

MINUTES OF THE FLEET TOWN COUNCIL POLICY AND FINANCE COMMITTEE

21 March 2011 7.30pm
The Harlington

Councillors

Robert Schofield (Chair), Cllr Einchcomb, Cllr Robinson, Cllr Appleton

Also Present

Shar Roselman – Clerk

Cllr Forster for the item on the website.

Cllr Wheale attended for item 11 and 12.

P & F MAR 2011 ITEM 1: APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Cllr Appleton for being late, Cllr Woods, and Cllr Perthen and a block apology for absence from committees was received from Cllr Hurley.

P & F MAR 2011 ITEM 2: DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

P & F FEB 2011 ITEM 3: PUBLIC SESSION

No members of the public were present.

P & F FEB 2011 ITEM 4: MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

Resolved to receive and approve as a correct record the minutes of the Policy and Finance Committee dated 21 February 2011 with one amendment that allowances to members could be paid to members on receipt

P & F MAR 2011 ITEM 5: RISK ASSESSMENT/LOSS CONTROL

The meeting received the notes of the first working group meeting. The clerk reported that the Risk Assessment computer programme had been received in disk format. Members of the working group can take the disk home to load onto their personal computers in order to make a start on identifying the risks facing the council. The date of the next meeting is 4th April at 8 pm.

Action: Members of the Risk Assessment working group.

P & F MAR 2011 ITEM 6: REPORT FROM THE WORKING GROUP ACCOUNTS

Cllr Robinson reported that he and Cllr Hurley had met on Friday 18th March to monitor the payments and review the bank reconciliation, against cash book.

Aside from some queries as to why it had taken some cheques so long to clear, there were no other concerns.

P & F MAR 2011 ITEM 7: MONTH ELEVEN INCOME AND REVENUE STATEMENT, PAYMENT SCHEDULE, BANK RECONCILIATION.

The committee received into the minutes the month 11 income and revenue statement, the payment schedule, and the bank reconciliation.

Resolved to receive, sign off and accept the Income Statement, Payment Schedule and Bank Reconciliation into the minutes.

The committee also received the budget/actual and projected budget for year end showing a likely balance of approximately £97000. This followed a year where the council's spending had been extremely frugal since the budget was untested. This sum would allow the council to maintain its desired working capital reserve of £50000 for the forthcoming year.

P & F MAR 2011 ITEM 8: EARMARKED RESERVES

On the basis of the above projection the committee considered the sums it could earmark for legal obligations, capital projects identified in this financial year, and capital projects in forthcoming years.

Resolved that a sum of £2056 be earmarked for pension fund obligations, to be used once the matter of a pension fund provider for staff had been resolved.

Prop: BS

**Resolved that £2500 be set aside for email development for council,
that £4000 be set aside for website development,
that £22490 be set aside for the development of the gym,
that £2000 be set aside for the cemetery extension and that
that £5000 be set aside for cemetery drainage.**

Prop: BS

The working group dealing with the strategy for the Harlington was urged to consider that expenditure on the gym should result in increases in income.

Action: The clerk will ensure that costs on the new security system are incorporated into the income and revenue statement at year end, as they belong in this year's accounts.

Resolved that £25000 be earmarked for Park improvements and that £25000 be set aside for improvements to the Harlington Coffee Shop.

Prop: BS

Action: The clerk will obtain advice from the internal auditor as to whether these broad categories can be used for earmarking reserves.

P & F MAR 2011 ITEM 9: INVESTMENT STRATEGY

The clerk recommended placing £20000 in a 30 day call account, and £30000 in a 6 month savings account. The committee requested further information on rates paid by the HSBC.

P & F MAR 2011 ITEM 10: HAMPSHIRE LOCAL SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT FUND BID.

The committee received a consultation request on the Sustainable Transport initiatives bid funding, for which Hampshire County Council will be applying. The committee was requested to seek ideas to promote major behavioural change.

The committee's views were that as the high price of petrol had resulted in lower petrol and diesel purchases, and that as there were noticeably fewer cars on the roads, this was an excellent time to encourage people to change their behaviours on short term journeys. What was sought was a modal shift on journeys to schools and for shopping purposes, and a realisation that as parking at the station was limited, public transport was becoming more of an option, as was cycling to the station.

The committee proposed that the revenue funding portion of the bid be used to employ a cycling and sustainable transport officer on a short term contract (2-3 years) to help promote that shift in Fleet.

The functions of this officer would be to:

- Increase ease of obtaining, and awareness of, both cycling and public transport to the station
- Increase cycle awareness in children and families by coaching and testing all children at primary school between the ages of 8 and 11 for their cycle proficiency tests.
- Assist schools to identify means of encouraging cycling such as cycle storage facilities and increasing awareness in schools of other sustainable transport methods through walking/public transport competitions and activities.
- Work with retailers and consumers to encourage cycling through the Town Centre.
- Work with HCC to find innovating ways of improving the use of the Fleet Link.
- Promote recreational cycling, by developing cycling facilities, off road and competitive cycle interests.
- Develop cycle and walking routes throughout the Town and around the green wheel of surrounding countryside.
- Encourage recreational outdoor pursuits.
- Promote methods of introducing mothers on the school run means other than cars to get children to school.
- Identify minor spend capital items that will make significant differences in getting a change of mindset towards sustainable methods of transport.
- Promote cycling event, turning these into community events.
- Monitor use of public transport and cycling.

