

**MINUTES of a meeting of the POLICY, RESOURCES & FINANCE COMMITTEE held on MONDAY 28<sup>th</sup> November 2011 in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, East Street, Wareham at 7.00 p.m.**

**Present:** Councillors D Budd, K Critchley (Chairman), Mrs S Elmes (Vice Chairman), K Green, Mrs L Kenyon, Mr M Russell, Mrs C Turner

Officer present: Mr R Curtis, Town Clerk

The Chairman remarked that the Finance Administrator was absent from the meeting due to a recent illness and it was hoped that he would be back in time for the budget setting meeting on 5<sup>th</sup> December. The Committee expressed their good wishes for a speedy recovery to be sent to Mr Jones.

56. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION TIME** - an opportunity for members of the public to raise issues of concern or interest e.g. ask a question, make a comment or statement (limited to 15 minutes maximum, 3 minutes per speaker).

No members of the public were present.

57. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Mrs N Wiggins, detained in London on business, and Mrs J Spooner.

58. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor Mrs S Elmes declared a personal and prejudicial interest in discussion on a potential donation to the Wareham and District Development Trust (item 8 on the agenda) in her capacity as a Trustee of that body.

59. **CONFIRMATION OF THE MINUTES of the Policy, Resources & Finance Committee Meeting held on 17<sup>th</sup> October 2011**

The minutes of the meeting held on 17<sup>th</sup> October 2011 were agreed as a correct record of the meeting and signed by the Chairman.

60. **MATTERS ARISING from the Minutes of the Meeting held on 17<sup>th</sup> October 2011**

- A one year contract had been negotiated with N-Power for supply of electricity by the Finance Administrator and £100 off the first invoice had been offered and accepted.
- Rugby Club rent review – committee agreed with Town Clerk that this matter had been delayed unduly awaiting action from the Club chairman, there was to be no negotiation, the review had been done in April 2011 and the club notified; any arrears due were to be paid and arrangements put in place for the collection of future rent due i.e. an increase of £250 per annum on the previous rental of £1800 per annum.
- CAB/Town band at 2 Mill Lane premises – Councillor Kenyon gave an update on accommodation issues following a more hopeful meeting with band representatives and the possibility of suitable premises for the band becoming available at Wareham Middle School following the

creation of a Music and Arts Centre for Purbeck School use at the Middle School site under plans for school re-organisation in Wareham. The Town Clerk would be writing to the Chairman of Governors and the Town Band Chairman on this matter.

61. **REPORT OF UP TO DATE EXPENDITURE AND INCOME AGAINST BUDGET, PAYMENT OF ACCOUNTS (INCLUDING URGENT PAYMENTS), ACKNOWLEDGEMENT BY MEMBERS AND INSTRUCTION TO SIGNATORIES TO SIGN CHEQUES**

Due to the Finance Administrator's very recent illness and his absence from the office at short notice, the Town Clerk informed the committee that it had not been possible to prepare a budget report. There were no urgent payments that needed to be paid.

**RESOLVED** that the situation with the Finance Administrator be noted and monitored, the Chairman kept informed and any forthcoming urgent payments be processed in line with the Council's Financial Regulations as normal.

62. **INTERNAL AUDIT – AUDITOR'S REPORT**

The committee considered the comments of the Internal Auditor following his last visit on 25<sup>th</sup> October 2011. The comments were of a minor nature, as attached to the agenda. Following discussion, it was

**RESOLVED**

- (a) that the Internal Auditor's report dated 25<sup>th</sup> October 2011 be noted.
- (b) that where money received relates to an invoice, the invoice number be quoted on the copy receipt and the copy invoice be annotated with the receipt number and date.
- (c) that the Farmers Market pays the exact amount due on every occasion and, as recommended, the Council sets a rate for 2012/13 which makes for ease of calculation i.e. a rounded up amount.

Councillor Mrs S Elmes declared a personal and prejudicial interest in part (a) of the following item and left the room during discussion on this matter.

63. **DONATIONS 2011**

The committee considered applications for grants (donations) under various powers available to parish and town councils. From a total budget of £1800 at the beginning of the financial year, a total of £1400 was remaining following donations of £400 in June 2011. Discussion took place on the following applications:

- (a) Wareham and District Development Trust

**RESOLVED** that this request be deferred pending the receipt of further information regarding its intended use at the Town Pound and the applicant be informed.

Councillor Mrs S Elmes rejoined the meeting at this point.

Following further discussion it was:

**RESOLVED** that donations as follows be given to the following applicants under the Council's powers under Section 137 of the Local Government Act 1972:

- (b) Dorset Blind Association - £100
- (c) Anglebury Court - £75 and the offer of help in obtaining a free Christmas tree by Councillor M Russell
- (d) Victim Support - £100
- (e) Wareham Christmas Lights Committee - £500
- (f) Wareham Father Christmas Committee - £500

Total: £1275, leaving £125 remaining.

64. **SUPERFAST BROADBAND for DORSET including FUNDING ARRANGEMENTS**

This matter had been deferred from a Council meeting held on 20<sup>th</sup> September 2011, when it was understood that Dorset County Council was seeking a contribution in match funding of approximately £10 million from Parish Precepts throughout Dorset to match funding allocations announced for Broadband Delivery UK (BDUK) in August 2011 by the government.

