

FELIXSTOWE TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

Held on Wednesday 19th March 2014

Present: Councillors Slemmings (Chairman), Barber, Bird, Deacon, Jan Garfield, Morris, Newman, Savage, Sennington, Sharman, Smith, Walker, Webb and Williams.

506. APOLOGIES

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Jon Garfield.

507. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors Bird, Deacon, Jan Garfield, Savage, Sennington, Sharman, Slemmings, Smith and Williams declared a Local Non Pecuniary Interest as Members of Suffolk Coastal District Council.

Councillors Barber and Newman declared a Local Non Pecuniary Interest as Members of Suffolk County Council.

508. REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS FOR COUNCILLORS WITH A PECUNIARY INTEREST

No requests for dispensation had been received.

509. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 22nd January 2014, were confirmed as a true record by those present and the Chairman was authorised to sign them.

510. ACCOUNTS

RESOLVED that the Committee noted the financial statement up to 28 th February 2014.
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511. REVISION OF FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS WITH TRIMLEY ST MARTIN PARISH COUNCIL REGARDING BURIAL OF ITS RESIDENTS

The Committee considered the review of the financial arrangements with Trimley St Martin Parish Council and agreed to recommend to Full Council that the rate charged to Trimley St Martin Parish Council with effect from 1st April 2014 be increased to £2,500.

512. RECENT TRENDS IN BURIALS AND INTERMENTS AND REVISION OF CEMETERY FEES

The Committee noted the recent trends in burials and interments and agreed to recommend to Full Council that fees be revised with effect from 1st April 2014 and to change the wording from "Ex-Residents" to "Non-Residents."

513. MAINTENANCE AGREEMENT FOR GRAVES

The Committee agreed to recommend to Council the introduction of maintenance agreements for graves, at a rate to be determined by the Town Clerk.

514. REVISION OF ALLOTMENT TENANCY AGREEMENT

The Committee considered revision of the Allotment Tenancy Agreement in line with the NALC model. The new Allotment Tenancy Agreement would be in place for new tenants from 1st April 2014 and for existing tenants from 1st April 2015. The Committee agreed to recommend to Full Council that the suggested new Allotment Tenancy Agreement be put in place subject to existing structures being retained by existing tenants.

515. REVISION OF CEMETERY REGULATIONS

The Committee agreed to recommend to Council the revision of the Cemetery Regulations.

516. REPRODUCTION OF CEMETERY BOOKLET

The Committee approved a high quality production of a new Cemetery Booklet, subject to the use of larger photographs in a different order.

517. CURRENT SITUATION OF ALLOTMENT PLOTS

The Committee agreed to recommend to Council the introduction of "First Year Discount" for new tenants of 5 rod plots. Members discussed making vacant allotments available to young people, who would also qualify for the first year discount. It was suggested that a press release and item in the newsletter be written to this effect.

518. LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOUNDARY COMMISSION ELECTORAL REVIEW

The Committee discussed the draft recommendations of the Local Government Boundary Commission's Electoral Review. The Clerk will summarize the discussions and write a draft response which will be brought to Full Council, so it can be submitted before the deadline of 28th April 2014.

519. ALLOCATION OF ADDITIONAL EARMARKED RESERVES FROM GENERAL BALANCES AT YEAR END

The financial forecasts for the year end indicate that there is likely to be a net underspend of c£60,000. The usual practice is for these monies to return to (and increase) general reserves. However, the Council is already aware of a number of likely commitments that will occur during 2014/2015 and is recommended to earmark these savings towards those future projects. The Clerk will present a full report to Full Council. The Committee agreed in

principle to not return surplus money to the General fund but to earmark funds accordingly.

520. INTRODUCTION OF WiFi AND BROADBAND TO THE COUNCIL CHAMBER

The Committee agreed to recommend to Council the introduction of WiFi and Broadband to the Council Chamber.

521. PROPOSED CHANGES TO VAT RULES AFFECTING LOCAL COUNCILS

The Committee considered options to respond to the European Union consultation on changes to VAT rules affecting Local Councils. The Clerk will respond with the Committee's preferred option b) Full compensation of input VAT at EU level.

522. ADMINISTRATION OF CHARITIES

The Committee agreed to recommend to Council acceptance of the request from the Trustees of the De la Roche and Felixstowe Widows Charity, Felixstowe War Memorial Cottages and King George VI Coronation Memorial Homes Charities, that the Council second the Town Clerk and such other staff as required from time to time, support the administration of the charities.

523. REPORT OF THE INTERNAL AUDITOR

The Committee received the report of the Independent Internal Auditor and noted the action taken to address the issues raised in the report. A copy of the Internal Auditor report can be found on the Town Council website under Town Council/Freedom of Information/Financial Information.

524. FINANCIAL SOFTWARE PACKAGE

In response the recommendation of the Internal Auditor, and in view of the urgency (Full Council does not meet until after 1st April), the Committee agreed to purchase the Omega package and report the action to Full Council.

525. MAYOR'S HANDBOOK

The Committee agreed to adopt the Mayor's Handbook but requested anonymity, as names will change from year to year. The Committee gave thanks to Celia Page who had put the Handbook together.

526. INSURANCE REVIEW

The Committee noted the savings achieved as a result of an Insurance review.

527. DAMP ISSUES AT TOWN HALL

The Committee agreed to recommend to Council the recommendation from the Premises Committee to investigate and resolve the damp issue at the Town Hall.

528. OFF-PEAK HIRE RATES FOR THE COUNCIL'S PREMISES

The Committee agreed to recommend to Council the recommendation from the Premises Committee that the Town Clerk be authorised to negotiate off-peak hire rates for the Council's Premises.

529. REPLACEMENT OF WINDOWS AT THE TOWN HALL

The Committee agreed to recommend to Council that an investigation into the future of the windows at the Town Hall be undertaken.

530. REPAIRS TO THE CEMETERY ROADWAYS

The Committee discussed the need for urgent repairs to the cemetery roadways and considered to fund the reconstruction by way of a Public Works Board Loan. It was agreed to the drawing up of specifications and schedules of works and to invite tenders, and to also investigate the rights of passage along Langley Avenue. The Clerk will then report back to the Committee.

531. CLOSURE

The meeting was closed at 9.55 pm.

CHAIRMAN