

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE FINANCE AND BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE held on 10 October 2011 in the Uniform Groups' Headquarters, Fiddlers Lane, Saughall

In attendance: Councillor B Kerr (in the Chair)
Councillor A Warrington
Councillor Mrs JM Young
Councillor PP Young

Also present Cheshire West and Chester Councillor Brian Crowe
Mr Bob Salisbury, Internal Auditor

20. APOLOGIES FOR AUTHORISED ABSENCE

Apologies for authorised absence were received from Councillors Mrs K Ford, DF Holman and RK Shukla.

21. CODE OF CONDUCT – DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were received.

22. MINUTES

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 8 August 2011 be confirmed as a correct record.

23. PROTECTION OF THE GREEN BELT – PROFESSIONAL ADVICE

The Council at its meeting held on 5 September 2011, in the light of Cheshire West and Chester (CWAC) Council's proposal to develop land in its ownership in Saughall as a transit site for gypsies and travellers had considered what action it could take to protect the local Green Belt. It had resolved

"That

(1) this matter be referred for discussion to the next meeting of the Finance and Business Development Committee on 10 October 2011; and

(2) the Clerk be requested to contact the Parish Clerks of Puddington and District, Mollington, Lea by Backford and Capenhurst Parish Councils to see if they are interested in meeting to discuss how to protect Green Belt land."

(Minute No. 165/2011 refers.)

It was noted that the Clerk had written to Steve Robinson on behalf of the Council on 7 October 2011 objecting in the strongest possible terms to his Council's proposals for a transit site for gypsies and travellers on the grounds that it was inappropriate development in the Green Belt.

It was also noted that the Leader of CWAC Council's Personal Assistant, Jenny Maxwell had responded by email on 10 October 2011 to the issues raised by the Chairman at a meeting with the Chief Executive, Steve Robinson. However, the reply had not been very helpful and referred to CWAC Council's legal duty to assess and make provision for the accommodation needs of Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Show Persons resorting to its area.

Members appreciated that CWAC Council had a statutory duty to provide permanent sites for gypsies and travellers but considered that statutory provision was not required in respect of transit sites.

Members were aware that the local group campaigning against the proposed development in the Green Belt of Oakwood Farm had sought legal advice and that CWAC Councillor Brian Crowe was also exploring this option.

Councillor Kerr reported that the Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE) was concerned over Green Belt erosion and that one of its stated aims was to protect it by resisting threats to Green Belts from new developments. He proposed that the Council join CPRE.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the Clerk be requested to write to Steve Robinson, Chief Executive at CWAC Council again to clarify the position with regard to gypsies and travellers transit sites; and
- (2) the Clerk be requested to obtain and complete an application to join CPRE at an annual subscription fee of £29.

24. ACCOUNTS

(a) Mid -Year Review of the 2011/12 Budget

The Committee considered its budget and estimated expenditure to 31 March 2012. It was noted that the miscellaneous minor repairs budget was significantly over spent and therefore any further work would need the agreement of the Committee or Council as virement from other budget heads would now be required.

It was noted that the Responsible Financial Officer had made an error in respect of the Clerk's estimated salary in the documentation provided with the agenda and this would be rectified and re presented.

RESOLVED:

- (1) the six monthly budget position be noted;
- (2) no further miscellaneous minor repairs be carried out without the agreement of this Committee or the Council; and

(3) further to Minute No. 23 above, the Council be **RECOMMENDED** to consider setting aside a sum of money from its budget, to fund any future action it may decide to take to protect the local Green Belt.

(b) Payments made since the meeting of the Committee held on 13 June 2011:

RESOLVED:

That the following payments be approved:

<u>Financial Year 2010/2011</u>	<u>£</u>	<u>Cheque No</u>
Just a Mow (3 Cuts)	255.00	102518
Sam Whitfield (Painting Cheshire Railings)	220.00	102519
Saughall Cricket Club (Grass Cutting under Joint Agreement)	2,500.00	102520
Morrall Play Solutions (Quarterly Play Equipment Inspection)	81.00	102521
Royal British Legion (Poppy wreath for Remembrance Sunday)	17.00	102522
Mr R Hipkiss (Litter Picking)	541.67	102523
Mrs S Hudspeth (Salary)	486.00	102524
Mrs S Hudspeth (Expenses)	36.00	102525
Jeff Harris Roof Services Ltd (Bus shelter repairs)	440.00	102551
Mr R Hipkiss (Litter Picking)	541.67	102552
Mrs S Hudspeth (Salary)	486.00	102553
Mrs S Hudspeth (Expenses)	36.00	102554
HM Revenue and Customs	1239.45	102555
Alan Morris (Mole Extermination)	80.00	102556
(Cheque No.102516 – Messy Moles – cancelled)		
Wirral Borough Council (Printing and postage)	53.42	102557

