

Minutes of the MEETING of the FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE of Bridport Town Council held at Mountfield, Bridport on Wednesday 16 September 2015 at 7.00 p.m.

PRESENT: Cllr: Mrs M.J. Ray (Chairman)

Cllrs: G.J. Ackerman C.M. Ray
Miss S.A. Brown Mrs E.A. Rickard
Ms G.E. Massey Ms S.J. Williams

Also in attendance: Cllr D.G. Rickard

PUBLIC FORUM

There were no speakers in the public forum, although Joe Hewetson from the Neighbourhood Planning Group provided an update on the project (min 43 below).

34. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Cllrs K.A. Day and Ms F.K. McKenzie.

35. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 17 June 2015 were confirmed as a true and correct record and signed by the Chairman.

36. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Minute 37 - Best Value, Scrutiny and Bridport and West Bay Town Plan Sub Committee: Cllr Miss S.A. Brown declared an interest as set out in the Sub Committee minutes, in respect of the Chamber Orchestra and the New Elizabethan Singers. (The individual grants were not discussed as they were moved en bloc).

37. 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 September 2015 be received and the following recommendations be approved.

(Min. 20) Town Council Grants to Smaller Bodies 2015/16

(a) that the following grants be approved, under the General Power of Competence: -

	£
St Mary's CE VC Primary School – Replace Play Equipment.	250
First Dorset Credit Union – Publicity	500
Heritage Coast Canoe Club - Racking	250
Axe Valley Ring and Ride – Community Transport Scheme (To be reviewed if Bridport usage increases)	500
Melplash Agricultural Society -Education Initiative	500
Chamber Orchestra – General Rehearsal Costs	250
Youth Dance – Dance Studio	600
Small Things – Arts Workshops	250
New Elizabethan Singers – 50 th Anniversary Concert and Exhibition	250
Total Small Grants	£3,350

(b) that the following application be not supported at this time, as it was considered that it did not meet the criteria: Charmouth Primary School (£250)

(c) that in respect of approved applications from national and county bodies, it was on the understanding that the money was ring-fenced for Bridport only.

(d) that the grants scheme be re-opened in October and any further applications received be reported to the Sub Committee at its next meeting in December.

(Min. 21) Town Council Grants to Larger Bodies 2015/16

RESOLVED: that the previous decision to continue the existing service level agreements for 2015/16 be noted and the grants be awarded to the Arts Centre, Museum, CAB and Leisure Centre as set out in 3.1 of the report (at existing levels) and the Sub Committee receive a further report back at its December meeting on the level of future SLA funding.

38. MARKET AND BUSINESS LIAISON SUB COMMITTEE

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the meeting of the Sub Committee held on 30 June 2015 be received.

39. FINANCIAL ESTIMATES 2015/2016 – 1ST REVISION

Consideration was given to a report of the Town Clerk, ENCL: 2998.

RECOMMEND: that the 1st revision of the estimates for the year 2015/2016 be approved.

40. COASTAL COMMUNITIES TEAM – ESTABLISHMENT OF THE TEAM AND FUNDING SUPPORT

Consideration was given to a report of the Town Clerk, ENCL: 3001.

RESOLVED:

(1) that the arrangements to establish the Coastal Communities Team (CCT) be approved as set out in the report.

(2) that the Town Clerk be given delegated authority to obtain Project Management support, up to a limit of £7,000 subject to the approval of West Dorset District Council, as the accountable body.

(3) that Councillor Sarah Williams be the Town Council's representative on the CCT.

41. DORSET COUNTY COUNCIL “FORWARD TOGETHER”

The Town Clerk reported on the discussions with the County Council on ways of working with town and parish councils. The proposals were subject to member approval at the County Council, but a number of draft recommendations were being put forward for joint working, including:

- regular information sharing,
- early discussions/consultation as part of any potential service reviews,
- recognition of the need to provide funding if services transferred,
- District and County work with local councils when looking to dispose of assets, including exploring possible community uses.

Members welcomed the discussions and the recommendations.

RESOLVED: that the further development of the proposals be supported and a report be submitted when the final recommendations were approved.

