

DURSLEY TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES and REPORT of the MEETING of the POLICY AND FINANCE COMMITTEE of the Council held in the **Methodist Church Rooms, Castle Street, Dursley** at 7.35 p.m. on Tuesday, 15th April 2014 for presentation to the Council on the 6th May 2014.

PRESENT

Chairman: Councillor C Nelmes

Vice Chairman: Councillor L. V. Patrick

Councillors: J. A. Ball, S Creswick, N Grecian, R Blackwell-Whitehead
M Nicholson, T. G. Frankau, F Firth, M Laybourne, A Stennett

In Attendance: Councillor V Harding, Town Clerk, Town Clerk's Assistant, Trainee Administration Assistant

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence had been received and were accepted from Councillor T.G. Frankau (personal).

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Harding declared a personal interest in agenda/minute item 7, as a member of Dursley Tabernacle United Reformed Church.

Councillor Ball declared a disclosable pecuniary interest in agenda/minute item 9, as an employee of Dursley and District Community Association.

3. REQUEST FOR DISPENSATIONS

There were no requests for dispensations.

4. REPRESENTATIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

No representations had been received from the public.

5. MINUTES

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Policy and Finance Committee, held on the 18th February 2014, having been circulated among the members, were taken as read, considered, approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

6. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

The Chairman had no matters to report.

7. YOUTH CENTRE PROJECT

a) Members noted that the Youth Centre construction work is due to start week commencing 28th April 2014; work is ongoing to resolve the electrical specification with the Church.

b) Members reviewed the risk and financial plan.

THE COMMITTEE AGREED to note the plan.

- c) Members noted that the Council has been successful in obtaining the 'Our Place' Grant, the initial amount is £3,000 with the potential to access funds totalling £33,000; a Project Administrator has started work.

8. CAM AND DURSLEY COMMUNITY PLAN 2020

Members noted that Vale Vision has not been able to make sufficient progress to bring the Cam and Dursley Community Plan 2020 back to Council yet; relevant plan data has been supplied to the Neighbourhood Development Plan groups.

Councillor Ball withdrew from the meeting.

9. DURSLEY & DISTRICT COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION 2020

Members discussed an action plan for the Dursley and District Community Association Grant 2014/15.

It was noted that the Town Clerk has requested a meeting with the Chairman to discuss grant conditions and targets; the Association have arranged an Annual General Meeting with members on 28th April 2014.

The COMMITTEE AGREED to award the grant subject to conditions and targets which will be drafted by the Town Clerk and include the following elements and timescales:

- a) Quarterly reports and regular progress meetings.
- b) Quarterly/six monthly targets.
- c) Development of a marketing and communications plan, to promote positive aspects of the centre and include customer feedback and engagement actions.
- d) Development of an income generation and usage plan.
- e) Review of governance and IT skills.
- f) Review of shared access and maintenance issues with the school.
- g) Display liquor license information above the door (immediate action).
- h) Address any Health and Safety issues.
- i) Work with the support of Gloucestershire Rural Community Council.

Councillor Ball re-joined the meeting.

10. HIGHFIELDS - 20MPH ZONE

Members considered pursuing the introduction of a 20mph zone on the Highfields estate. Councillor Nicholson informed members that a number of residents have complained about speeding vehicles; '20 is plenty signs' have recently gone up around the estate.

Members discussed how speeding could be tackled including introducing traffic calming measures (e.g. speed humps/tables, flashing lights during key school hours), enforcement issues and educational police intervention through the school.

THE COMMITTEE AGREED to investigate the process with Gloucestershire County Council/relevant experts and draft a project plan with timescales and budget. Councillor

Nicholson agreed to liaise with Dursley Primary Academy and the Police. The plan will be considered at a future committee meeting.

11. LEGAL TOPIC NOTES & UPDATES

Members noted the following Legal Topic Notes (LTN) and updates issued by the National Association of Local Councils and considered whether to take actions:

- a) Elections (LTN 8)
- b) Defamation (LTN 30)
- c) Up2Date (140206)
- d) Access to Council meetings and documents (LAIS1365)

Regarding a), it was noted that from 2016 parish, town and district elections in the Stroud district will be held at the same time every 4 years.

The COMMITTEE AGREED that Council will need to implement changes in light of the election changes. The Town Clerk and communication group will consider d) 'Access to council meetings and documents' when looking at social media and the Communications Policy.

12. EUROPEAN COMMISSION CONSULTATION PAPER ON VAT

Members considered responding to the European Commission consultation paper 'Review of existing VAT legislation on public bodies and tax exemptions in the public interest'.

THE COMMITTEE AGREED not to respond to the consultation as the Council will not be directly affected.

13. FINANCIAL BRIEFINGS

Members noted the following Financial Briefings issued by the National Association of Local Councils:

- a) Accounting for council tax support grant in a council's Annual Return (F02-14)
- b) Repeal of s.150 (5) of the Local Government Act 1972 – Implementation (F04E-14)

14. ELECTRONIC PAYMENTS

In light of agenda/minute item 13 b) above, members considered procedures for making electronic payments with Lloyds Bank. The benefits and risks were discussed in detail.

The COMMITTEE AGREED not to trial electronic payments at this time but to carry out detailed research before considering the issue further. The Town Clerk will investigate safeguarding measures and the systems and checks used by other banks, before bringing the issue back to committee.

15. COUNCIL FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

Members noted new Model Financial Regulations issued by the National Association of Local Councils (NALC).

The COMMITTEE AGREED to review Council's Financial Regulations against the new Model at the next committee meeting to allow the Town Clerk further time to review the changes. The Town Clerk will contact NALC to request that they clearly identify differences and outline changes when they issue updated regulations.

16. PLAYING OUT SCHEME

Members considered piloting a 'Playing Out' scheme for Fourth Avenue, Highfields and Oak Drive.

Councillor Nicholson outlined the 'Playing Out' format, the benefits to children and local press interest in the scheme. Members were informed that Councillor Nicholson was recently interviewed on Points West and BBC Radio Gloucestershire.

The COMMITTEE AGREED to support pilot events in Highfields and Oak Drive; Councillors Nicholson and Stennett will consult and co-ordinate with local residents/volunteers, organising a meeting with interested parties including District Councillors and Stroud District Council legal and community safety officers. The Council will pay the £80 road closure fees for the pilot events if required with the hope that, if a success, Stroud District Council will support in the future.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 8.35 p.m.

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Chairman

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Date