

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE FINANCE AND BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE held on 23 April 2012 in the Uniform Groups' Headquarters, Fiddlers Lane, Saughall

In attendance: Councillor Mrs K Ford
Councillor RK Shukla
Councillor A Warrington
Councillor Mrs JM Young
Councillor P Young

Invited Members: Councillor WI Humphrey
Councillor Mrs J Johnson

Bob Salisbury, Internal Auditor

17. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN FOR THE MEETING

RESOLVED:

That in the absence of the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Committee Councillor Mrs JM Young be elected Chairman for the meeting.

18. APOLOGIES FOR AUTHORISED ABSENCE

Apologies for authorised absence were received from Councillors DF Holman and B Kerr.

19. CODE OF CONDUCT – DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were received.

20. MINUTES

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the meetings of the Committee held on 29 February and 12 March 2012 be confirmed as a correct record.

21. ACCOUNTS

(a) Audit of Accounts 2011/12

It was reported that the 2011/12 Accounts had been prepared and were now ready for signature and would be handed to the Internal Auditor, Mr B Salisbury so that he could carry out his audit before the External Audit.

RESOLVED:

That the Chairman and the Clerk be requested to sign the Accounts for the 2011/12 Financial Year.

- (b) Cheshire Association of Local Councils' Parish Council Audit 2012 on Thursday, 5 April 2012, 2 – 4pm at Tarvin Community Centre

Mr B Salisbury reported that he had attended this training event and there was nothing new to report regarding accounting processes. However, the Audit Commission would be abolished in the summer and Parish Councils' External Auditor's work would be undertaken by various private accountants. The Council would be informed of the details of its new External Auditor. The cost was not expected to increase under the new arrangements.

- (c) Annual Subscriptions

The Committee considered the costs of continuing to be a member of the following organisations:

- Cheshire Community Action – Annual Membership Fee is £50
- Cheshire County Playing Fields Association – Affiliation Fee is £20
- Cheshire Association of Local Councils – Affiliation Fee £735.30, 1-3 copies of Local Council Review - £13.50 each.

RESOLVED:

That the Council remain a member of the above organisations and the costs of so doing so be noted.

- (d) Payments made since the meeting of the Committee held on 29 February 2012:

RESOLVED:

That the following payments be approved:

<u>Financial Year 2011/2012</u>	<u>£</u>	<u>Cheque No</u>
Mr R Hipkiss (Litter Picking)	541.67	102537
Mrs S Hudspeth (Expenses)	35.00	102538
Mrs S Hudspeth (Salary)	486.00	102539
Morrall Play Solutions (Play Equipment Inspection)	81.00	102540
Mr and Mrs G Dutton (Hedge cutting)	240.00	102542
Mr R Hipkiss (litter Picking)	541.67	102544
<u>Financial Year 2012/2013</u>	<u>£</u>	<u>Cheque No</u>
Vernon Institute Management Committee (Half cost of submitting the planning application)	1850.00	102541
HM Revenues and Customs	1239.45	102543
Massey and Harris (Engineering) Ltd (Swing repairs –seats and chains)	528.00	102545
Cheshire West and Chester Council (License Fee – Music in the Park)	21.00	102546
Mrs S Hudspeth (Salary)	489.84	102547
Cheshire Association of Local Council	5.00	102548
Mrs S Hudspeth (Expenses) (Audit Update Event – Bob Salisbury)	63.99	102549
Mrs JM Young (Rabbit guards for trees)	10.00	102550

The Clerk reported that one of the Council's loans through the Public Works Loan Board (Loan Number 486673) would be paid off on 14 May 2012.

(e) Receipts

Precept £63,278

(f) Cash to Bank Reconciliation

RESOLVED:

That the contents be noted.

22. THE NEW STANDARDS REGIME

RESOLVED:

The Clerk reported that the Monitoring Officer at Cheshire West and Chester Council had not informed her of any progress he had made in respect of this. The current regime would end on 30 June 2012.

RESOLVED:

That the position be noted and hopefully there would be some progress to report to the Committee's June 2012 meeting.

23. REVIEW OF THE CONDUCT OF COUNCIL BUSINESS

The Council had implemented a new decision making process from the beginning of the 2011/12 Municipal Year. The aim of new process was to make the Council more efficient and effective in the way it conducted its business.

This process was reviewed at the Council meeting on 7 November 2011 when some minor changes were made. It was then agreed that the process would be reviewed again in six months time or sooner if deemed necessary. (Minute No. 171 refers.)

Consequently, the Committee was asked to review the processes currently in place and make any recommendations to the Council to bring about improvements, as appropriate.

The Clerk reminded Members that one of the aims of modernising the way the Council conducted its business was to free up time to spend on special projects such as attracting external funding, putting together a new Parish Plan and taking the lead on community events. This would involve Panel or Working Party meetings which were informal in nature and not subject to Access to Information regulations. Formal Minutes would not be required but there would be time spent in producing noticeable outputs in the form of documents, actions etc.

However, what the Council now had in place were more formal Committee meetings that tended to be long, drawn out and very time consuming. Some Members were confused over what matter would be considered by which

Committee. There had also been some duplication e.g. green belt issues and some Members felt they were missing out and were not being kept up to speed with Council business.