42. SERVICES ADMINISTERED BY THE TOWN SURVEYOR

Consideration was given to a report of the Town Surveyor, ENCL: 3003.

The Town Surveyor provided updates on the following:

a. Allotment Conditions and Water Charges

It was asked if the wording of the conditions could be reviewed.

RECOMMEND that water charges (£10 for a full plot and £5 for a half plot) be included for all sites where water was now provided.

b. Salt House Chairs

RESOLVED: that fifty replacement chairs be purchased for the Salt House at a cost of no more than £2,000.

c. Farmers' Market

RESOLVED: that the proposal for an additional Farmers' market be discussed at the next Market and Business Liaison Sub Committee.

d. West Bay Play Area

RESOLVED: that a further lease be entered into with West Dorset District Council for the additional land for the extension to the play area, subject to the details being approved.

e. Notice Boards

RESOLVED: that all town notice boards be replaced with lockable boards, to include the events notice board at the side of the Town Hall, subject to any necessary permissions.

f. Park and Ride

It was reported that the service had been well used once again this year, with the numbers just slightly down on last year.

RESOLVED: that the update be noted.

43. NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN UPDATE AND PROJECT MANAGEMENT

The Town Clerk reported on the latest position on the project. Joe Hewetson, Steering Group member, also commented to say how well the project was going and that the working groups would be launched very soon.

RESOLVED: that the update be noted.

44. WEST DORSET DISTRICT COUNCIL – SERVICE REVIEW OF SUPPORT FOR LOCAL AREA PARTNERSHIPS

Consideration was given to a report of the Town Clerk, ENCL: 3002.

Members made the following comments on the consultation on funding options:

- If option (c) – uniform payments – was chosen this would mean that one of the five partnerships would receive an increase in funding. All areas were different and a “one size fits all” approach was not appropriate.
- There needed to be some recognition of the success of a partnership, such as BLAP and also there needed to be a cost benefit analysis, to quantify how much the District Council saved by the local area partnerships undertaking community planning, on behalf of the District.
- If the funding was reduced, then there had to be a reduction in the requirements to report back so regularly to the District.
- The Town Council was committed to ensuring BLAP would continue and would continue to look at options to enable this to happen.

RECOMMEND: that the Town Clerk, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, respond to the latest consultation on options for District Council funding of local area partnerships, to include the comments above and receive a report back in November, with the proposals to ensure continued support for BLAP from 2016/17 onwards

45. BUDGET AND SERVICE REVIEW WORKING GROUP

Consideration was given to a report of the Town Clerk, ENCL: 3005.

Members expressed concern at the proposed reductions by the District Council in funding to the Arts Centre, Museum and CAB and questioned the comment accompanying the proposed reduction in the funding of the Arts Centre. It was stated that the organisation “*can attract a substantial amount in matched funding because of local authority support*”. However, if the District Council reduced its funding, there was likely to be a corresponding reduction in matched funding, so any reduction would have even more of an impact.

It was noted that discussions were continuing on the options for future management of the TIC.

RESOLVED: that the report be noted and discussions continue with the District Council on options for the future management of the TIC and that the implications of District Council grant reductions on the larger grant aided bodies be discussed with each body, as part of the Town Council’s SLA meetings. Both issues to be reported back to the next meeting of this Committee.

46. EXTERNAL AUDIT 2014/15 – OUTCOME

The Town Clerk reported that he was very pleased that no issues had been raised by the External Auditor and that the annual audit had been formally closed.

Members asked that the Committee's thanks be recorded for the work of the Finance and Office Manager.

RECOMMEND: to note the conclusion of the annual audit and accept and approve the completed Statement of Accounts and Annual Governance Statement 2014/15.

47. FOOTBALL CLUB CAR PARK MANAGEMENT

The Town Clerk reported that it was proposed to review the management arrangements of the car park in consultation with the Football Club and report back to members on the future arrangements.

RESOLVED: that the update be noted.

48. DAPTC ISSUES AND NALC SURVEY

Consideration was given to a report of the Town Clerk, ENCL: 2999.

Members were invited to send their comments to the Town Clerk.

RECOMMEND: that the Town Clerk, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, complete the survey to include any comments received from members.

