

Minutes of the MEETING of the FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE of Bridport Town Council held at Mountfield, Bridport on Wednesday 30 March 2011 at 7.00 p.m.

PRESENT: Cllr C.M. Ray (in the chair)

Cllrs: G.J. Ackerman
K.A. Day

Ms F.K. McKenzie
Mrs M.J. Ray
D.G. Rickard (ex officio)

PUBLIC FORUM

There were no members of the public present.

121. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors: Miss S.A. Brown, N.K. Cast, D.R. Tett and K.G. Wallace.

122. MINUTES

The minutes of the special meeting of the Committee held on 17 February 2011 were confirmed as a true and correct record and signed by the Chairman.

123. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

124. MARKET AND BUSINESS LIAISON SUB COMMITTEE

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the meeting of the Sub Committee held on 15 February 2011 be received and noted.

125. BEST VALUE, SCRUTINY AND BRIDPORT AND WEST BAY TOWN PLAN SUB COMMITTEE

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the meeting of the Sub Committee held on 8 March 2011 be received and the recommendations therein be adopted, namely:

Min 39 – Asset Register

RESOLVED: that the asset register be endorsed for 2011 and the Town Clerk be given delegated authority to make any final amendments.

Min 40(b) – Investment Strategy

RECOMMEND:

(a) that the annual investment strategy for 2010/11, attached as an Appendix to the Sub Committee report, be adopted without amendment for 2011/12.

(b) that the potential for environmental and ethical investments be considered in future reviews of the Strategy, subject to assurances on security and liquidity of investments.

Min 41 – Cheque Signatories

RECOMMEND: that the Town Clerk be given delegated authority to take action to appoint further cheque signatories.

126. TOWN HALL AND BUCKY DOO WORKING PARTY

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the meeting of the Working Party held on 24 January 2011 be received.

127. SERVICES ADMINISTERED BY THE SURVEYOR

The Town Surveyor updated members on the following items: -

Mountfield

The improvement works to facilitate the impending move of Magna Housing to Mountfield were progressing well. Works were to take place to upgrade the CCTV and install an alarm, in what will become the shared reception with the District Council.

Lengthsman

The scheme continued to be well received and Puncknowle & Swyre and Bradpole parishes had now joined the scheme.

The Town Clerk reported that it was proposed that the hourly fee for the service remain at £15 for 2011/12, as this would be the first full year of operation. This was supported by members.

West Allington Allotments

The Town Surveyor said that the allotments were now all let and beginning to be worked on. Members thanked Amanda Streatfeild for her kind offer of this land for much needed allotments.

Late Night Markets

The Town Surveyor said that whilst members of the Market and Business Liaison Sub Committee supported the intention to try to run evening markets again this year, it would be for the National Market Traders' Federation to develop a proposal and provide the necessary resources, to advertise and promote the evenings. If there was the support for such events, then the Town Council would seek the necessary approval from the District Council, but at this stage it was for the Federation to bring forward the proposals.

The update was noted.

Street Lighting

The Town Surveyor said that the designs were still being worked up and a report would be brought to members once a scheme had been finalised, in line with the agreed outline proposal which included heritage lighting, the same number of street columns and other lighting required to be on buildings.

The update was noted.

128. TOWN HALL HERITAGE LOTTERY FUND PROJECT

Consideration was given to a report of the Town Clerk, ENCL: 2358.

The Town Clerk updated members on progress with the building works, the implementation of the activity plan projects, the relocation of the town centre toilets and the proposal for an additional fully accessible toilet on the side of the building.

RESOLVED:

- a. that the latest position on the Town Hall Heritage and Conservation Project be noted, as outlined in the report, and
- b. that the terms for the Tourist Information Centre relocation be considered in closed session (Min.147).

129. CEMETERY EXEMPTION FROM BUSINESS RATES

Consideration was given to a report of the Town Clerk, ENCL: 2356.

RESOLVED: that support be given to any representations to be made by the Dorset Association of Parish and Town Councils in respect of the level of business rates for cemeteries.

130. DAPTC MATTERS

The Town Clerk reported on recent meetings of the western area and the town and larger councils' committees.

The update was noted.

131. CALENDAR OF MEETINGS

Consideration was given to a report of the Town Clerk, ENCL: 2359.