(c) Receipts

There were no new receipts to report at this meeting.

(d) Cash to Bank Reconciliation

RESOLVED:

That the contents be noted.

25. REVIEW OF THE COUNCIL'S FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

The Committee had regard to the Council's Financial Regulations and revised them to reflect its new committee structure.

RESOLVED:

That the revisions to remove all references to the Finance and General Purposes Committee and replace them with this Committee be agreed along with some other minor amendments (Appendix A).

26. ANNUAL AUDIT – RISK MANAGEMENT

The Committee considered that the Council's Risk Management Action Plan did not require any revision at the current time.

RESOLVED:

That the Council's Risk Management Action Plan be reviewed in six months time.

27. PARISH COUNCIL'S DRAFT BUSINESS PLAN

Further to Minute No. 17 of the last meeting the Committee gave consideration to the second draft of the Council's Business Plan and agreed some further minor amendments.

The Committee gave consideration to which outside bodies it wished to consult on the Business Plan. Although the Plan would be finalised taking account of any comments received it was agreed that it was a "living" document that would evolve and continue to be changed and modified as the Council saw fit.

RESOLVED: That

(1) copies of the draft Business Plan be provided for the following outside bodies and they be asked for their comments on its content and for a form of words about itself to be incorporated within the Plan:

- The Vernon Institute Management Committee
- All Saints Church
- The Methodist Church
- All Saints C of E Primary School
- The three Public Houses
 - The Greyhound Inn
 - The Wheatsheaf
 - The Egerton Arms
- Co-op Stores
- Saughall Health Centre

(2) the draft Business Plan be **RECOMMENDED** to the Council for adoption at its next meeting on Monday, 7 November 2011.

28. IMPROVING COMMUNICATIONS – SOCIAL NETWORKING

(a) Website Improvements

Callie O'Farrell (Councillor Mrs K Ford's sister-in-law) had offered to develop the Council's website free of charge. At present there were no plans to change the content of the existing site. The aim was to modernise its appearance making it vibrant and exciting. A number of different formats had been suggested but because the logo would be central to the development no further work could be done until a decision was made on where to change it.

(b) New Council Logo

The Committee considered a number of options for a new Council logo but agreed that it liked the one it already had better than any of them.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) no change be made to the current Council logo; and
- (2) Councillor Mrs K Ford be informed of the decision at (1) above so that she can liaise with Ms O'Farrell regarding work required on the Council's website.

(c) Vertical Display Board

Councillor DF Holman had recommended that the Council procure a Zap3 Stand the same as the ones the University of Chester used at an estimated cost of £245.

RESOLVED:

That the Clerk be requested to purchase a Zap3 from Teme Display.

29. FUTURE PROJECTS/IDEAS

The Committee reviewed its current list of future projects and Ideas as follows:

- **At the end of the year a new litter picking contract must be drawn up**
This new contract will run from 1 April 2012 to a date to be agreed. To consider options and revise the tender specification as considered appropriate to include a daily litter pick from the bus terminus on Church Road to the Vernon Institute.

ACTION

The invitation to tender for the Council's Litter Picking Contract is published on the website and posted on notice boards. Arrangements are being made for neighbouring Parish Councils to include it in their newsletters if the timing is right. It will appear in the November edition of the Council's Newsletter. The closing date was 9 December 2011.

- **Tarmac path beside the Uniform Groups' Headquarters**
No quotations for the work required had yet been received.

- **Fundraising for Community Projects**

A Panel to oversee this fundraising initiative would be established.

- **Community Action Projects (CAP)**

The Council has kick started the CAP Fund with £2,000 from its precept for 2011/12.

