

Minutes of the MEETING of the FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE of Bridport Town Council held at Mountfield, Bridport on Wednesday 26 March 2014 at 7.00 p.m.

PRESENT Cllr: C.M. Ray (Chairman in the Chair until 7.10pm)

Cllrs: G.J. Ackerman	J. T. May
Miss S.A. Brown	Mrs M.J. Ray
Ms G.E. Massey	D.R. Tett
	Ms A-M. A. Vincent

Also present: Cllrs D.G. Rickard, Mrs E.A. Rickard and Ms S.J. Williams (ex-officio).

The Vice Chairman, Cllr Ms A-M. A. Vincent took the Chair from 7.10pm, for the remainder of the meeting.

PUBLIC FORUM

There were no speakers in the public forum.

130. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillor K.G. Wallace.

131. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 21 January 2014 were confirmed as a true and correct record and signed by the Chairman.

132. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

133. CODE OF CONDUCT DISPENSATION REQUESTS

There were no items reported.

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

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the meeting of the Sub Committee held on 4 March 2014 be received and the following recommendations be approved.

(Min 36) Investment Review 2013/14 and Strategy 2014/15

RECOMMEND: that the Annual Investment Strategy for 2013/14, attached as an Appendix to the report, be adopted without amendment for 2014/15.

(Min 38) Revision of Standing Orders

RECOMMEND: that Standing Orders for speaking at the Plans Committee be amended as below:

Non committee members should sit, not in the public gallery, but separately from the Committee, so that the members of the public present could make a clear distinction between councillors on the Committee and those that were not. Non committee members should have the opportunity to speak on an item prior to the decision making, but it would be made clear that they were not entitled to vote.

(Min 39) Asset Register

RESOLVED: that the asset register be approved for 2014 and the Town Clerk be given delegated authority to make any final amendments.

(Min 43) Annual Town Meeting Arrangements

RESOLVED: that the arrangements for the Annual Town Meeting be noted.

(Min 46) Appointment of an Internal Auditor for 2014/15

RECOMMEND: that Fair Account & Lightatouch be appointed as the Town Council's Internal Auditors for 2014/15.

135. MARKET AND BUSINESS LIAISON SUB COMMITTEE

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the meeting of the Sub Committee held on 18 March 2014 be received and the following recommendations be approved:

(Min 16) Events 2014, Tourism and Bridport Promotion

RESOLVED: that the monthly meeting of representatives of this group oversee and advise on the production of the Town Guide and the continued development of the community web site.

(Min 19) Market Charges

RESOLVED: that the proposed charges for 2014/15 be supported:

(i) Registered Trader £1.60p per 30 cm. run per day
Non registered Trader £2.60p per 30 cm. run per day

(ii) the following reduced market tolls be levied for the winter months of January, February and March:

Registered Trader £0.75p per 30 cm. run per day
Non registered Trader £1.60p per 30 cm. run per day

(iii) for the Wednesday market only, the winter fees as in (ii) above to again also apply for the months of November and December and the fees for Wednesdays be capped at no more than £5 for registered traders during January and February.

136. TOWN HALL

The Town Clerk reported that the project had been concluded and the final budget, showed an under spend of over £150,000. The final budget figures would be set out in the updated evaluation report.

RESOLVED: that the conclusion of the project be noted.

137. SERVICES ADMINISTERED BY THE SURVEYOR

Councillors considered a report of the Town Surveyor, ENCL: 2811.

Updates were provided on the following: -

- (i) Mountfield – the kitchen and car parking. In due course, proposals would be brought forward to improve facilities at Mountfield.
- (ii) Town Hall – following comments from the Internal Auditor and discussion at the Best Value Sub Committee, options for the administration of the craft fairs were being considered.
- (iii) Road Closures – in total, the Town Council would be applying for eight road closures for events in the town this year.
- (iv) Park and Ride 2014 – tenders would be sought from operators interested in running the service this year and be reported back to the next meeting of this Committee.

St Mary's Play Area

RESOLVED: that £5,000 be approved from the 2014/15 Play Equipment budget, to remove the existing paddling pool and paving and install a triops climbing frame in a sand surround, similar to the equipment in the West Bay Play Area.

