

**UNADOPTED
POLEGATE TOWN COUNCIL**

Minutes of the Finance and Policy Committee meeting held on Tuesday 18th January 2011 in the Council Chamber, 49 High Street, Polegate at 7:30 p.m.

Present: Cllrs A Watkins (vice chair), Mrs C Berry, Mrs J Bigsby and M Cunningham (Deputy mayor- ex-officio).

Not Present: Cllrs J Rogers, T Voyce (Mayor – ex officio), Mrs J Voyce, G Carter (Chair), S Barber
Mrs Jo Ognjanovic – Town Clerk

1 Member of the public present Mr S Black

9538 Apologies for absence

Cllrs G Carter(ill), S Barber(work), J Rogers(other commiotments), T Voyce(Pelham Appeal), Mrs J Voyce (Pelham Appeal)

9539 Declarations of interest

None

9540 Minutes of the Finance & Policy Meeting 16th November 2010 (already adopted)

The minutes were signed by the chair and agreed to be an accurate record of the meeting.

A number of councillors indicated their desire in the absence of a matters arising agenda item to have an action list related to their committee in order that they may follow the progress of the tasks assigned within that committee. The clerk agreed to look into this as soon as possible as she was currently investigating project management software in order that each task is clear on the progress.

9541 CRB Checks

The clerk informed the committee that all CRB checks were now back and ok.

9542 Standing Orders

a) Section 15 vi was discussed it was recommended that the wording should be as follows:

“an ordinary member of a committee not able to attend a meeting and who has been replaced by a substitute member in accordance with standing order 15(a) (v) above shall not be permitted to participate in debate or be able to vote on business at that meeting and may only speak during any public participation session during the meeting. The substitute member will be able to participate in debate and vote on business.” VOTE All in favour

b) It was recommended that Group Leaders for each Group would submit to the Clerk the names of their substitute members so that they could be approved at the next Council meeting VOTE All in favour

9543 Review of Pension Policy

It was recommended to adopt the Pension Policy (as per the draft attached at Appendix A) and it was requested that the Policy be flagged in some way as to make sure that it was adhered to in the future. (Particularly with regards to the accounts.) VOTE All in favour

9544 Precept

The clerk had requested that as the precept had increased this year that the committee review the wording to be submitted on the precept request.

Cllr A Watkins stated at this point that he had not been in agreement with the increase in precept as he considered that the reserves were sufficient to absorb the extra costs that would be incurred in the new financial year.

It was recommended that the wording would be as follows:

“Increase in provision for street lighting maintenance due to ageing street furniture and to continue current levels of service in the face of increasing costs and to maintain reserves to protect the Council from major Council tax increases in the future.” VOTE Majority in favour (3 in favour 1 abstention)

9545 Insurance Policies review

The clerk informed the committee that she was assisting working with both Cllr G Carter and Cllr Mrs C Berry in making potential amendments to the insurance policies and checking the asset register.

9546 Town Assembly

A discussion took place regarding the date of both the annual meeting and the annual Town assembly. The clerk stated that the Annual Town Assembly (electors meeting) must be held between 1st March and 1st June regardless of an election year. However a request had been submitted to the office that it be held after the elections as per a former resolution which had since expired.

It was recommended that the Town Assembly be on 23rd May 2011 with the United Reform as the venue subject to discussion at Full Council and costs, which the Clerk would look into.

It was recommended that the annual meeting be held on 16th May 2011 in order that the Finances of the Council run as smoothly as possible over the changeover period.

It was discussed that possibly Charles Lant Chief Executive of Wealden District Council be approached as to whether he would be prepared to speak on the current financial situation within the Council in the current economic climate.

It was also agreed that as soon as the new Council was in place it would be wise to ask Trevor Leggo to come and speak with them and to book them on the new councillor training course locally and maybe share this with Willingdon and Jevington Parish Council.

9547 Standing Orders/Terms of Reference

It was recommended that the following amendment be included at section 15 Committees a) vi) in the Standing Orders:

“an ordinary member of a committee not able to attend a meeting and who has been replaced by a substitute member in accordance with standing order 15(a) (v) above shall not be permitted to participate in debate or be able to vote on business at that meeting and may only speak during any public participation session during the meeting. The substitute member will be able to participate in debate and vote on business.”

It was recommended that the following be added as section c) to the Terms of Reference for Finance & Policy

"All Councillors without exception will go through the Chair of Finance & Policy with regard to any Finance and Policy matter; the chair will then contact the Clerk with those details if appropriate."

9548 Buildings & Land Advisory Committee

The clerk informed the committee that the office still had not received all the necessary information in order that the advisory committee meet and therefore the report would be submitted to Full Council as per Terms of Reference.

9549 Year end Close Down

The clerk informed committee that she was still waiting on the date for the close down of the accounts and would notify all councillors when this had been received.

9550 Financial Delegations to committees

A discussion took place regarding giving delegated authority to all committee to encourage full and appropriate use of budgets. The Personnel Advisory committee was also considered as it had a budget. However it was viewed that the Personnel Advisory Committee being purely advisory could not have delegated authority and should still make recommendations by way of report to Finance & Policy Committee or full council who would then have the authority to make the appropriate financial decisions.

It was recommended that the following Committees should be given delegated authority. This should include (Planning – already resolved at previous meeting), Finance & Policy, Environment & Leisure.

It was recommended that Personnel Advisory Committee should be discussed at full council with a view to allowing recommendations to be considered at Finance & Policy or full council

9551 Renewal of football lease for Polegate Town Football Club 2011/12

The football club had written in asking if the renewal could be for 5 years instead of 1 year. Standing orders suspended

Mr S Black explained why he had been asking for a longer lease regarding funding.

Standing order resintated

It was recommended that due to financial implications to the club regarding the village green clause that at present it was prudent to consider only a years lease. The clerk was asked to check with the solicitors about the village green wording of the clause 5 Termination and whether the words "in the event of a change in law requiring the termination of the lease".

9552 Financial reports

Cllr M Cunningham requested that all chairs be asked to consider their budgets and any outstanding reserves ring fenced for certain projects should be completed as far as possible, before the end of the financial year. With consideration of any overspend in each committee's budget monies should be spent on the prjects they were budgetted for before the year end.

The clerk also informed the committee that having spoken to Roger Bates from Wealden District Council there was likely to be a provision of a laptop and projector & screen for the eplanning as requested by the former clerk.

Cllr Mrs C Berry commented on the large amount spent on Electricity and Gas almost £12,000. The clerk explained that she had investigated the problem, the meters had not

been checked and submitted by the previous clerk when they were changed. They have now and followed up by the clerk. A refund had been requested and the refund would be received shortly for approximately £13,000.

The meeting closed at 9.10pm