 15 November 2010.

Resolved that no apologies need be recorded for Town or District Councillors who are not members of a committee or full council.

Prop: RR Sec: GW

P & F DEC 2010 ITEM 5: CLERK'S REPORT

The committee noted the clerk's report. The clerk explained that a new problem had arisen with effluent leaking from the sewerage in Basingbourne Park, just outside the Lion's premises. Difficulties in unearthing the manhole cover over the blockage were being experienced and a digger had been brought in to scrape away the road surfacing this manhole. The cost of this was likely to run into thousands of pounds, and create a drain on the budget.

Action: The clerk to establish if this is a main drain causing the problem, because main drains are the property of the responsible water company.

The clerk also shared the news that the Playbuilder funding for Ancells Park Junior Playground had been granted to the value of £50000. The deadline is very tight, tenders will

be received by 7th January 2011, and contractors are working to a strict brief as outlined in the previous bid. The project should be completed by March 2011, and will include demolishing the existing playground, a grass mat base, and a number of pieces of equipment suitable for boys and girls ages 8 – 12.

P & F DEC 2010 ITEM 6: ACCOUNTS WORKING GROUP REPORT

Cllr Robinson reported that the Accounts Working Group had held their first meeting to analyse the accounts. They had concentrated on the payment side, and there were a few queries in hand which were being addressed by the clerk. At the following meeting the Accounts Working Group would work on the receipts side. Thereafter a procedure will be written to ensure that any councillor can perform the duties of the Accounts Working Group. A problem had arisen in that the cash book analysis produced by the RBS system did not reflect the same balance as the Bank Statement analysis, also produced by the system, because of differing time periods.

Action: The deputy clerk will raise this matter with RBS.

P & F DEC 2010 ITEM 7: MONTH EIGHT INCOME AND REVENUE STATEMENT, PAYMENT SCHEDULE, BANK RECONCILIATION.

Cllr Robinson has indicated that the bank statements will be signed off once the above matters had been addressed.

A related issue of the need for additional cheque signatories was raised, as it was felt that limited signatories increased risk.

Resolved to raise this matter at the next Full Council meeting proposing to approve signing powers for any member of the Policy and Finance Committee who wished to become a signatory.

P & F DEC 2010 ITEM 8: BUDGET 2011/2012

A lengthy discussion ensued regarding the forthcoming operating budget. Several of the figures were altered, and the final budget is attached to these minutes. It includes expenditure on capital items this year being £10000 for the website and £5000 for drainage for the cemetery. It further includes £15000 for the forthcoming election. The publicity and promotions budget was reduced, although discussion was held regarding the need for funding for public consultation.

Concerns were raised regarding the £5000 budgeted for Olympic Funding. A vote was taken. 6 councillors were in favour of making this provision, Cllr Appleton was against.

The question of how the council can better manage the Harlington Centre was an issue discussed. Cllr Appleton wished to raise this topic at Full Council for discussion at a later date.

Action: The Clerk

Another item raised by the budget discussion was how to best manage burials from Church Crookham, Elvetham Heath and Crookham Village Parishes. Additional contributions from them were possible, as was excluding burials not from Fleet. This matter to be raised at a Recreation, Leisure and Amenities Meeting.

Action: The Clerk

Resolved to recommend this budget to Full Council at the January 2011 meeting.

P & F DEC 2010 ITEM 9: PRECEPT 2011/2012

Following a review of the proposed budget, the council received a report showing how varying increases in the precept would influence the general reserves. An increase of 5% was suggested, but raised no support. It was realised that an increase of 2 ½ % would go some way towards reducing the effects of inflation, with a consumer price index running at over 3%. It was recognised that the budget had already been severely eroded through inflation after a zero % increase this year.

Resolved to recommend to Full Council that the precept be raised by 2 ½ %.
Prop: RA. Sec: RR.

It was suggested that application for a new cemetery should be included in future S106 funding proposals and that the chair of the Policy and Finance Committee and the chair of the Recreation, Leisure and Amenities Committee jointly put together a proposal for ongoing survival of a Fleet cemetery.

Action: Cllrs Schofield and Einchcomb.

The committee discussed the need to finally address Special Expenses.

Action: The clerk to write a letter to Hart District Council, to request that a meeting be set up to discuss special expenses.

At 10.30 pm a resolution was taken to stand down standing orders relating to the three hour meeting rule, in order to complete the agenda.

P & F DEC 2010 ITEM 10: GRANT POLICY

A proposal for a Grant's Policy was received by Cllr Schofield.

Action: Councillors to send comments on this policy to Cllr Schofield prior to the next meeting, where the matter would be raised on the agenda again.

P & F DEC 2010 ITEM 11: PENSION RECOMMENDATIONS

The committee discussed that staff pensions for the new staff employed were contractual obligations, and were, in some cases, one/two months overdue. It was recognised that this will need to be amended in the forthcoming salaries figures.

Resolved to redirect the matter of staff pensions to the Establishment Sub-committee which is meeting on 7 January 2011 at 9 am at the Harlington.
Prop: RA Sec: AH

P & F DEC 2010 ITEM 12: INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT.

Resolved to delegate most of the action items on the internal auditor's second report to the clerk. On the issue of need for further ashes plots, this was still under investigation by the Recreation, Leisure and Amenities Committee. On the matter of investment in an interest bearing bank account, this needs approval at a future Policy and Finance Meeting. On the issue of the Ancells community centre manager, this matter is being taken up by the Establishment Sub-committee.

P & F DEC 2010 ITEM 13. BUILDINGS VALUATIONS

A report on buildings valuations and insurance details was received by the committee which showed that the vast majority of buildings were over insured, but that the Lion's premises was not insured at all, either by the council or in terms of the lease, by the tenant. Where we have no leases or have not confirmed insurance valuations by tenants no further action to be taken until the leases have been acquired.

Resolved to instruct the council's insurance brokers to adjust the values of council buildings as per the valuations, excluding buildings where we are awaiting lease information. Also resolved to insure the premises currently leased by the Lions.

It was further resolved to pay the Lions £1500 for utilities and to delegate to the clerk the task of reducing the contents insurance to appropriate replacement value levels.

Action: The clerk

P & F DEC 2010 ITEM 14: RISK MANAGEMENT

The committee received a preliminary report on financial risks for the council. It was recognised that a complete risk assessment document needs to be created in order for council to assess all risks that face it. This item to be further debated at future Policy and Finance Meetings.

Resolved to approve the expenditure of £105 per annum to ensure the Council for Loss of Earnings to a value of £272000, being one year's income from the Harlington.

P & F DEC 2010 ITEM 15: THE GROUND MAINTENANCE SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENT.

The clerk advised council that a third service level agreement for Ground Maintenance had been received from Hart District Council, increasing costs on the initial contract by 50%. All budgeting for this year and the forthcoming budget had been based on the set of figures

presented in the first amendment, which initially had allegedly been adjusted to cater for the addition of the grounds in Ancells Ward.

Resolved to write to Carl Westby, rejecting the introduction of a third Ground Maintenance Service Level agreement after a time period of nine months into the year.

Action: The clerk.

P & F DEC 2010 ITEM 16: FULL-TIME STAFF

The clerk’s and deputy clerk’s working hours were discussed.

Resolved to approve the full time employment of the deputy clerk as from January 2011.

Action: The clerk.

There being no further business
the meeting closed at 22h50

The next meeting will be held on 17th January, at 7.30 pm at The Harlington.

Signed.....

Date:.....