

Minutes of the Finance and Human Resources committee 03.11.16

MINUTES OF THE FINANCE AND HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE MEETING HELD IN BANSONS ON THURSDAY 3 NOVEMBER 2016 AT 8.15pm

Present: C. Feetham (chair) J. Bicknell D. Birch
P. Bolden B. Freeman J. Reynolds

*Non committee members

Officers: A. Middlehurst (Clerk)
J. Farr (Deputy Clerk)

Public: Four members of the public
One member of the press

62/16 Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Cllrs Browning and Devonald

Action

63/16 Declarations of personal and or prejudicial interest

Cllr Freeman declared a pecuniary interest in item 72/16 as chair of the Tennis Club

64/16 Public participation session with respect to items on the agenda

No members of the public wished to address the committee.

65/16 To agree the minutes of the Finance and Human Resources meeting held on 1 September 2016

The minutes were agreed as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

66/16 Clerk's Report

Bank charges

The Council accrued bank charges for the period between 4 June 2016 and 3 September 2016. Ongar Town Council amounted to £38.85 and Jubilee Park amounted to £62.40.

Internal Audit report

The Internal Auditor visited the Council on 20th and 21st October 2016. A draft written report had been received and a final version was expected shortly.

67/16 Finance Reporting

i) To note the bank reconciliations for August and September 2016

Bank reconciliations for August and September were provided for Councillors attention.

ii) To note the payments over £100 for August and September 2016

A list of payments made during August and September was provided for Councillors attention.

68/16 Mini Bus

i) To receive the budget as at 30 September 2016

A report showing income and expenditure from 1 April to 30 September was provided for Councillor's information.

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Councillors were concerned that the expenditure was greater than the income. It was reported that the expenditure was weighted to the first quarter (insurance payment was made in June).

ii) To review the mini bus usage as requested by Cllr Birch
Cllr Birch requested a review of the mini bus usage review. Information detailing the number of bookings between January and September as well as future bookings, income and expenditure between January and September was provided for Councillors attention.

Councillors asked if the number of bookings for this year was the same as for each of the previous 5 years and that staff time for managing the service was not included. It was reported that staff time would be included in next year's budget and past bookings would be included on a future committee agenda.

69/16 Bansons (Ongar Town Council Offices)

i) To review the current lettings policy and fees, make any changes necessary and make a recommendation to Full Council
At the Full Council meeting held on 29 September 2016 it was agreed to refer this document back to Finance and Human Resources committee. The committee was asked to review the policy and fees and make a recommendation to Full Council.

Councillors were concerned that evening bookings for external organisations that required the building to be opened and closed meant that they had to attend meetings in which they were not involved. The alternative would be to pay staff to facilitate evening bookings.

Cllr Freeman proposed that no future bookings were accepted after office hours and this was seconded by Cllr Bolden.

Vote –
For 5
Against - 1

ii) To receive details of the lease agreement with Epping Forest District Council.
The Town Council leases Bansons from Epping Forest District Council (EFDC) for a peppercorn rent annually (if demanded). The term was for 50 years from 6 December 2007 and required the building to be returned to EFDC in "good repair".

Councillors noted the lease arrangements.

iii) To receive information on the Public Works Loan applicable to Bansons (Amount borrowed, interest rate, start and finish dates, annual repayment amount and the current balance).
The Town Council acquired a Public Works Loan to enable the building to be converted from its previous use to make it fit for purpose as Council offices.

Councillors noted the detail of the Public Works Loan.

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iv) To consider the location of Basons regarding the impact on residents and agree a course of action.

Cllr Reynolds requested that the Council considered the location of Basons and the impact on residents.

Cllr Reynolds was concerned that the building had limited parking and that exit from the building late at night caused a noise nuisance to neighbours. It was reported that if there were no longer any evening bookings the only evening noise nuisance would be following Council meetings.

Cllr Freeman proposed that the Council contacts Epping Forest District Council to request a transfer of the freehold. This was seconded by Cllr Reynolds and unanimously agreed.

v) To consider preparing a 50 year plan to include Basons and other Council areas of responsibility e.g. the cemetery.