(a) A Participatory Budget Scheme (as a pump primer) is to be drawn up to launch the CAP. There is £1,000 in the Council's budget for this purpose.

(b) To consider how to increase what is in the fund.

(c) Proposed Social Evening

ACTION

An advert will be prepared and will go in its Newsletter inviting interested organised groups in the village to make proposals on how it would spend up to £500 max on a project, which must benefit the local community, to celebrate the Queen's Diamond Jubilee. A Panel will be established to judge any entries in this competition.

- **Community Action Projects (CAP) Team**

The Council wants to establish, build and motivate a winning CAP Team to engage partners and work within an agreed remit, to successfully shape its community by driving forward social enterprises and to administer the CAP Fund that will be used to assist and match fund worthwhile projects and initiatives.

- **Golden Jubilee Park**

(a) Possible Land Purchase

To note the land in question is not for sale at the present time.

- **Proposed Sports Pavilion**

A fact finding visit to Neston Cricket Club at Parkgate is to be arranged.

- **Skate Park/Folding Ramp**

The Committee will investigate the possibility of hiring a ramp during school holidays to see how popular it is with local youngsters.

- **The Queen's Diamond Jubilee**

Councillor Mrs JM Young made a request for some funding to assist the community event, Music in the Park on Monday, 4 June 2012 in the Golden Jubilee Park, being organised to celebrate the Queen's Diamond Jubilee.

ACTION

The Council be recommended to set aside £2,000 for this purpose.

RESOLVED:

That the Committee's current list of Future Projects/Ideas along with the Actions agreed and progress being made as set out above be noted and further reviewed at the next meeting.

APPENDIX A

SAUGHALL AND SHOTWICK PARK PARISH COUNCIL FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

1 **General**

- 1.1 These financial regulations shall govern the conduct of the financial transactions of the Council and may only be amended or varied by resolution of the Council.
- 1.2 The Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) under the policy direction of the Finance and Business Development Committee (F&BD Committee) shall be responsible for the proper administration of the Council's financial affairs.
- 1.3 The RFO shall be responsible for the production of financial management information.

2 **Annual Estimates**

- 2.1 Each committee shall formulate and submit proposals to the F&BD Committee in respect of revenue services and capital projects for inclusion in the rolling capital programme not later than the end of November each year.
- 2.2 Detailed estimates of income and expenditure on revenue services, and receipts and payments on capital account, shall be prepared each year by the RFO.
- 2.3 The F&BD Committee shall review the estimates and submit them to the Council not later than the end of January in each year and shall recommend the precept to be levied for the ensuing financial year. The RFO shall supply each Member with a copy of the approved estimates.
- 2.4 The annual capital and revenue budgets shall form the basis of financial control for the ensuing year.

3 **Budgetary Year**

- 3.1 Expenditure on the revenue account may be incurred up to the amounts included in each approved committee budget.
- 3.2 No expenditure may be incurred which cannot be met from the amount provided in the appropriate committee budget unless a virement has been approved by the F&BD Committee or the Council.
- 3.3 The RFO shall regularly provide the Council with a statement of income and expenditure to date under each head of the approved annual revenue and capital budgets.
- 3.4 The Clerk may incur expenditure on behalf of the Council which is necessary to carry out any repair replacement or other work which is of such extreme urgency that it must be done at once, whether or not there is any budgetary provision for the expenditure, subject to a limit of £500. The Clerk shall report the action to the appropriate committee as soon as practicable thereafter.

- 3.5 Where expenditure is incurred in accordance with regulation 3.4 above and the sum required cannot be met from savings made elsewhere within that committee's approved budget, it shall be subject to the provisions of a supplementary estimate approved by the F&BD Committee or the Council.
- 3.6 Unspent provisions in the revenue budget shall not be carried forward to a subsequent year.
- 3.7 No expenditure shall be incurred in relation to any capital project and no contract entered into or tender accepted involving expenditure on capital account unless the committee concerned are satisfied that it is contained in the rolling capital programme and that the necessary capital funds are available, or the requisite borrowing approval can be obtained.
- 3.8 All capital works shall be administered in accordance with the Council's standing orders and financial regulations relating to contracts.

