

MINUTES of a meeting of the POLICY, RESOURCES & FINANCE COMMITTEE held on WEDNESDAY 11th JANUARY 2012 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), Mrs L Kenyon, M Russell, Mrs J Spooner, Mrs C Turner, Mrs N Wiggins.

Officers: Mr R Curtis, Town Clerk
 Mr R Jones, Finance Administrator

77. 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).

There were no members of the public present at the meeting.

78. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor K Green.

79. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest

80. CONFIRMATION OF THE MINUTES of the Policy, Resources & Finance Committee Meeting held on 28th November 2011 and 5th December 2011.

The minutes of the meetings held on 28th November 2011 and 5th December 2011 were confirmed as a correct record of the meetings and signed by the Chairman, with the addition of the following amendments:

- 28th November, Minute 64, line 3: delete 'in', insert 'towards'.

81. MATTERS ARISING from the Minutes of the Meetings held on 28th November 2011 and 5th December 2011

28th November 2011 meeting:

- Citizens Advice Bureau: Town Clerk had written to Chairman of the Town Band suggesting contact with Chairman of Governors of the Purbeck School with a view to requesting that premises at the Wareham Middle School site (proposed new community arts and education centre) be made available from July 2013 onwards i.e. when that site was planned to be incorporated into Purbeck School under current schools reorganization in Dorset. It was agreed that the Clerk would send a copy of this letter to the Chairman of Governors and that the Citizens Advice Bureau be included as a permanent agenda item on the committee's agenda.

5th December 2011 meeting:

- There was now a new figure for the Precept of £111,211 based on the Band D rate of Council Tax that had now been agreed by Purbeck District Council. This figure had been submitted by the Town Clerk to the District Council.
- Car park fees – discussed at Amenities committee meeting on 4th January. Car park blocked drain problem during very wet weather discussed, Town Clerk to liaise with Lengthsman who can investigate with drain rods and report back on any further action needed.

82. 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

Members received an up to date budget report dated 11th January 2012, plus a schedule of urgent payments and accounts/invoices were presented. The Finance Administrator explained various details in the budget report including the following matters:

- Anticipated loss of income due to the monthly Antiques Fair having cancelled their bookings in the Corn Exchange. Estimated loss of £1100 per annum.
- Lengthsman grant variance £3,177.50.
- Current healthy balance for salaries.
- Election expenses – not yet billed by District Council.
- Christmas reception – error had been made by suppliers of food, leading to a shortage at the event and further supplies being obtained locally on the night. Cost had been reimbursed, around £280.

There was a discussion on a quotation received for a possible new platform type of chairlift to replace the existing chairlift which continued to give problems. Plans for the Town Hall were requested by Councillor Budd, and the Town Clerk agreed to supply plan from the file records.

It was proposed by Councillor Budd, seconded by Councillor Russell and

RESOLVED that the Budget Report of 11th January 2012 be noted and accepted, accounts for payment in the sum of £22669.17, of which £7233.30 were urgent payments, be approved and signatories instructed to sign cheques in payment of this sum

83. ELECTRICITY SUPPLY – SPORTS PAVILION

The committee was requested to formally note a decision to change to NPower on expiry of the current British Gas contract in April 2012. The Finance Administrator explained that notice had been given to British Gas and the new supplier would be £80 cheaper per annum. A 'welcome' credit of £100 had been received from NPower.

RESOLVED that the decision to change electricity suppliers to NPower for supply to the sports pavilion be noted.

84. COUNCIL'S RISK ASSESSMENT 2011/2012

The Committee scrutinised a proposed Risk Assessment document i.e. in terms of the Council's financial risk assessment only. Matters arising:

Table 1: 1. Risk Identification: insurance cover: 2: Internal controls:

- Section 2.3, annual review of risk and the adequacy of cover. Noted that the formal, legal requirement to do this had been discontinued, however it was still an option and could be done by 31st March 2012 under arrangements for a review of internal effectiveness. Town Clerk to arrange a review with Chairman/Vice Chairman in due course.
- Section 2.4, testing of robustness of insurance providers. Noted that Council had changed insurance suppliers to AVIVA, a reputable and internationally recognized company, in December 2009.

Table 2: Risk Identification – buying in of specialist services:

- Sections 1.1, 1.5, 1.6 comments noted.

