

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 7.30 p.m. on Tuesday, 17th June 2014 for presentation to the Council on the 1st July 2014.

PRESENT

Chairman: Councillor C Nelmes

Vice Chairman: Councillor L. V. Patrick

Councillors: S Creswick, R Blackwell-Whitehead, F Firth, M Nicholson, B Marsh, M Laybourne.

In Attendance: Town Clerk, Deputy Town Clerk

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence had been received and were accepted from Councillors T. G. Frankau (personal), J. A. Ball, (personal), Neil Grecian (personal), A Stennett (work) and R Harding (personal).

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

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 27th May 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

The Town Clerk gave members an update on the Youth Centre construction work.

Members noted that the first site meeting had taken place; work is ongoing to agree a supplier for the alarm system; the builder is complying with health and safety requirements; the first site visit for young people will take place on 18th June and work is currently on schedule and within budget.

8. OUR PLACE PROJECT

Members noted that the Our Place project submitted a Delivery Strategy for the “Getting Going” stage of the funding programme, the outcome will be known shortly; the Town Clerk attended a useful cost benefit analysis training event which will help with future funding applications; unfortunately the Project Administrator has resigned, the Council office will undertake any necessary work until the position is filled.

9. CAM AND DURSLEY COMMUNITY PLAN 2020

Members noted that the Chairman of Vale Vision met with the Town Clerk to go through the specification for the Cam and Dursley Community Plan 2020; a new timescale has yet to be confirmed.

10. DURSLEY AND DISTRICT COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION – ACTION PLAN

Members noted the action plan supplied by the Dursley and District Community Association in connection with their grant for 2014/15; the plan covers all the necessary actions.

The COMMITTEE AGREED to schedule the first quarterly review meeting.

11. PLAYING OUT SCHEME

Councillor Nicholson gave an update following the cancellation of the Playing Out scheme pilot events, due to a poor response from the community.

Members discussed an idea put forward by a resident from the Ferney area to consider designating ‘Play Streets’. These streets would be permanently designated with a 5mph limit that would apply at non-peak times to encourage a safer environment for children to play outside their homes, signage could say ‘Play Street Between the Hours of.....’.

Members discussed the possible removal of Stroud District Council’s ‘No Ball Games’ signs.

The COMMITTEE AGREED to feedback locations of ‘No Ball Games’ signs to the Town Clerk so that Stroud District Council can be approached regarding a review of the signage and possible removal. Councillor Nicholson will investigate the ‘Play Street’ approach, including possible locations, legal implications, signage and community support.

12. REDNOCK BAND FUND

Members reviewed the arrangements for the Rednock Band fund; the £7860 held in trust by the Council is not being used and the restrictions placed on the fund are limited to the formation of a brass ensemble.

The COMMITTEE AGREED to write to trustees to see if they would be open to considering other alternatives for use of the fund including: using it for other musical purposes (e.g. bursaries), opening the fund up to other schools, the purchase of musical equipment/lessons, giving access to other types of band. The Town Clerk will investigate current and possible future bands at Rednock.

13. COUNCIL ELECTIONS FROM 2016

Members noted changes to Council Elections from 2016.

The COMMITTEE AGREED to budget for the changes and allocate an additional £3,000 in next year's budget to cover additional election costs.

14. COMMUNICATIONS GROUP

Members noted that a Communications Group meeting is scheduled to take place on 25th June 2014, 7pm at Jacob's House, Castle Street.

15. TRANSPARENCY CODE

Members considered guidance on the Local Government Transparency Code.

The COMMITTEE AGREED to follow the guidance and publish a Transparency Code section on the Council's website.

16. COUNCIL'S FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

Members reviewed Council's Financial Regulations against the National Association of Local Councils' new Model Financial Regulations 2014.

The Town Clerk presented a table analysis of the differences between the new model and the Council's current regulations, making recommendations for change. It was noted that the new model is an improvement.

The Town Clerk's recommended amendments were generally adopted, with some minor variations.

The COMMITTEE AGREED to: improve fraud awareness by signing up to a regular fraud and scam newsletter; consider paying salaries electronically, the Town Clerk will investigate and report back; check the current mileage allowance and update in line with HMRC, referring to the Staff Committee; investigate cash book and salary confidentially issues with Scribe and, in future, review Council's Investment Policy when Financial Regulations are being reviewed.

The COMMITTEE RECOMMENDS adopting the revised Financial Regulations (Appendix 1).

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 9:17 p.m.

.....
Chairman

.....
Date

