



FLEET TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE POLICY AND FINANCE COMMITTEE

**Monday 17 June 2013
at The Harlington at 7.30pm**

PRESENT

Councillors

Cllr Vincent (Chairman)
Cllr Appleton
Cllr Axam
Cllr Einchcomb
Cllr Oliver
Cllr Perthen
Cllr Robinson
Cllr Schofield
Cllr Tilley
Cllr Woods

Also Present

James Corrigan-Town Clerk
Sheila Rayner –Committee Clerk

4 representatives of Squirrels Community Pre-School

ITEM 1 ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

Cllr Vincent was duly elected as Chairman of the Committee for 2013/2014

ITEM 2 ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIRMAN

Cllr Schofield was duly elected as Vice-Chairman of the Committee for 2013/2014

ITEM 3 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence were received from Cllr. Holt

ITEM 4 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of Interest

ITEM 5 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

The representatives of Squirrel Pre-School were present to ask questions regarding item 16 on the agenda. Item 16 was therefore taken at item 7

ITEM 6 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

The minutes of the Policy and Finance Committee held on 15 and 23 May 2013 were received and approved with the addition of Cllr Appleton's name as the Chairman of the meeting held on 23 May 2013

ITEM 7 OAKLEY PAVILION LEASE AND REFURBISHMENT (at item 16 on the agenda)

The Chairman invited the representatives of The Squirrels Community Pre-School (SCPS) to put their questions to the Committee.

It was explained that as SCPS intended to spend a further £12,000 towards making Oakley Park Pavilion into a multiple use pavilion, would FTC be prepared to commit to hiring the Pavilion to SCPS from September 2013?

The requirement for an OFSTED inspection was explained which must be applied for by 31 July 2013 for a September start date.

Reference was made to various defects including an overflowing external urinal drain, water ingress and inappropriate heating.

There was also concern that statements had been made on the Council's website, noticeboards, 'Fleet Life', and the Star newspaper, that the pavilion had been refurbished ready for mixed use including SCPS.

In answer to a question, the SCPS representatives explained that their proposed expenditure of £12,000 was to cover such items as a shed, walkway, canopy, fencing and base for the play area. This expenditure was in addition to £3,000 already spent by SCPS on obtaining planning permission and associated matters.

Cllr Schofield then presented his report to the Committee which explained, in detail, the current condition of the building (copy attached to record minutes).

Following a lengthy and detailed discussion of all the issues outlined in Cllr Schofield's report it was

RESOLVED that

Subject to Building Regulation approval not being applicable or, expenditure up to a sum of £5,000 being sufficient to resolve issues which leads to the issue of Building Regulation approval :

- (1) That the sealed connection of the urinal drain to the sewer system be undertaken as quickly as possible and that the Clerk in consultation with the Chairman of the P&F Committee be authorised to spend up to a maximum of £1,000 to secure the safe and sanitary discharge of the urinals.
- (2) That three new electric fan heaters of 2/3 kW capacity be installed to replace the existing radiant heaters at a total cost not exceeding £710 subject to overall agreement to proceed with all necessary works (see 2.4 below).
- (3) That the Clerk, in consultation with the Chairman of the P&F Committee agree the minor amendments to Terms and Conditions of Hire, subject to there being no cost implications.
- (4) That a ceiling budget of £1,620 be set for the remedial works to resolve the damp problem in the toilet area beyond which the works would not be undertaken.

Or

In the event of expenditure in excess of £5,000 being required, then a special meeting of the Policy and Finance Committee be called forthwith

ITEM 8 QUARTERLY FINANCIAL MONITORING REPORT

The Town Clerk explained that the purpose of the report was to provide the Committee with an overview of the Council's Financial performance up to the 31st May 2013. Individual cost centres had been reviewed and where there was a significant deviation from the expected income or expenditure an explanation was given. However as the report only covered a period of two months there was little comment at this stage.

It was noted that the cost centres had been altered to make services more accountable, so for example there is now a cost centre for the coffee shop in its own right. The system is not yet complete as holidays have prevented alterations prior to the meeting but it is anticipated there will be some more alterations during the year to make the budget entirely accountable. In particular salaries need to be allocated to the correct cost centre. Central core salaries and costs will also be allocated to individual cost centres.

Several of the income expenditure cost codes are below budget as all of the data had not been inputted at the time of producing the report following the period when data cannot be entered on the system until the end of year accounts are completed.

During discussion several matters were raised :

- The need to advertise the availability of the FTC tennis courts
- The possibility of a revised P&F meeting cycle to facilitate more up-to-date information being available to the Committee
- Concern that data for the new financial year (2013/2014) cannot be uploaded onto the system until all the previous year's invoices have been paid.
- The requirement to circulate the end of June quarter figures to members of the Committee as soon as these are available
- The on-going need to ensure that appropriate staff are trained to run financial management reports
- The bank reconciliation to be signed off when the final page is available

RESOLVED

That the report of the Town Clerk be noted

ITEM 9 QUARTERLY INVESTMENT REPORT

The Committee noted the content of the quarterly investment report

ITEM 10 ALTERNATIVE BANKING ARRANGEMENTS

Members were reminded that at the meeting of the Policy and Finance Committee held on 23 May 2013, it was decided that the Council's Financial Regulations be amended to include the policy that the Council should diversify its risk away from all funds being held in one institution such that the Council has funds to operate outside the funds held in the Current Account.

The Town Clerk was authorised to open interest bearing accounts with two British Banks/Building Societies with at least four Councillors' signatures. Research had now been undertaken to assess the terms available for an interest bearing account but with limited success. This has been achieved by investigating all the accounts / Banks recommended by the Council Members as well as a general request via a Clerks internet forum.