Table 3: Risk identification: do we:

- Sections 1.6, 1.7, 1.11 comments noted.

Table 3 – internal controls:

- Sections 2.2, and 2.10 comments noted.
- Section 2.9 –changed from 'No' to 'Yes' – there were procedures to deal with enquiries from the public, although no formal documentation produced as in a large District or County Council organisation.

Table 3: Internal audit assurance:

- Section 3.5 – testing of disclosures – to be looked at by review team when considering effectiveness of internal audit review. Date to be agreed with Chair/Vice Chair. Action: Town Clerk.

RECOMMENDATION that the Risk Assessment document as amended be noted and accepted by Wareham Town Council at its next meeting in accordance with auditing requirements.

Councillor Mrs Elmes declared an interest as a Trustee of the Wareham and District Development Trust and left the meeting at 8.00 pm, taking no part in the ensuing discussion for the following item on a possible donation to the Trust:

85. DONATIONS 2011/2012

The Council considered a deferred application for a donation (under various powers available to parish and town councils) from Wareham and District Development Trust following information received regarding the Town Pound. Further details were given at the meeting. Following a proposed internal shift of funding for the cost of RBL wreaths (£100) to the correct budget line, the Finance Administrator explained that there was potentially £125 remaining in the donations budget, rather than £25. Following a proposal from Councillor Budd, seconded by Councillor Mrs Kenyon, it was:

RESOLVED that £100 be transferred back to the donations budget following a correction and re-allocation of costs of the Royal British Legion wreaths for Remembrance Sunday, and that a donation of £100 be given to the Wareham and District Development Trust in connection with a community project at the Town Pound.

Councillor Mrs Elmes re-joined the meeting.

In further discussion, it was suggested that a possible donation to the newly formed Diamond Jubilee Working Party should be put on the agenda for the next meeting, and this was agreed (see Minute 89).

86. COUNCIL CALENDAR OF MEETINGS 2012/2013

A review of the proposed Calendar of Meetings for 2012/2013 Civic Year, delegated to the Committee from the Town Council meeting on 12th December was undertaken. Following discussion regarding certain District Council meetings which may affect the proposed calendar in terms of attendance of those Town Councillors who were also District Councillors, it was:

RESOLVED that a small group consisting of Councillors D Budd and K Critchley be delegated to further review and refine the proposed calendar for re-submission to Town Council at its next meeting on 24th January 2012.

87. POLICY - A FRAMES CONTROL

The Town Clerk and Councillor Mrs Elmes gave an update on liaison with the Chamber of Trade regarding a meeting, which had not yet been held, to discuss A-frame problems and strategy in the town. Recent Improvements had been noted, however. Members were informed that he was awaiting the outcome of a request for a meeting with a senior County Council officer to discuss enforcement policy and the possibility of a delegated scheme with the Town Council to control A-frames and he would report back to a future meeting.

RESOLVED that the report be noted and that a letter be sent to the Chairman of the Wareham Chamber of Trade to update him on this matter and to inform him of the Council's satisfaction with recent improvements to the street scene.

88. HISTORICAL ITEMS – WAREHAM SAXON SWORD

Members discussed the possible return of the remains of a Saxon Sword found in the River Frome at Wareham in 1927, currently held at the Dorset County Museum, for display in the Wareham Town Museum.

The Town Clerk reported that he had viewed the sword on a recent trip to the Museum whilst on leave. The display mentioned that the sword contained the words 'this belongs to' on one side of its crossguard and 'Wareham' on the other, in Old English. The Museum Committee had already discussed this matter and was also in favour of displaying the sword, and he understood that the best way forward was to request a 'temporary loan' of this item to the Town Museum. It was unanimously agreed and:

RECOMMENDED that a request be made to the Dorset County Museum for the temporary loan of a Saxon sword discovered in the River Frome at Wareham in 1927 to the Wareham Town Museum.

89. ITEMS CONSIDERED URGENT BY THE CHAIRMAN (for report or for next agenda only)

Item on possible donation to Diamond Jubilee Working Party to be put on next committee agenda.

90. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was noted that the date of the next meeting was scheduled for **Wednesday 22nd February at 7.00 pm.**

Meeting closed at 8.37 pm.

..... Chairman