RECOMMEND: that the Calendar of Meetings for 2011/12 be approved.

132. BLAP FUNDING – DORSET COUNTY COUNCIL

Consideration was given to a report of the Town Clerk, ENCL: 2360.

Members expressed concern at the reported reduction in funding by Dorset County Council for community planning. It was felt that the Town Council should raise its concerns at this reduction, bearing in mind that it seemed to be at odds with the

localism agenda. Whilst it was noted that the County Council was proposing to establish a new community fund, members were concerned that such relatively small funding (£5,000 per year) was being taken away from supporting local community partnerships, which in the Bridport area were operating so effectively. As an example, BLAP had initiated the Bridport Area Lengthsman project. This was an initiative that the County Council was specifically supporting, seeking partnership working between local councils. The successful introduction of the scheme owed much to the work of BLAP (which included within its membership ten local councils) and it seemed incongruous therefore for the County Council to be withdrawing its support from community planning at this time.

RESOLVED: that the reduction in funding for community planning be noted and the Town Clerk be asked to write to Dorset County Council, expressing concern at the removal of this funding, for the reasons given above.

133. SUPPORTING VOLUNTARY AND COMMUNITY ACTION IN DORSET - CONSULTATION

Consideration was given to a report of the Town Clerk, ENCL: 2361.

Members referred to their comments on the previous item and noted also that a response had been made by the West Dorset Partnership and that this matter was also to be considered by the BLAP Planning Group.

RESOLVED: that the Town Clerk, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, be given delegated authority to prepare a response, to be approved by the full Council at its meeting on 19 April.

134. FUTURE OF LIBRARY SERVICE CONSULTATION

Consideration was given to a report of the Town Clerk, ENCL: 2362.

RESOLVED: that the Town Clerk, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, be given delegated authority to prepare a response, to be approved by the full Council at its meeting on 19 April.

135. PUBLIC SECTOR EQUALITY DUTY

The Town Clerk reported on the proposed new duty on all public authorities, to consider how their policies contribute towards increasing equality and documenting how this contribution was made.

The Town Clerk stated that at this stage, it was not known when this requirement would come in, or what documentation would be required. However, he would report to the next meeting of this Committee with proposals to ensure that the requirements were met.

The report was noted.

136. COMMUNITY RIGHT TO BUY AND RIGHT TO CHALLENGE

Consideration was given to a report of the Town Clerk, ENCL: 2371.

RESOLVED: that the consultation documents be noted and the Town Clerk, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, be given delegated authority to prepare a response, to be approved by the full Council.

137. WEST BAY REGENERATION SCHEME

Consideration was given to a report of the Town Clerk, ENCL: 2367.

RESOLVED: that the following comments be agreed, in response to the published proposals:

The Town Council generally welcomed the intention to make West Bay more pedestrian friendly. However, it notes that the cost of the scheme overall was £700,000 and that there was only a budget of £400,000. The Town Council would wish to reiterate that it would not wish to see any of the £100,000 earmarked for the sea angling jetty used for highway improvements, as it would like that funding reserved to support water based and local amenity projects in West Bay.

The Town Council would recommend that following the outcome of the public consultation process, which was due to finish on 8 April, that the District Council prioritise the elements within the scheme that could be undertaken within the available budget and the Town Council then be asked to comment on those specific elements.

138. PARK AND RIDE 2011

Consideration was given to a report of the Town Clerk, ENCL: 2364.

The Town Surveyor reported that West Dorset District Council had still to confirm its commitment to the scheme, which it was hoped would be known early next month. Confirmation on the funding and also the possibility of extending the scheme for two weeks would be reported to the next meeting of this Committee.

RESOLVED:

- a. that the 2011 Park and Ride service from West Bay to Bridport be provided during the Summer Holidays as outlined in the report under the power of well being and subject to the contribution from West Dorset District Council being confirmed.
- b. that the award of the contract for the service for 2011 be considered at the next meeting of this Committee.

139. PROJECTS UPDATE – FUNDING CONTRIBUTIONS

Consideration was given to a report of the Town Clerk, ENCL: 2370.

RESOLVED: that £10,000 be earmarked within reserves, for the project for a multi use games arena, although the funding not be committed until a full report was received on the project and other funders identified.

