

**MINUTES of a meeting of the POLICY, RESOURCES & FINANCE COMMITTEE held on MONDAY 5<sup>th</sup> SEPTEMBER 2011 in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, East Street, Wareham at 7.00 p.m**

Present: Councillor D Budd, Councillor K Critchley (Chairman), Councillor Mrs S Elmes (Vice Chairman), Councillor K Green, Councillor Mrs L Kenyon, Councillor M Russell, Councillor Mrs J Spooner, Councillor Mrs C Turner, Councillor Mrs N Wiggins.

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

19. **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).

Mr M Howlett, Chairman of Wareham Chamber of Trade, attended the meeting and referred to the need for discussions with the Chamber on the agenda item concerning a possible scheme to control A-frames in the town centre. This was noted by the Chairman for inclusion in discussion on the agenda item.

20. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**  
Nil apologies for absence – all Members present.

21. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**  
Councillors K Green, K Critchley, Mrs J Spooner, and Mrs N Wiggins all declared a personal interest in any discussion on the Wareham Burials Joint Committee. It was noted, however, that they had been appointed by the Town Council as their representatives on that body.

Councillor Mrs Elmes declared a personal interest regarding a payment to Mr H Elmes for Museum books.

22. **CONFIRMATION OF THE MINUTES of the Policy, Resources & Finance Committee Meeting held on 25<sup>th</sup> July 2011**  
The Minutes of the meeting held on 25<sup>th</sup> July 2011 were agreed as a true and accurate record of the meeting and signed by the Chairman subject to the following amendments:

Minute 25: line 4 – insert ‘national’ after ‘large-scale’.

23. **MATTERS ARISING from the Minutes of the Meeting held on 25<sup>th</sup> July 2011**

Minute 22 – bullet point, line 4: insert ‘Councillor Mrs’ before ‘N.Wiggins’.  
Minute 23 - The Town Clerk had not yet been able to arrange a visit to Council properties for Members; he hoped to do this in early October and would advise accordingly.

Minute 24 – the Finance Administrator clarified that direct debit payments to BNP Paribas were the quarterly charge for the photocopier rental. The monthly invoices from Clarity Copiers were their charges per sheet.

Minute 27: clarified that any town councillor may sit in on any meeting with the exception of the Human Resources Panel.

The Town Clerk noted a point raised on the Adopt-A-Payphone Scheme regarding lighting of the kiosk, for investigation.

24. **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**

The Committee received an up to date Budget Report dated 1<sup>st</sup> September for all Committees and accounts for payment. The Finance Administrator did a detailed summary of the report for Members, page by page. It was clarified that the Recreation Ground football pitch refurbishment costs of £510.90 carried out by Dorset Works was authorised by the Premises Working Party. It was proposed by Councillor Mrs S Elmes seconded by Councillor K Green and

**RESOLVED** that accounts for payment in the sum of £64,189.46 be approved and signatories instructed to sign cheques in payment of this sum and that the payment for the football pitch refurbishment of £510.90 be deducted from General Reserves, no budget having been set this financial year for this urgent item.

25. **PAST MAYOR'S BADGES**

Following a refund approved by Town Council at last meeting on 8<sup>th</sup> August, Members considered which budget line to allocate two refunds for payment to the individuals concerned plus one other possible payment to the Sergeant at Mace with regard to the late Mr Jack Spiller. It was

**RESOLVED** that funding for this item be deducted from General Reserves.

26. **A-FRAMES – WAREHAM TOWN CENTRE**

The Town Clerk reported on the possibility of instigating a delegated agreement with Dorset County Council on the control of A-frames and other items on the public footway in Wareham town centre. He also referred to the possibility of enforcement by Purbeck District Council's Planning Enforcement Officer, although his duties covered the whole of Purbeck and it may not be practical. Legislation was available under the Highways Act 1980 and the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisement Regulations) 2007. It was agreed, however, that although there were problems in certain areas, a 'heavy handed' approach was not needed and any scheme should be as a result of consultations, in the first instance, with the Wareham Chamber of Trade.

**RESOLVED** that the Town Clerk approach the Wareham Chamber of Trade for its views on a scheme to control A-frames and other potential obstructions in the streets.