Street Lighting

RESOLVED: that up to £1,000 be approved from the Town Plan projects budget 2014/15, to fabricate and install banner arms to the new columns, for event banners.

138. SKATE PARK REFURBISHMENT

Consideration was given to a report of the Town Surveyor, ENCL: 2810.

It was reported that quotes for the next stage had been sought and it was considered that the equipment could be produced locally, at a more competitive price. Bearing this in mind, it was recommended that the requirement to tender in this case be waived.

RESOLVED:

- (1) that the further works at the Skate Park (the provision of new equipment, in line with the proposals produced with the Steering Group of young people)

be approved at a cost of no more than £17,000 to be met from funding proposed to be earmarked at this meeting from existing 2013/14 budgets (min 140) as outlined in the report.

- (2) that Financial Regulations be waived and the Town Surveyor be given authority to place the contract with a local contractor, subject to ensuring best value.

139. YOUTH COUNCIL WORKING GROUP UPDATE

The Town Clerk reported on the recent meeting of the Youth Council. At this stage, the Youth Council was not in a position to appoint Youth Advisers. Other options to enable the Youth Council to comment on items coming to the Town Council were being looked at and would be reported back.

RESOLVED: that the update be noted.

140. PROJECT SUPPORT FOR 2014 – IDENTIFICATION OF ADDITIONAL FUNDING

Consideration was given to a report of the Town Clerk, ENCL: 2812.

It was reported that this item was seeking the earmarking of funds for projects and members would consider separate reports, before the funding is committed. However, the one item that members were asked to commit on the basis of this report, was the expenditure for new bins. It was proposed to install a number of general / dog bins in Town Council owned open spaces. Members asked if, where possible, recycling bins could also be installed.

RESOLVED:

- (1) that the following funding be earmarked in reserves: -
 - Assistance at events, including the Freedom March - £1,500
 - Town Guide - £1,500
 - Salt House refurbishment - £2,000
 - Skate Park next stage, following resurfacing - £17,000
 - Additional Neighbourhood Plan funding - £5,000
 - Environment Committee re Bins - £2,500
- (2) that the proposal to install additional bins in Town Council owned open spaces be approved, with the costs to be met from the funding earmarked in item (1) above.

141. REVIEW OF FUTURE BUDGETS AND SERVICE DELIVERY

Consideration was given to a report of the Town Clerk, ENCL: 2807.

In discussion of the report, members noted that West Dorset District Council had agreed a phased withdrawal of the Localisation of Council Tax Funding, but it was felt that in addition to the national representations to the Government on this matter, the Town Council should also write to Oliver Letwin, MP.

RESOLVED:

- (1) that a Budget and Service Review Working Group be established, with the remit as in the report and the following membership:

Cllrs: Miss S.A. Brown, Ms G.E. Massey, D.G. Rickard, D.R. Tett and Ms S.J. Williams.

- (2) that the Town Clerk write to Oliver Letwin, MP to ask if he would support representations to the Government, asking that it seek to ensure that the Localisation of Council Tax Funding is passed, in full, to the Town Council.

142. FOOTBALL GROUND AND CAR PARK

Consideration was given to a report of the Town Clerk, ENCL: 2813.

Now that the Town Council was taking over the football club land, discussions had taken place with the Football Club, with a view to amending their current lease of the land, as follows:

- The car park land would no longer be part of the lease to the Football Club.
- The lease of the Football Club land would be extended for 99 years on the existing terms other than that the “peppercorn” rent of £50 per year would be reviewed on what would have been the ending of the current lease in 2031.

It was proposed that West Dorset District Council be asked to manage the car park for another year, with the existing arrangement of half the income going to the football club, with the Town Council receiving the remainder, after deduction of the District Council’s operational costs. There would be a further report during the year on the long term management of the car park.

The Town Surveyor reported on plans to “tidy up” the car park and increase the number of parking spaces. This was supported by members and would be funded through a S106 contribution of £12,290.