Cllr Reynolds suggested that the Council considered preparing a 50 year plan for all areas of Council responsibility. It was confirmed that this plan would include every Council asset including play areas, Nature Reserve, street lighting etc.

Cllr Reynolds proposed that the Council prepared a 50 year plan. This was seconded by Cllr Bicknell and unanimously agreed.

70/16 Chapel

To receive information from the Diocese of Chelmsford regarding the deconsecration of the Chapel

Officers were unable to find definitive proof that the Council owns the Chapel. In the absence of such proof the Diocese of Chelmsford requested that the Council provided a Statutory Declaration which must include –

- that exhaustive searches had been made but that the title deeds had not been found
- that the Council had treated the Chapel as its own for 150 years and that the Council was unaware of any claims to the contrary

A quote for this legal cost had been received from the Council's solicitor.

Cllr Freeman proposed that the Council spend up to £100 to complete the Statutory Declaration. This was seconded by Cllr Bicknell and unanimously agreed.

71/16 Scout lease

i) To receive information from the Council's solicitor regarding the proposed draft lease for the Scouts

The Council's solicitor provided advice to the Council on the proposed lease to the Scouts.

Councillors noted this information.

ii) To consider the draft Scouts lease, make any changes necessary and make a recommendation to Full Council

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Cllr Bicknell proposed that the committee recommended to Full Council to grant the Scotus a lease for 50 years. This was seconded by Cllr Reynolds and unanimously agreed.

Cllr Freeman left the meeting at 8.48 pm

72/16 Jubilee Park Steering Committee

To receive recommendations from the committee meeting held on 1 November 2016 regarding –

- granting sub leases in advance of agreeing the principle lease with the trustees
- granting a start-up grant for the proposed charity
- granting a one year rent holiday

In light of new information received since the meeting on 1st November Cllr Birch suggested that this matter be considered by the Jubilee Park committee to consider following a meeting of the proposed trustees of the new charity, the date of the meeting has yet to be agreed.

Cllr Birch proposed that the committee rejected the recommendation of the Jubilee Park committee. This was seconded by Cllr Bicknell and unanimously agreed.

It was reported that as Cllr Battersby was unable to attend the meeting she had asked provided a statement to be read to members by the Clerk. In light of the decision the Clerk felt that this was no longer necessary.

Cllr Freeman re-joined the meeting at 8.52 pm.

73/16 Server Warranty

To consider and agree to enter into an extended warranty for the Council's IT server Information on the options for warranty of the Council's IT server was provided for Councillors information. It was reported that the current warranty on the Council's server will be coming to an end and the committee was asked to consider an extension.

Two members of the public left the meeting at 8.53 pm.

The Clerk was asked for her recommendation which was agreed.

Cllr Freeman proposed that the Council secures a warranty for 24 x 7 4 hr response on site extended support for 3 years. This was seconded by Cllr Birch and unanimously agreed.

74/16 Draft budget 2017-18

- To note the recommendations from Open Spaces committee, Planning & Environment and Public Relations committee and the Clerk regarding revenue budgets for 2017 – 18 Information on the revenue budget was provided for Councillor's information.
- To note the recommendations from Open Spaces committee, Planning & Environment and Public Relations committee and the Clerk regarding budgets for capital projects for 2017 – 18

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Information on the capital projects requested –

Open Spaces committee

- Repaint St Martin's railings £5,000
- Replace Castle sign £1,000
- Concrete raft for cemetery £2,200

Planning & Environment and Public Relations

- Community Grants Donations £2,340

Councillors noted the information on revenue and capital projects budgets.

iii) To note that the finalisation of the budget for Jubilee Park is dependent on decisions yet to be made regarding the transfer of the facility to the proposed charitable trust. It was reported that as the Jubilee Park Steering Committee had yet to consider what, if any, budget was required for the coming financial year the Council was unable to set a budget or precept for the financial year 2017 – 18. The Clerk expressed her concern that at this time of year the Council would normally be considering the budget for the coming financial year and making recommendations to Full Council.

The Clerk reported that the Deputy Clerk had tendered her resignation from the Council and expressed her thanks for her work during the last 9 years.

The meeting closed at 9.00 pm.

Date

Signed

Chairman