27. **LENGTHSMAN - CONTRIBUTION TO WAREHAM IN BLOOM and LONG TERM FUNDING**

**(a) To consider financial recognition by the Wareham in Bloom Committee e.g. apportioning of staff costs under its own budget, for work undertaken by the Lengthsman leading up to the town's judging in recent regional and national competitions.**

Councillor Mrs S Elmes emphasised that, according to the Lengthsman's job description, no work was undertaken for Wareham in Bloom. All efforts to control weeds, pick up litter, deal with road sweeping, grass cutting, verges and maintenance of open spaces etc were on behalf of the town of Wareham and were jobs that were being partly financed by Dorset County Council under the Lengthsman scheme adopted in May 2011. It was understandable, that he may be directed to areas of the town that needed attention in summer by Wareham in Bloom but this was not his primary role.

During discussion, the Chairman referred to Wareham in Bloom as being a committee of the Council and it not being appropriate for one committee to donate funding to another committee, which may throw up a financial anomaly. To apportion staff costs may set a precedent and it would be difficult to control the process if it started and this was agreed by the committee.

Councillor Mrs L Kenyon referred to the possibility of purchasing a hand cart for the Lengthsman; she had researched costs and one could be obtained for around £300.

**RESOLVED** that there be no apportionment of staff costs for the Lengthsman by the Wareham in Bloom Committee and that the cost of a suitable hand cart be investigated and brought back to committee for consideration.

**(b) To flag up the need for long term funding of the Lengthsman scheme during the budget setting process later in the year.**

During discussion, reference was made to the possibility of commencing a rolling programme of set-aside funding for the future of the Lengthsman scheme, bearing in mind that current Dorset County Council funding of £10,000 per year was for three years only, from April 2011. It was agreed that the Council should endeavour to continue with the post after April 2014, due to its effectiveness and popularity with the public, and that ways should be found of replacing the County Council's funding.

**RESOLVED** that the possibility of setting aside funds in a rolling programme be brought forward at the committee's budget setting meeting later in the year together with the 'on costs' of employing the Lengsthman.

28. **ANNUAL RETURN of ACCOUNTS 2010/2011 and FIXED ASSETS**

The Committee received the Council's Fixed Assets for 2010/2011.

**RESOLVED** that the Fixed Assets for 2010/2011 be accepted and approved. The Finance Administrator explained the reasoning behind a revised figure in figure 9 in Section 1 of the Accounting statements ('total fixed assets and long term assets') in the Annual return of Accounts, this having been queried by the Council's external auditors. He explained that it was due to a change in accounting practice where the asset value had to be based upon historic cost rather than reinsurance value. This included property where the 2009/10 accounts value was to be used in the future.

A new figure of £2,805,613 had been inserted.

**RESOLVED** that the Finance Administrator's report be noted and accepted.

29. **FIXED DEPOSITS – LLOYDS TSB BANK**

The Committee considered a request for lodging a fixed deposit at the Bank. The Finance Administrator referred two blocks of money being available for investment, either from the Business Call account or from the National Savings Investment Account. Generally, only very low interest rates were obtainable however he had obtained details of a scheme giving a rate of up to 3% for a minimum of £50,000 invested over one year. In discussion, the committee felt that this should be pursued.

**RESOLVED** that the Finance Administrator pursue the best scheme possible to invest a minimum of £50,000 at a minimum of 3%, renewable after one year, and that he report back to committee with the results.

30. **WI-FI COVERAGE – CORN EXCHANGE**

The Finance Administrator reported on this matter, referring to the scheme provided by DAPTC some three years previously where IT equipment and a printer had been supplied free of charge in return for public access to free wi-fi internet coverage for three years which had now lapsed. The cost to continue this internet access would be around £240.00 per annum, at 'corporate' rates since rates set for individual subscribers were not available. Alternatively, this could be provided from the Council's existing server with a one off charge of £550 - £600. The question arose, however, did the Council wish to continue public access to the internet – which had to be in the Council Chamber for security reasons rather than the Corn Exchange, although wi-fi was available in that location for meetings if needed – or discontinue the system? Following discussion, it was

**RESOLVED** that the situation regarding WI-FI coverage be monitored but at this stage it be not re-provided at this stage, however if there were many queries from the public then it be brought back to committee for re-consideration at a later date.

