

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE FINANCE & POLICY COMMITTEE OF TRING TOWN COUNCIL HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, THE MARKET HOUSE, TRING ON MONDAY 24th NOVEMBER 2014 AT 7:30p.m.

Present: Councillors: H Alison (Chairman)
J. Allan
B. F. Bachelor (7:38)
Mrs P. Hearn
S. Hearn (ex officio)
M. Hicks
Mrs R Ransley (ex officio)

Also present: Mr M. Curry, Town Clerk

0 members of the press & public

17566. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillors S. Tolley (prior commitment)

RESOLVED: To accept the apologies for the reason given

17567. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllrs S. Hearn and Mrs P. Hearn had a declarable pecuniary interest on any matter arising in the budget considerations relating to Market Auctions as a tenant of the Town Council.

17568. MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 19th May 2014 were a true record and could be signed by the Chairman

17569. MATTERS OF REPORT FROM THE MINUTES

There were no matters of report

17570. CHAIRMAN'S COMMUNICATIONS

There were no matters to report

17571. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There were no members of the public present.

17572. GRANT APPLICATION A grant application from Forget-Me-Not Nursery, Tring Community Centre was considered. Cllr Mrs Ransley explained the background to the application through her role as the Council's representative on the Community Centre's Management Committee. Members recognised the value of the service being provided to local children. In determining the amount of the award the Committee took into consideration the level of funds raised by the organisation and users.

RESOLVED: Through the powers granted by the S.137 of the LGA 1972 award Forget-Me-Not children's nursery, Tring Community Centre one thousand pounds for enhancements to the garden facilities

17573. PRECEPT AND BUDGET 2015/16

The Committee confirmed the Council's agreed policy of returning to a balanced budget. With the increase in staff costs as a result of the recent pay settlement, averaging 2.2%, it was agreed

that the recommendation to Council is that this should be covered by a 2% increase in the council tax rate given the uncertainty in the level of the council tax support grant. This will increase the rate from £24.19 to £24.67 – an increase of 48 pence.

The members considered the draft budget prepared by the Clerk and accepted the baseline figures. It was agreed that the balance of funds available be used for items of expenditure identified in the Town Plan with two further provisions. Firstly a contingency fund for the Charter 700 celebrations (because the Heritage Lottery Fund application outcome will be received until after commitments have to be made). Secondly it was agreed that £5,000 would be taken from unallocated reserves for capital expenditure to improve the Christmas light infrastructure.

Cllr Mrs P. Hearn and the Clerk were delegated to prepare a priority list of projects from the town plan to be financed. This will be informed by the scheduled meeting with members of Hertfordshire County Council and Dacorum Borough Council.

RESOLVED: (i) To recommend to Council that the parish element of Council tax be raised from £24.19 to £24.67, a 2% increase
(ii) To recommend to Council a balanced budget based on the draft baseline budget as presented augmented by funds for Town Plan projects, a Charter 700 contingency, and a reserve-funded £5,000 budget to improve the Christmas light infrastructure
(iii) That Cllr Mrs P. Hearn and the Clerk prepare a priority list of projects from the town plan to be so financed

17574. FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

The Clerk took members through the differences between the Council's existing regulations and the new NALC model regulations.

RESOLVED: (i) To adopt the new NALC model financial regulations subject the following amendments:
(a) Paragraph 3.4 from the current financial regulations be adopted in preference to paragraph 4.5 in the model regulations
(b) Paragraph 3.6 from the current financial regulations be adopted in preference to paragraph 4.3 in the model regulations

17575. TOWN WARDEN'S HALF-YEARLY REPORT

Members considered the information contained in the report. Cllr Hicks expressed concern with regard to the state of pavements – leaves and unevenness – away from the High Street. Cllr Alison echoed concern at the tardy response from Hertfordshire County Council even to potentially dangerous situations. Cllr Allan reported the uncertainty that had arisen about the future of the noticeboards in Dolphin Square.

RESOLVED: To note the report as presented

17576. INFORMATION OFFICER'S REPORT

The Members welcomed the use being made of the Information Office's services, especially given its location and appreciated the work being done by the Centre's staff. The investigation into how to enhance what could be achieved from the current facility was fully supported.

RESOLVED: To note the report as presented

The meeting ended at 8:25 p.m.

Chairman