The Clerk proposed that a way forward could be revert back to one Council meeting and one Planning Committee meeting each month and to reserve an evening or two as necessary to meet in Panel or in Working Party form to work on specific projects.

RESOLVED:

That the Council be **RECOMMENDED** to discuss how the Council conducts its business and decide whether any improvements can be made to deliver satisfactory outputs.

24. PARISH COUNCIL'S BUSINESS PLAN – ACTION LIST

It was six months since the Council had adopted the Business Plan and it was now time to review it in accordance with Council Minute No. 172.

RESOLVED:

That Members be requested to review the Business Plan and bring suggestions on how it can be improved and developed for consideration to the Committee's next meeting in June 2012.

25. IMPROVING COMMUNICATIONS – SOCIAL NETWORKING

RESOLVED:

That as Councillor DF Holman is not in attendance at the meeting to report on progress being made by the University of Chester's Informatics Centre who has been commissioned to make website improvements and provide a vertical display board, this item be deferred to the Committee's next meeting in June 2012.

26. EXTERNAL FUNDING FOR COMMUNITY PROJECTS

Councillor Mrs K Ford had introduced this item of business at the Committee's meeting held on 29 February 2012. Since then it had been referred to the Council. It was noted that the Council would consider this matter at its next meeting scheduled for 15 May 2012.

27. COMPETITION – PROJECTS TO COMMEMORATE THE QUEEN'S DIAMOND JUBILEE

The competition had been advertised in the February 2012 Parish Council Newsletter. Community Groups had been invited to submit their project ideas by 31 March 2012.

The Clerk reported that two organisations had submitted their project ideas within the timescale laid down as follows:

- (a) The Vernon Institute Management Committee has applied for £500 to provide Diamond Jubilee Planters and flowers outside the entrance to the Vernon Institute. An email dated 31 March 2012 was attached to the agenda from Mr Chris Harman, Chair.
- (b) All Saints Parochial Church Council has applied for £500 to provide a gateway into 'The Willowbeds.' A letter dated 25 March 2012 was attached from Mr John Hallas, Church Warden.

Councillor Mrs JM Young informed that a third organisation had submitted its project ideas just before this meeting as follows:

- (c) Saughall Youth Club has applied for £500 to provide something to benefit the young people of the village. This could be the purchase of a new pool table or a couple of bench seats. A letter dated 23 April 2012 was read out from Rachel Lowe, Treasurer.

The Committee considered these applications for funding in detail.

RESOLVED:

That the Council be **RECOMMENDED** to award each of the three organisations detailed above £300 each to help them to bring their ideas to fruition in order to commemorate the Queen's Diamond Jubilee.

28. FUTURE PROJECTS/IDEAS

The Committee was requested to:

- (a) keep the Council's future priorities that fell within its remit, as listed below, under review;
 - (b) identify any new priorities; and
 - (c) take any action considered appropriate.
- **Tarmac path beside the Uniform Groups' Headquarters**
To consider any quotations for the work required that have been received. No further action is being taken on this at the current time.
 - **Fundraising for Community Projects**
A Panel to oversee this fundraising initiative is to be established.
 - **Community Action Projects (CAP)**
 - (a) A Participatory Budget Scheme (as a pump primer) was to be drawn up to launch the CAP. No provision was specifically made in the Council's 2012/13 Budget for this purpose. It was noted that Competition – Projects To Commemorate The Queen's Diamond Jubilee (Minute No. 27 above refers) is a form of Participatory Budgeting.
 - (b) To seek alternative funding sources and prepare funding applications to exploit external funding opportunities that may arise e.g. proposed Community Investment Champions initiative.

- (c) There was £2000 in the Council's 2012/13 Budget for Community Action Projects.
- (d) An advert was placed in the February 2012 edition of the Parish 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. (Item No. 10 on the agenda.)
- (e) To discuss the arrangements for the proposed Social Evening when the funding will be distributed to the successful applicants. This is to be considered at a Special meeting of the Committee on Monday, 12 March 2012.

- **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

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

- (b) Proposed Sports Pavilion

Members visited Neston Cricket Club at Parkgate on 28 November 2011.

This proposal is to be explored at the Council's Cheese and Wine Evening to be held after the Annual Parish Assembly on Monday, 30 April 2012.

- (c) Skate Park/Folding Ramp

The PCSO has asked Councillor Mrs K Ford to provide a copy of the quotations she has acquired.

- **The Queen's Diamond Jubilee**

The Council has put £2000 a side out of its contingencies to help support the planned community event, "Picnic in the Park" on Monday, 4 June 2012 in the Golden Jubilee Park, being organised to celebrate the Queen's Diamond Jubilee. Arrangements for the event are well advanced.

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.

12. SPECIAL MEETING OF THE COMMITTEE

RESOLVED:

That a Special meeting of the Committee be held to consider quotations received for goods and works the Council requires and to agree arrangements and format of the Annual Parish Assembly scheduled for the evening of Monday, 30 April 2012 at the Vernon Institute.