

MINUTES OF THE FINANCE AND POLICY COMMITTEE OF THE TRING TOWN COUNCIL HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, THE MARKET HOUSE, TRING, ON

MONDAY

8th MARCH 2010 at 7.52 p.m.

Present: Councillors: J. S. Allan (in the Chair)
B. F. Batchelor (sub. for L. J. Harris)
Mrs P. J. Hearn
Mrs R. L. Ransley (ex officio)

Also present: Councillor: N. A. Hollinghurst
M. J. James

Mrs S. Johnson, Clerk of the Council
Mrs B. Daytonn, Deputy Clerk
2 members of the public

15380. **APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Harris (sub. Councillor Batchelor) and Townsend.

15381. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were none.

15382. **MINUTES**

The Minutes of the Finance & Policy Committee meeting held on 18th January 2010 were confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

15383. **MATTERS OF REPORT**

Arising from Minute 15307, the Council's Member-Officer Protocol was adopted at the Council meeting held on 22nd February 2010 Minute 15368.

15384. **GRANTS 2009/10**

- (i) Under S19 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 the Council **RESOLVED** to make a grant to the Tring Table Tennis Club of £750 to enable them to buy a new table for their sessions at Tring Cricket Club. This grant exhausted the Grants budget for 2009/10, together with a £50 overspend.
- (ii) Under S137 of the Local Government Act 1972 the Council **RESOLVED** to make a grant to Tring Together of £250 out of the 2010/11 budget to support the opening event of the Tringe Festival (Comedy Week) 2010 in July. An early decision was necessary as the Festival needed to have its sponsors in place well in advance. The payment would be made in April 2010. The Council's contribution would be acknowledged on posters and in literature.

15385. **GRANTS 2010/11: TRING TOGETHER'S BUSINESS SUPPORT PROJECT**

A sum of £10,000 had been identified in the 2010/11 Estimates as a S137 grant to support local business in Tring through the medium of Tring Together. TT's Project Officer had been asked to produce a paper setting out possibilities for the use of the grant, and this had been circulated prior to the meeting. The Committee was satisfied with the TT proposals; and the need to start the project as a matter of urgency, due to the current economic climate. Therefore it was **RESOLVED** to make a grant to Tring Together under S137 of the LGA 1972 in the sum of £10,000 to be taken from the 2010/11 Grants budget. The payment would be made in April 2010.

15386. **ANNUAL ACCOUNTS 2009/10**

The Budget v. Actual statement to 28th February 2010 was noted. Councillor Mrs Hearn declared a prejudicial interest in this item as her family's business was a tenant of the Council.

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15387. **TREASURY RESERVE 2009/10**

The Clerk had been given clearance at the Council meeting on 26th October 2009 (Minute 15227) to transfer £100,000 to a new Treasury Reserve account with Barclays plc, to diversify the Council's investments. She had subsequently discussed this with the Internal Auditor; and investigated the cost in bank charges, which would have amounted to three months' interest. In view of the more stable banking conditions at present, she had left the investment with the NatWest bank. Transfer was still an option should banking conditions become more unstable again. The Committee endorsed her decision; and would keep the situation under review.

15388. **STANDING ORDERS**

- (i) The Committee reviewed the Council's Standing Orders and Financial Standing Orders and found them still fit for purpose. No amendments would be recommended to Council.
- (ii) The Committee received the new NALC publication *Standing Orders for Councils*. The Clerk was requested to adapt the new SOs and bring a version for possible adoption to a future F&P Committee meeting.

15389. **FINANCIAL RISK ASSESSMENT**

The Council's Financial Risk Assessment had been circulated prior to the meeting. The Committee had examined the document and was content to adopt it, with one very small amendment, as presented.

15390. **RISK ASSESSMENTS AND HEALTH & SAFETY POLICY**

The Council's Health & Safety at Work Policy and its Risk Assessments had been circulated prior to the meeting. The Committee had examined the documents and was content to adopt them, as presented.

15391. **THE COUNCIL'S POLICIES: AN ENVIRONMENT POLICY**

At the meeting of its Buildings & Assets Committee on 8th February 2010 Minute 15349 the Council received an Environmental Assessment prepared by Toby Robins FRSA AIEMA. As part of his report he recommended the Council write and adopted an Environment Policy to set a framework for its further progress towards more 'green' practices. The Clerk and the Chairman had researched various policies adopted by other parish and district councils, and the Clerk had adapted them to suit the Council's needs. The draft Environment Policy circulated with the agenda was the result of this work, and the Committee considered its suitability. With one small amendment the Committee **RESOLVED** to adopt the Policy, as presented. The Policy was referred to the Buildings & Assets Committee for realisation of its aims with regard to the Council's properties; particularly that concerned with energy consumption and efficiency.

15392. **THE COUNCIL'S 10-YEAR PLAN**

The Council's 10-Year Plan was due for reassessment and review, having been adopted in 2007. The Committee set up a Working Party consisting of the Chairman and Councillors Mrs Hearn and Mrs Ransley to carry out the initial work. They would meet as soon as possible.

15393. **EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC & PRESS**

It was **PROPOSED** by Councillor Batchelor, **SECONDED** by Councillor Mrs Ransley and **RESOLVED:** That under Section I of the Public Bodies (admission to Meetings) Act 1960 the public and press be excluded during the Items in Part II of the agenda for this meeting, because it was likely that publicity would prejudice the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business or for other special reasons arising from the nature of the business or proceedings.

The Chairman proposed and the Committee agreed to reverse the order of the next two items.

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15394. **ANNUAL COMMUNITY AWARD**

The Committee considered various nominations for the Annual Community Award; and decided on a possible recipient. It decided to ask the Gazette to publicise the Award and request nominations from the public. The matter would be brought back to the Council meeting on 22nd March 2010. The Award would be presented at the ATM to be held at 8 p.m. on Monday 19th April 2009 at the Victoria Hall, Akeman Street.

The Deputy Clerk left at 8.21 p.m.

15395. **STAFFING MATTERS**

The Clerk had presented a report to the Committee. It was **RESOLVED:**

- (i) To note that that it was highly probable that there would be no pay rise for LG staff in 2010/11, except perhaps for the low-paid (under Point 15).
- (ii) To appoint Belle Daytonn, Deputy Clerk, on Pay Scale LC1 Above Substantive Point 23, rising to Point 24 on permanent appointment.
- (iii) To approve the continuing employment of Colin Jones as Town Warden after the normal age of retirement at 65. He requested his continuing employment be subject to annual review at the September F&P Committee meeting. The Committee expressed the Council's continuing appreciation of his work.
- (iv) To reconvene the Staffing Working Party to prepare for recruiting to replace the Information Officer, who wished to retire in the summer.

The meeting ended at 8.33 p.m.

Chairman