4 Accounting and Audit

- 4.1 All accounting procedures and financial records of the Council shall be determined by the RFO as required by the Accounts and Audit Regulations 1996.
- 4.2 The RFO shall be responsible for completing the annual accounts of the Council as soon as practicable after the end of the financial year and shall submit them to and report thereon to the F&BD Committee.
- 4.3 The following principles shall be observed in connection with accounting duties.
- (a) The duty of providing information, calculating, checking and recording sums due to, or from, the Council, should be separated as completely as possible from the duty of collecting or dispersing them.
- (b) Officers charged with the duty of examining and checking the accounts of cash transactions should not be engaged in any of those transactions.
- 4.4 The RFO shall be responsible for maintaining an adequate and effective system of internal audit of the Council's accounting, financial and other operations in accordance with regulation 5 of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 1996. Any officer or Member of the Council shall, if the RFO requires, make available such documents of the Council which relate to their accounting and other records as appear to the RFO to be necessary for the purpose of the audit and shall supply the RFO with such information and explanation as the RFO considers necessary for that purpose.

5 Banking Arrangements and Cheques

- 5.1 The Council's banking arrangements shall be made by the RFO and approved by the F&BD Committee.
- 5.2 A schedule of the payment of money shall be prepared by the RFO and presented to the Council for authorisation.

5.3 Cheques and autopay sheets drawn on the two bank accounts in accordance with the schedule referred to in the previous paragraph shall be signed by three of the six signatories (one often being the Chairman).

6 Payment of Accounts

6.1 All payments shall be effected by cheque or another order drawn on the Council's bankers.

6.2 All invoices for payment shall be examined, verified and certified by the officer issuing the order. Before certifying an invoice the officer shall be satisfied that the work, goods or services to which the invoice relates have been received, carried out, examined and approved.

6.3 Duly certified invoices shall be passed to the RFO who shall examine them in relation to arithmetical accuracy and authorisation. He/She shall take all possible steps to settle all invoices submitted, and which are in order, within 30 days of their receipt.

6.4 All duly certified invoices will then be entered on the schedule referred to in 5.2 above.

7 Payment of Salaries and Wages

7.1 The payment of all salaries and wages shall be made by the RFO from the payroll account in accordance with the payroll records.

7.2 All time sheets shall be certified as to accuracy by or on behalf of the Clerk.

8 Loans and Investments

8.1 All loans and investments shall be negotiated by the RFO in the name of the Council, and shall be for a set period of time in accordance with Council policy. Changes to loans and investments should be reported to the F&BD Committee at the earliest opportunity.

8.2 All investments of money under the control of the Council shall be in the name of the Council.

8.3 All borrowings shall be effected in the name of the Council.

8.4 All investment certificates and other documents relating thereto shall be retained in the custody of the RFO.

9 Income

9.1 The collection of all sums due to the Council shall be the responsibility of and under the supervision of the RFO.

- 9.2 Particulars of all charges to be made for work done, services rendered or goods supplied shall be notified to the RFO and the RFO shall be ultimately responsible for the collection of all accounts due to the Council.
- 9.3 The Council will review all fees and charges annually, following a report of the Clerk.
- 9.4 Any bad debts shall be reported to the F&BD Committee.
- 9.5 All sums received on behalf of the Council shall be deposited with the Council's bankers with such frequency as the RFO considers necessary.
- 9.6 A reference to the related debt, or otherwise, indicating the origin of each cheque, shall be entered on the paying-in slip.
- 9.7 Personal cheques shall not be cashed out of money held on behalf of the Council.

10 **Orders for Work, Goods and Services**

- 10.1 An official order or letter shall be issued for all work, goods and services unless a formal contract is to be prepared or an official order would be inappropriate e.g. petty cash purchases. Copies of the orders issued shall be maintained.
- 10.2 Order books shall be controlled by the RFO.
- 10.3 All officers are responsible for obtaining value for money at all times. An officer issuing an official order is to ensure as far as reasonable and practicable that the best available terms are obtained in respect of each transaction.