The Committee considered a table setting out details of the accounts that have been identified and explored.

Following discussion and careful consideration it was

RESOLVED

- 1) That FTC continue to use the Cooperative Bank to manage its working balance
- 2) The Nationwide Business Saver Account and one other separate Bank/Building Society Account be set up in which to invest the Council's remaining funds

ITEM 11 CAPITAL WISH LIST

The Town Clerk reminded the members that a report had been presented to the March Policy and Finance meeting together with a draft list of potential projects. This detailed how it is financially prudent to develop a capital programme as this provides a clear vision as to what funds are needed in the medium term in particular. It is also a very useful tool to assist in securing grants. Additionally with the introduction of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) on all new housing in the near future it will inevitably become a useful tool in determining where this funding shall be spent. It was noted that 15% of the CIL will come to FTC, 25% if there is a Neighbourhood Plan in place.

There was a wide ranging discussion regarding the status of the Wish List and the list of capital projects that had already been developed in the hope of attracting s106 Funding.

During discussion several matters were agreed:

- Projects listed in approved and adopted 'Friends ' Development Plans should automatically be incorporated into the list of projects
- Grants with the highest chance of success should be pursued
- FTC should attempt to engage with Edenbrook Phase 2 Developers for S106 funds
- The evidence base for projects should continue to be developed
- The purchase of a PA system for The Harlington would need to proceed
- The Town Clerk should report back on progress at each quarterly meeting of the Policy and Finance Committee

ITEM 12 NEW GRANT POLICY

Following some issues and concerns raised at Council on 5 June 2013, the members considered the report of Cllr Schofield and the Town Clerk.

Following discussion it was agreed that that the following amendments should be incorporated:

- The Statutory Authority can be simplified to state that grants will be given where FTC is legally empowered to do so and the amount reflects the benefit to the community.
- Commercial organisations should be excluded

- There will be a maximum grant of £1,000, but in exceptional circumstances FTC will award up to £5,000 if the number of beneficiaries is a significant percentage of the population of Fleet
- All applicants may be called upon to make a presentation
- Grants will not cover room hire of FTC facilities or any other hall hire rate
- Where a community organisation requires a small room to meet occasionally to conduct business for a major event or project affecting the whole of Fleet , and the organisation by its very nature does not generate significant income or hold significant funds , the Council will permit the use of a room subject to there being no prior bookings by paying customers and there being no suitable alternative venue for the organisation

RESOLVED

That the Grant Policy be amended to reflect the comments set out above and be referred to Full Council for adoption

ITEM 13 CHARGES FOR SERVICES

The members considered a table which set out the various charges made by the Council. The charges were discussed and a number of issues were identified:

- The opportunity should be taken to consider an increase to charges including the hiring of Ancells
- Block and other bookings of the Harlington could continue to be negotiated at the discretion of the Operations Manager
- A fair and equitable list of charges for services should be published
- Negotiated (commercial) booking rates should be excluded from the published list
- There should be a community rate where appropriate
- Charges for burials (resident/non-resident) should be checked

ITEM 14 EARMARKED RESERVES

The members agreed to changes to the statement of Earmarked Reserves to reflect the inclusion of CCTV at Calthorpe Park, the substitution of Table Tennis in Parks for Olympics and deletion of Dog bins

The Earmarked Reserves are therefore as follows:

Website Development	£1,425
Development of gym	£ 22, 490
Cemetery extension	£ 4,000
Park Improvement	£ 3,123
Coffee Shop improvement	£ 10,962
Elections	£ 10,000
Table tennis in Parks	£ 11,212
Computers	£ 4,645
Tree surgery	£7,500
Office support	£5,000
Park signage	£10,711
Salary provision	£12,000
Ancells Farm decoration	£4,000
CCTV The Harlington	£ 6,250
CCTV Calthorpe Park	£10,000

ITEM 15 INTERNAL AUDIT ACTION PLAN

Following the Internal Auditor's report which was considered by Council on 5 June 2013, The Town Clerk reported back with an Action Plan to address the issues raised. The Action Plan dealt specifically with:

- Risk Assessment (meeting of the Working Group to be held on 1 July 2013 with a report back to Council on 4 September 2013)
- Bank reconciliation
- Debtors
- Supplier payment
- Visa Card (Noted that a protocol must be in place and approved by Council on 3 July 2013 , before the Visa cards can be issued to the designated officers)
- Stock Count
- Pensions-noted that the Council had considered this matter after previous audits
- Bank balances
- Year-end ledger cut off
- Change of Bank account
- Electronic payments (a list of electronic payees should be drawn up)
- Fidelity guarantee

General comments were made by a member about the possible poor value for money for the Report on the Accounts for 2012/2013 at a cost of £600 for 3 days work. Conversely there were concerns expressed by the Town Clerk about the charge of £1,600 for the internal audit report with few visits

RESOLVED

- That the actions in the report, with the incorporation of the additional comments above, be authorised
- That the services of an internal auditor for 2013/14 be sought through a tendering process

ITEM 16 EVENTS POLICY

The Events Policy was deferred until the next meeting of the Council on 3 July 2013.

In the meantime The Town Clerk was instructed to write to the Chairman of The Carnival Committee to reiterate the Ageement condition regarding the parking of lorries

ITEM 17 TRAINING SESSION ON THE BUDGET SYSTEM

The Budget/Finance training session for members will be held on Monday 5 August 2013 at 7pm at The Harlington

ITEM 18 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Policy and Finance Committee will be held on Wednesday 3 July 2013, immediately following Council

Having waived Standing Orders and there being no further business, the meeting closed at 11.27pm

Signed:..... **Date:**.....

Chairman