Fleet Town Council would be willing to offer support to such an officer by providing office facilities, management of activities, and administrative functions.

Resolved to write to Hampshire County Council recommending the use of the bid funding to employ a sustainable transport officer.

Prop: RA

P & F MAR 2011 ITEM 11: INSURANCE

The committee received a copy of the asset register for the Harlington. The asset register is not quite complete, and does not show stockholding, but the total value of the assets held where replacement costs had been obtained comes to only £116,688 whereas the contents insurance covers the Harlington for over £500 000. Consideration of improvement of facilities was taken into account but the committee did not believe that this high level of cover was necessary.

Resolved to reduce the insurance cover on the Harlington contents to £250 000.

Prop: RA Sec: RR

Action: The clerk will reduce the cover and also establish what the premium difference is between £200 000 and £250 000.

P & F MAR 2011 ITEM 12: GRANT ON BENCH

The clerk reported that Hart District Council were currently assessing the condition of the Town Benches, and would soon be writing to Fleet Town Council to ask the council to take over these assets.

In the meantime the bench that Cllr Wheale had arranged to obtain for half price would be purchased by Hart District Council.

Resolved to give Hart District Council a grant for £408 to cover the cost of the new bench on condition that the ownership of the bench reverts to Fleet Town Council and that Hart District Council install the new bench.

Prop: PE Sec: RR

Action: The clerk will arrange to have the memorial plaque removed from the old bench and placed onto the new bench.

P & F MAR 2011 ITEM 13: LEGAL ADVICE

The committee received two quotations for obtaining legal advice on leases. There was some discussion regarding where legal advice was needed. The chairman pointed out that a new lease had been received for the Harlington, which placed conditions on the other sub leases held within the building. This should be reviewed from a legal perspective. Other leases causing concern were those where no lease appeared to exist, such as on the Girl Guides property at Basingbourne, and on the Sea Scouts building at Calthorpe Park.

Resolved that, when the revisions had been made to the new lease on the Harlington, these should be reviewed by Peyto Law in conjunction with other

leases held by the Town Council. The costs of this will depend on hours spent on the review, but were likely to be in the region of £800 to £900.

Prop: PE Sec: RR

The order of agenda items was revised to accommodate Cllr Forster, who had arrived for the discussion of the email provider.

P & F MAR 2011 ITEM 15: WEBSITE/EMAIL

Cllr Forster discussed the need to establish a separate email hosting facility that provided 99.9% uptime, and that gave reliability, given the problems experienced with the current hosting provider. The quotation received from Computer Connect would service all the council's needs, and would run through the Microsoft Hosted Environment.

The cost of the migration of hosting environments was £800 with an ongoing hosting fee of £104 per month and a support fee of £100 per month.

Resolved to approve the email hosting service offered through Computer Connect, subject to POP 3 and email forwarding being available.

Action: The clerk

Cllr Forster stated that he and the clerk had worked together to provide an outline of various categories for the website, and that a working group was now needed to pull the website design together.

Cllrs Forster and Schofield would form the working party, and Cllr Perthen was asked, in her absence, to join the group.

Action: Cllrs Forster and Schofield to schedule a date for the working party.

P & F MAR 2011 ITEM 14: CLERK'S REPORT

The committee received a letter from Hart District Council which was a reply to the Town Council's letter regarding the way in which Fleet Special Expenses had been distributed. Hart District Council were refuting the argument that the expenses had been collected from residents according to a fixed ratio, and therefore reserves from these expenses should be redistributed to the new parishes under the same allocation.

Action: Cllr Schofield will review the letter to consider how the council might wish to respond and obtain further legal advice without incurring any cost to the council.

Resolved to approve unlimited emergency expenditure for the clerk (in consultation with the chairman) to effect any emergency repair which could result in extreme damage or high risk.

Prop: RA

Resolved to approve giving the clerk authority to arrange for up to £1500 for tree felling and tree surgery.

Prop: PE

P & F MAR 2011 ITEM 16: ESTABLISHMENT SUB-COMMITTEE

The committee determined that, in terms of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 Exclusion of the public Section 1(2), by reason of the item referring to an individual/s, the Public and Press would be excluded from the following items on the agenda.

The minutes of the establishment sub-committee meetings held on 21st February 2011 and 7th March 2011 were approved by the committee.

Standing orders to complete the meeting within 3 hours were set down at 10.30 pm to allow the meeting to continue.

P & F MAR 2011 ITEM 17: FULL TIME APPOINTMENT OF DUTY MANAGER

The committee discussed a matter of full time employment of a duty officer.

P & F MAR 2011 ITEM 18: STAFF SALARIES

The committee discussed the need to consider inflationary increases and merit increased and to develop a policy to cater for both these, and the matter of an employee bonus.

There being no further business the meeting ended at 11.02 pm.

The next meeting will be held on 18th April 2011 at 7.30 pm at The Harlington.

Signed.....

Date:.....