31. **WAREHAM TOWN GUIDE**

The Council's former contract having expired, the Town Clerk reported on its renewal. Reference was made to the receipt of 10,000 free copies of the Guide for three editions over six years i.e. every two years commencing in June 2012. There was no cost to the taxpayer since text/photographs were supplied by the Council with the company administering the advertising campaign. Copies were delivered to local households, camping and caravan sites, tourist offices, hotels and guest houses and various other outlets to promote Wareham to Purbeck's visitors and boost local businesses. In discussion, the Committee agreed that the publishing company had given good service, there was a good liaison with the Town Council staff and there was no need to change current good practice. A Town Guide Working Party would need to be set up to plan the next edition and this would be requested at the next Council meeting.

It was proposed by Councillor M Russell, seconded by Councillor Mrs L Kenyon and

**RESOLVED** that a new contract for three editions of the Wareham Town Guide over six years commencing in 2012 be agreed with Plus Publishing Services and that a Town Guide Working Party be formed at the next Town Council meeting.

32. **EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

It was **RESOLVED** that under 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.

33. **WAREHAM BURIALS JOINT COMMITTEE – EMPLOYMENT of CLERK by WAREHAM TOWN COUNCIL**

The committee considered the employment by the Town Council of the current Wareham Burials Joint Committee Clerk for reasons set out in the Town Clerk's agenda report.

Following discussion, it was

**RESOLVED** that the employment of the Clerk to the Burials Committee be not disagreed with in principle, however there was a need to investigate all options and the Town Clerk be delegated to discuss with the Chief Executive of Purbeck District Council on this matter and also the NALC Financial

Advisor, in consultation with the Chairman and Councillor Mrs L Kenyon, Chairman of Human Resources Committee.

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

The Committee considered a recommendation of Town Council at its 8<sup>th</sup> August 2011 meeting that the Policy, Resources and Finance Committee be delegated to consider using Lloyds TSB Bank's recommended security company, G4s, for safe storage of the Council's valuable items.

A discussion arose on this matter and several alternative options were considered, including the construction of the Council's own secure storage facility which, it was understood, needs to be based on a firm concrete floor and not floorboards, which precluded all of the first floor of the Town Hall. It was:

**RESOLVED** that the Finance Administrator contact the Bank regarding removal of the Council's valuable items by the due date, temporary storage be arranged and a scheme to store these items in a permanent, secure Council-owned facility be investigated.

35. **RENT REVIEW PURBECK VIEW CARAVAN PARK**

The Town Clerk reported on the current situation following submission of a rent review to the Lessees of the Caravan Park. A further response had now been received from their agents and reference was made to a conciliatory offer contained within. In discussion, the committee agreed that it was a reasonable offer and should be accepted.

It was proposed by Councillor M Russell, seconded by Councilor Mrs Elmes and:

**RESOLVED** that the report of the Town Clerk be noted and an offer of £19,500 per annum from the lessees for the next three years of the lease commencing on 31<sup>st</sup> August 2011 be agreed and accepted.

36. **SWANAGE AND WAREHAM RUGBY CLUB – RENT REVIEW**

The Town Clerk reported on a response received from the Rugby Club following correspondence sent to its President. An offer by the President to attend a meeting to discuss the rent review was noted together with a request for the Council's permission to build a gymnasium/store on Council-owned land at the Rugby Club, albeit that planning permission had been granted by Purbeck District Council.

It was proposed by, resolved by and

**RESOLVED** that a meeting be organised with the President of the Rugby Club to discuss this matter with a view to arriving at a conclusion.

Following discussion, it was:

**RECOMMENDED** that a request for permission to build a gymnasium/store on Council-owned land at the Rugby Club be submitted to the next Town Council meeting for approval

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

38. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

It was noted that the date of the next meeting was scheduled for **Monday 17<sup>th</sup> October 2011 at 7.00pm.**

Meeting closed at 9.35 pm

..... Chairman