RESOLVED:

- (1) that the proposed car park improvement works proceed as detailed, with the costs to be met from the S106 funding of £12, 290 and the interim arrangements for the management of the car park be agreed as above.

RECOMMEND:

- (2) that the outline terms of the proposed amendment to the existing lease with the football club be approved as detailed above and the Town Clerk be given delegated authority to complete the amendments to the lease.

143. WEST DORSET DISTRICT COUNCIL – LICENSING POLICY REVIEW

Consideration was given to a report of the Town Clerk, ENCL: 2804.

RESOLVED: that the Licensing Policy Review be noted, without comment.

144. TOWN GUIDE

Consideration was given to a report of the Town Clerk, ENCL: 2814.

In the closed session part of this agenda, the Town Clerk reported on the discussions with two local companies to produce a new Town Guide.

RESOLVED: that the Town Clerk be given delegated authority to make arrangements and agree the appointment of a company to produce a new Town Guide and £1,500 be reserved in the 2013/14 Events budget, to contribute towards the production costs. The production of the guide to be overseen by a working group, drawn from the Market and Business Liaison Sub Committee.

145. DAPTC

The Town Clerk reported that there was a new DAPTC web site <http://www.dorset-aptc.gov.uk/> with details of meetings and other items of interest to members.

RESOLVED: that the update be noted.

146. WEST BAY WATER SPORTS CENTRE UPDATE

Consideration was given to a report of the Town Surveyor, ENCL: 2815.

He referred to the Town Council's previous decision to proceed with the conversion works, to accommodate the Gig Club and the Canoe Club. The funding required was greater than the budget available, although it was hoped that S106 funding could bridge the difference. To this end, he was meeting with Bridport District Councillors to outline the plans for the building, ahead of any discussion on the use of S106 funding. In the meantime, he was looking to see if part of the building work could start, to enable the Canoe Club to be accommodated, if possible.

RECOMMEND:

- (1) that the Town Surveyor be given authority to proceed with adaptation works on the building, allowing for initial works to proceed, to accommodate the Canoe Club, in line with the plans agreed by this Committee and within previously reported funding identified for the scheme (F&GP min. 83). The remainder of the works to take place, to accommodate the Gig Club, when sufficient additional funding was identified. If this additional funding was identified prior to the Council meeting, members be asked at that time to approve the expenditure.
- (2) that the completion of the freehold transfer of the building from West Dorset District Council to the Town Council be approved.

147. SALT HOUSE

Consideration was given to a report of the Town Clerk, ENCL: 2816.

RESOLVED: that the Town Council undertake the improvement works to the kitchen in the Salt House, at a cost of no more than £10,000, to be met from £2,000 funding earmarked at this meeting from existing 2013/14 budgets (min 140) and

£8,000 from Town Plan projects for 2014/15.

RECOMMEND: that the completion of the freehold transfer of the Salt House and Fisherman's Green from West Dorset District Council to the Town Council be approved.

148. MULTI USE GAMES ARENA - PROJECT UPDATE

The Town Surveyor updated on the latest position and it was hoped that the final elements of the works would be completed very soon and then arrangements would be made for the formal opening.

The update was noted.

149. ELECTORAL REVIEW OF WEST DORSET - DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS

Consideration was given to a report of the Town Clerk, ENCL: 2803.

RESOLVED: that the proposals for the Bridport wards be considered in detail by the working party established under minute 141 (with all members invited to attend) which shall

RECOMMEND: that, following consideration by the Working Group, a response be approved on the electoral review of the District Council ward boundaries.

150. BLAP UPDATE

The Town Clerk proposed to discuss with BLAP the ringfencing of part of the community initiatives budget (possibly £500) that could be used by BLAP to meet costs such as travel to meetings outside Bridport, representing BLAP.

RESOLVED: that the proposal for earmarking funding for BLAP be noted and, following discussion with BLAP, be reported back to the next meeting of this Committee.

151. MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES SCHEME

RESOLVED: that the existing scheme of Members' Allowances continue for 2014/15.

152. CALENDAR OF MEETINGS

Consideration was given to a report of the Town Clerk, ENCL: 2808.