11 **Contracts**

- 11.1 Procedures as to the contracts are laid down in the Council's standing orders as follows:
- (a) Every contract whether made by the Council or by a Committee to which the power of making contracts has been delegated shall comply with these standing orders, and no exception from any of the following provisions of these standing orders shall be made otherwise than by direction of the Council or in an emergency by such a Committee as aforesaid provided that these standing orders shall not apply to contracts which relate to items (i) to (v) below:
- (i) for the supply of gas, electricity, water, sewerage and telephone services.
- (ii) for specialist services such as are provided by solicitors, accountants, surveyors and planning consultants.
- (iii) for work to be executed or goods or materials to be supplied which consist of repairs to or parts for existing machinery or equipment or plant.
- (iv) for work to be executed or goods or materials to be supplied which constitute an extension of an existing contract by the Council.

- (v) for goods or materials proposed to be purchased which are proprietary articles and/or which are sold only at a fixed price.
- (b) Where it is intended to enter into a contract:
 - (i) exceeding £500 in value for the supply of goods or materials or for the execution of works or specialist services other than such goods, materials, works or specialist services as are excepted as set out in paragraph (a) the Clerk shall invite tenders from at least two firms.
 - (ii) for expenditures of £500 or less in value the Chairman of the spending committee or his appointed Vice-Chairman together with the Clerk or the duly authorised deputy shall have executive power.
- (c) When applications are made to waive standing orders relating to contracts to enable a tender to be negotiated without competition the reason shall be embodied in a recommendation to the Council.
- (d) Every exception made by a committee to which power of making contracts has been delegated shall be reported to the Council and the report shall specify the emergency by which the exception shall have been justified.
- (e) Such invitation to tender shall state the general nature of the intended contract and the Clerk shall obtain the necessary technical assistance to prepare a specification in the appropriate cases. The invitation shall in addition state that tenders must be addressed to the Clerk and the last date by which such tenders should reach the Clerk in the ordinary course of post. Each tendering firm shall be supplied with a specially marked envelope in which the tender is to be sealed and remain sealed until the prescribed date for opening tenders for that contract.
- (f) All sealed tenders shall be opened at the same time on the prescribed date by the Clerk or the properly authorised deputy in the presence of at least one Member of the Council.
- (g) If less than two tenders are received for contracts valued above £500 or if all the tenders are identical the Council may make such arrangements as it thinks fit for procuring the goods or materials or executing the works.
- (h) Any invitation to tender issued under this standing order shall contain a statement of the effect of standing order No. 75.
- (i) The Council shall not be obliged to accept the lowest or any tender.

12 Payments under Contracts for Building or Other Construction Works

- 12.1 Payments on account of the contract sum shall be made within the time specified in the contract by the RFO upon authorised certificates of the architect or other consultants engaged to supervise the contract.
- 12.2 Where contracts provide for payment by instalments the RFO shall maintain a record of all such payments. In any case when it is estimated that the total cost of work carried out under a contract, excluding fluctuation clauses, will exceed the

contract sum by 5% or more a report shall be submitted to the appropriate Committee.

- 12.3 Any variation to a contract or addition to or omission from a contract must be approved by the Clerk in writing, the appropriate Committee being informed where the final cost is likely to exceed the financial provision.

13 Properties and Estates

- 13.1 The Clerk shall make appropriate arrangements for the custody of all title deeds of properties owned by the Council. The RFO shall ensure that a record is maintained of all properties owned by the Council, recording the location, extent, plan, reference, purchase details, nature of the interest, tenancies granted, rents payable and purpose for which held in accordance with regulation 4(3)(b) of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 1996.

- 13.2 No property shall be sold, leased or otherwise disposed of without the authority of the Council, save where the estimated value of any one item does not exceed £100.

14 Insurance

- 14.1 The RFO shall effect all insurances and negotiate all claims on the Council's insurers in consultation with the Clerk.

- 14.2 The Clerk shall give prompt notification to the RFO of all new risks, properties or vehicles which require to be insured and of any alterations affecting existing insurances.

- 14.3 The RFO shall keep a record of all insurances effected by the Council and the property and risks covered thereby and annually review it.

- 14.4 The RFO shall be notified of any loss liability or damage or of any event likely to lead to a claim.

- 14.5 All appropriate employees of the Council shall be included in a suitable fidelity guarantee insurance.

15 Review of Financial Regulations

- 15.1 It shall be the duty of the F&BD Committee to review the financial regulations of the Council from time to time and to make such recommendations to the Council as the Committee considers are required.