140. EMPLOYMENT POLICIES

Consideration was given to a report of the Town Clerk, ENCL: 2368.

RECOMMEND: that

- (1) the Grievance Procedure as attached to the report be approved, and
- (2) a Staffing Appeals Sub Committee be established, with the terms of reference as in the report and 3 members and 3 deputy members be appointed, drawn from this Committee, as follows:

Members: Councillors Miss S.A. Brown, K.A. Day and C.M. Ray with all other members of the Committee able to deputise as required. The Sub Committee to be reappointed at the Annual Council meeting.

141. NEW COUNCILLORS TRAINING AND INDUCTION PROCESS

The Town Clerk reported that a session for new members was to be held in the week following the election and he would be providing information on how the council works and the role of a councillor. This would be followed by dedicated sessions on matters such as the Code of Conduct and Planning. All councillors would also receive a welcome pack of information and guidance.

The report was noted.

142. CORRESPONDENCE

The Town Clerk reported on the following correspondence: -

He had been asked to write a letter in support of a Bridport Museum and Discover West Bay project “Entwining Lines exhibition” which was seeking to provide additional opportunities for interpretation at West Bay. Members noted and endorsed this action.

Following the presentation at the recent Community Land Trust seminar, he had received a letter from the Symene Community Land Trust, with information on their proposals for an affordable housing project within Bridport.

Members generally welcomed the proposal to seek to identify more affordable housing in the area, as this was much needed and it agreed that the Symene Community Land Trust should be asked to adopt a similar approach to the Flaxhayes scheme and bring together a stakeholder panel and embark on public consultation, prior to submitting a planning application. The Town Council could be asked to formally nominate a representative for the stakeholder panel. That panel could then consider issues such

as nomination rights for the properties, which the Town Council would wish to consider further. The specific land use elements would be considered under the planning process and the submission of a planning application.

143. ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Leader of the Council reported that he had represented the Town Council at the Magna Housing celebration day, to mark Magna's partnership working and use of their community fund. He was able to highlight the many examples of joint working with the Town Council, including community justice panels, the community orchard and the new path through to St Mary's School, from the football club car park.

The Town Mayor reported that he had been joined by nearly all the Mayors and Chairmen from across the county and special guests the Lord Lieutenant and High Sheriff of Dorset, for the Freedom March. The March was headed by the Regimental Salamanca Band, who after the church service then provided a spectacular marching display in South Street. The Mayor presented the freedom scroll to Brigadier Toomey of the Rifles, who in turn presented the Regimental bugle to the Town Mayor. He thanked the many organisations who took part, as well as the traders who put up decorations and the local people who turned out in such great numbers. In particular, he thanked Linda Bullock of the Town Council for organising the event and the successful civic afternoon that followed.

144. PAYMENT OF ACCOUNTS

The Town Clerk presented List 5 of the 2010/11 accounts, in the sum of £183,831.55, which had been authorised for payment since the last meeting. This having been tabled for members' information was approved and signed by the Chairman.

145. PUBLIC BODIES (ADMISSION TO MEETINGS) ACT 1960

RESOLVED: that in view of the confidential nature of the business about to be transacted, it was agreed that in the public interest the public be temporarily excluded whilst the Committee considered the following matters:

146. MAGISTRATES' COURT – RIGHT OF WAY

The Town Clerk stated that there were no further developments at this stage.

The update was noted.

147. TOWN HALL HERITAGE AND CONSERVATION PROJECT – TOURIST INFORMATION TERMS OF LEASE

Councillors considered a report of the Town Clerk, ENCL: 2369 and an addendum circulated at the meeting.

RESOLVED: that West Dorset District Council be notified that the Town Council is willing to accept the offer outlined in the report, subject to the final details being approved at the full Town Council meeting on 19 April and subject to the conditions as set out in the addendum report.

148. ANNUAL STAFF REVIEW

Councillors considered a report of the Town Clerk, ENCL: 2366.

RESOLVED: that the report be received and the recommendations contained therein be approved, including increasing the tax free mileage allowance to 45p per mile, as notified by HM Revenue and Customs.

The meeting closed at **8.20 p.m.**

The next meeting of the Committee will be held on 15 June 2011