RECOMMEND: that the calendar of meetings for 2014/15 be approved, subject to the following amendments:

Finance and General Purposes Committee – meeting on 14 January be moved back, to take account of the likely budget timetable, to 21 January.

Annual Town Meeting – amend wording to say that all town councillors should attend.

153. ELECTRONIC PAYMENTS

Consideration was given to a report of the Town Clerk, ENCL: 2806.

RESOLVED: that changes to the legislation on Town Council payments be noted and it be agreed that, in light of these changes, the Council's Financial Regulations be reviewed and any proposals to change the payments systems be reported back to this Committee and full Council in June. The existing arrangements to continue until that time.

154. DIRECT DEBITS

Consideration was given to a report of the Town Clerk, ENCL: 2805.

RESOLVED: that the continued use of direct debits to discharge Town Council liabilities to the suppliers listed in the report be approved, including a new payment to Computersmiths Ltd, for the provision of Broadband at Mountfield.

155. FREEDOM MARCH BY THE RIFLES 2014

The Town Clerk reported on the arrangements being made for the Freedom March on Sunday 22 June.

RESOLVED: that the updated arrangements for the Freedom March be noted and a financial contribution from the Town Council, of no more than £1,500, be approved, to be met from funding earmarked at this meeting from existing 2013/14 budgets (min 140).

156. EVENTS 2014

The Town Surveyor reported on the large number of events in the town this year. All members had been sent an events list and, as reported earlier, the road closure applications were to be submitted by the Town Council.

RESOLVED: that the list of events and required road closures be noted and the submission of the road closure applications approved.

157. EVENTS 2015 – MAGNA CARTA

The Town Clerk reported on options to mark the 800th anniversary of Magna Carta in June 2015. Members agreed that it would be good if initial discussions could be started by the Town Council, on arrangements to mark the anniversary in Bridport.

RESOLVED: that initial discussions take place regarding events to mark the anniversary of the Magna Carta and be reported back to this Committee.

158. USE OF ASKER MEADOWS 2014

Consideration was given to a report of the Town Clerk, ENCL: 2801.

The Town Surveyor reported on the proposal to install a water supply at Asker Meadows and that the Food Festival had agreed to contribute £200 towards the costs.

RESOLVED: that the fee for the hire of Asker Meadows in 2014 (£500 for each event), the terms and conditions of the hire and the arrangements for the provision of a water supply be approved.

159. REPORTS FROM OUTSIDE BODIES

Cllr Mrs E.A. Rickard confirmed that the Food Festival Committee had discussed the proposed charge for the use of Asker Meadows.

160. CORRESPONDENCE

The Town Clerk reported that he had received a letter asking the Town Council to consider a discount on the Salt House hire fees, if a series of bookings were made.

Members felt that this could be difficult, bearing in mind it would set a precedent for other bookings, and that discounts for a series of bookings should not be agreed.

161. ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Town Clerk reminded members of the Town Meeting on 8 April and the Civic Evening on 9 April.

162. PAYMENT OF ACCOUNTS

The Town Clerk presented List 5 of the 2013/14 accounts, in the sum of £232,832.15, which had been authorised for payment since the last meeting. This having been tabled for members' information, was approved and signed by the Vice Chairman.

163. 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:

164. TOWN GUIDE

This item had been resolved earlier in the meeting (min 144).

165. MAGISTRATES' COURT ACCESS

The Town Clerk updated members on the latest position.

RESOLVED: that the update be noted.

166. LEASE RENEWALS

The Town Clerk reported on the following, in respect of Mountfield.

Pending lease renewal for West Dorset District Council.
Rent Reviews due for Magna Housing and Dorset County Council.

RESOLVED: that the Town Clerk seek advice from the Town Council's Valuers, Humberts, and be given delegated authority to conclude these matters.

167. ANNUAL STAFF REVIEW

Consideration was given to a report of the Town Clerk, ENCL: 2809.

Members asked for a report back on future administrative support in the office.

RESOLVED: that the recommendations in the report be approved.

The meeting closed at **9.10 p.m.**

The next meeting of the Committee will be held on 11 June 2014