The Town Clerk gave an update on the delivery of superfast broadband for Dorset following a meeting on this subject on 10<sup>th</sup> November 2011 attended by the DAPTC Chief Executive. The main points were as follows:

- Government priority was to stimulate private sector investment to deliver the best superfast broadband network in Europe together with increased coverage across the UK by 2015.
- Funding allocated from the Dept. of Culture, Media and Sport would be used to stimulate investment in broadband rollout in those areas where commercial investments alone will not deliver, with improved accessibility of broadband services in those areas.
- Superfast broad was defined as greater than 24 mbp/s by BDUK.
- £9.4 million had been 'ring-fenced' for Dorset in August 2011 – subject to approval by BDUK of an acceptable local broadband plan.
- Funding would not cover the 'final mile connection' to the individual premises; this remained the responsibility of the internet provider and the customer.
- Dorset would need to provide a minimum of £10 million capital match funding over the two financial years 2012/13 and 2013/14.
- Proposals focused on the 'white areas' in Dorset, where the market would not provide.
- Proposed match funding was to be split 2/3<sup>rd</sup> to Tier 1 authorities (£6.665 million) and 1/3<sup>rd</sup> to Tier 2 authorities (£3.335 million).
- If agreed, there was to be *no* precept from town and parish councils (i.e. Tier 3) required.

- The role for town and parish councils was seen as demand registration – essential for rural businesses and economy, with a focus on the benefits for the type of user e.g. health care, education, home working.
- BDUK would only deal with Tier 1 authorities, and Dorset County Council would act as the lead authority and set up a team to deliver the project.
- Access to funding required the submission of a Local Broadband Plan.

Next steps were to ensure that a Project Board was appointed which had been achieved in November 2011 by Dorset County Council with sponsor David Jenkins and Chief Officers across the County plus representatives from Dorset Community Action and Dorset Digital Task Force. The Project Board had been tasked to submit a local broadband plan and appoint a project team leader as soon as possible - with local broadband approved by BDUK in March 2012 and demand stimulation and registration from March to November 2012. The plan would be placed into the BDUK tender framework for roll out in Nov/Dec 2012 with completion set for 2014/15.

Whilst this work was going on, the project team would need to address the 'last mile' issue working with all stakeholders, including town/parish councils, since it was essential to connect to the final 10% of hard to reach properties. DAPTC/community groups including parish/town councils could help to stimulate demand and find local investment including precepts, investments into a community fund or by buying local bonds to close the gap so that there was a balance between cost and return. This was unlikely, however, to see a huge investment similar to the BDUK/DCC/LA fund.

The Chairman thanked the Town Clerk for his report. It was:

**RESOLVED** that the update on superfast broadband delivery for Dorset be noted and that the aims of Broadband Delivery UK be supported.

65. **POLICY - A FRAMES CONTROL**

Councillor Mrs S Elmes informed the committee that she understood that the Chairman of the Wareham Chamber of Trade had written to the members of the Chamber on this subject following his attendance at the last meeting. She had heard nothing from him, however, and there had been no meeting with the Chamber as proposed. The Town Clerk confirmed that he had also not been notified of a meeting date by the Chamber. Following discussion it was:

**RESOLVED** that a letter be written to the Chairman of the Wareham Chamber of Commerce informing him that if a meeting with Councillor Elmes and the Town Clerk was not arranged as wished for by the Chamber of Commerce by the end of the year then the Town Council would approach Dorset County Council and seek permission to initiate a scheme for local control of A frames and other potential obstructions on the public footway in Wareham town centre.

66. **HISTORICAL ITEMS – POLICY ON DISPOSAL or RETENTION**

Two historical items had been in the Town Council’s possession for many years and recently re-discovered in storage. These items were shown by the Town Clerk to the committee and consisted of:

- (a) a detailed map of Wareham Army Camp dating from 20<sup>th</sup> April 1915 and
- (b) a framed and signed oath of the Mayor of Wareham, Charles Hill dating from 1755 and witnessed by Burgess (Councillor) William Filliter, six times Mayor himself.

The committee considered that these were important documents, should not be disposed of to any other body and should be retained by the Town Council, subject to being properly preserved and protected. It was

**RESOLVED** that it be delegated to the Town Clerk to contact the Dorset History Centre and seek specialist advice on preservation methods for the two items, with a view to preserving and framing them for retention at Wareham Town Council for posterity.

67. **EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

**RESOLVED** that under the terms of Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and members of the public be excluded from the remainder of the meeting by Resolution on the grounds that it may involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 8 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the said Act.

68. **SAFE STORAGE OF TOWN COUNCIL VALUABLE ITEMS**

The Chairman gave an update on this matter following details submitted at the last meeting. The Council’s insurance company had given their opinion on three possible safes, an approved model under delegated arrangements had been ordered and delivery was awaited. A secure position had been identified, space had been cleared and details were given, together with access arrangements for the new safe, which would be on a ‘need to know’ basis.

**RESOLVED** that the Chairman’s report on this matter be noted with satisfaction.

69. **ITEMS CONSIDERED URGENT BY THE CHAIRMAN**

Nil.

70. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

It was noted that the date of the next meeting was scheduled for Monday **5<sup>th</sup> DECEMBER 2011 at 9.30 A.M** - a budget setting meeting only.

The meeting finished at 8.20 pm.

..... Chairman