49. LOCAL COUNCIL AWARDS SCHEME

RESOLVED: that the Town Clerk bring forward proposals in 2016, to consider re-accreditation under the Scheme.

50. "DEMOCRACY IN BRIDPORT 2015" EXHIBITION

RESOLVED: that it be noted that the Exhibition was to take place in the Town Hall from 29 September to 24 October 2015.

51. EVENTS REVIEW

The Town Clerk reported on the Town Council's support for events this year. It had been a very successful year, but there was a need to review the Council's support and discuss this with all event organisers. This would be reported back and there would also be a report on the feedback from organisations involved with the Town Council in the Bridport Marquee at the Melplash Show. It was also asked if it would be possible to have a static display with information from groups unable to be present in the Marquee.

The Town Mayor reported on her recent Civic Day and wished to record her thanks to all the Town Council staff who did so much to help on the day.

RESOLVED: that further reports be received on Town Council support for events.

52. REPORTS FROM OUTSIDE BODIES

The following reports were received:

Community Orchard – Cllr Ms G.E. Massey reported on this year's Apple Day, to be held on 17 October.

Borough Gardens – Cllr Mrs M.J. Ray reported on the recent work mornings and that the Group had received a donation of £20 from a member of the public.

Food Festival – Cllr Mrs E.A. Rickard said that next year's event was to run from 5 to 11 June, although the dates were to be finalised.

Christmas Cheer – the Town Surveyor said that the planning arrangements were going well. This year's event was on Wednesday 9 December 2015.

53. WATAG – NEW TIMETABLES FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTION

Consideration was given to a report of the Town Clerk, ENCL: 3000.

Members thanked WATAG for this work and producing the timetables, which were much needed. However, members did hope that the bus operator would in future ensure that their timetables were produced in time.

RESOLVED: that a contribution of £25 be made to WATAG, towards the costs of producing bus timetables, as detailed in the report.

54. WDDC GAMBLING POLICY REVIEW

Consideration was given to a report of the Town Clerk, ENCL: 3004.

RECOMMEND: that the District Council's review of its Gambling Policy be noted without comment.

55. APPOINTMENTS TO COMMITTEES AND OUTSIDE BODIES

RECOMMEND:

- (1) that Cllr E.T. Colfox replaces Cllr Mrs E.A. Rickard on the Plans Committee.
- (2) that Cllr Ms S.A. Horniman be appointed to represent the Town Council on the Axe Valley and West Dorset Ring and Ride Service.
- (3) that the membership of the Millennium Green Trust be reviewed and be reported back.

56. ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Town Mayor stated that she had attended a number of events, which would be listed in her report to Council.

The Town Clerk reported the following:

The World War II Exhibition in the Town Hall had been a great success and he was joined by all members in thanking the organisers.

The Town Crier was now enrolled in the Guild and had settled in well to his new role, attending a number of events over the summer.

Regalia – it was necessary to undertake some maintenance work on the Mayoral badge and it was:

RESOLVED: that funding of up to £1,200 be approved for necessary work on the Mayoral badge.

57. PAYMENT OF ACCOUNTS

The Town Clerk presented List 2 of the 2015/16 accounts, in the sum of £204,167.54, which had been authorised for payment since the last meeting. This having been tabled for members' information, was approved and signed by the Chairman.

58. PUBLIC BODIES (ADMISSION TO MEETINGS) ACT 1960

RESOLVED: "That in view of the confidential nature of the business about to be transacted, it is advisable in the public interest that the public be temporarily excluded and they are instructed to withdraw."

59. INSURANCE

The Town Clerk reported on an ongoing claim.

RESOLVED: that the Town Clerk discuss further with the Council's Insurer and be given delegated authority to decide the action to be taken, based on the advice received from the Insurers.

60. PROPERTY MATTERS

The Town Clerk reported that options for the additional space in Mountfield were still being pursued.

The update was noted.

61. STAFFING MATTERS

Consideration was given to a report of the Town Clerk, ENCL: 3006.

RESOLVED: that the proposals as set out in the report be approved.

The meeting closed at **8.55 p.m.**

The next meeting of the Committee will be held on 11 November 2015