

MINUTES of the FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE meeting held at Felixstowe Town Hall on Wednesday 21 January 2015 at 7.30pm

PRESENT: Cllr D Savage (Vice-Chairman in the Chair)
Cllr N Barber Cllr J Sennington
Cllr S Bird Cllr M Sharman
Cllr M Morris Cllr A Smith
Cllr G Newman (Town Mayor) Cllr M Walker

OFFICERS: Mr A Tadjrishi (Town Clerk)
Mrs D Frost (Finance Officer)

IN ATTENDANCE: Three members of the Public. One member of the Press.

In the absence of the Chairman, Vice-Chairman Cllr D Savage in the Chair.

445. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr M Deacon, Cllr Jan Garfield, Cllr Jon Garfield, Cllr C Slemmings, Cllr C Webb and Cllr K Williams.

446. DECLARATIONS OF COUNCILLORS' INTERESTS

The following declarations of Councillors' interests were made:

Member	Minute No.	Nature of Interest
Cllr N Barber	452	Non-Pecuniary (as a member of the Carnival Association)
Cllr A Smith	452	Non-Pecuniary (as a member of the Landguard Partnership)

In additions, Cllrs S Bird, M Morris, M Sharman, J Sennington, D Savage and A Smith each declared a Local Non-Pecuniary Interest on all items on the agenda as Members of Suffolk Coastal District Council.

447. REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS

There were none.

At this point in the meeting the Vice-Chairman suspended Standing Orders and reported to Councillors and members of the Public attending on a forthcoming meeting of Suffolk County Council's Cabinet which was to decide on the future of a number of Children's Centres in the county, including Sea Breeze Children's Centre in Felixstowe.

Members expressed their deep disappointment that, despite the Town Council's strong objections, and with 25% of Sea Breeze users having stated that they would not go anywhere else, the County Council was proposing to close this Children's

Centre in Felixstowe. It was noted that, should the proposals be approved by the County Council, the year-round services provided by Sea Breeze - fundamental to its users in this area of Felixstowe - would no longer be accessible out of term-time. In noting that the Town Council's response to the consultation had not been acknowledged, nor its objections addressed, in the report to the County Council's Cabinet, Cllr N Barber agreed to take a statement to Cabinet on behalf of the Members present.

Standing Orders reinstated.

448. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

It was RESOLVED that:

The Minutes of the Finance & General Purposes Committee Meeting held on 19 November 2014 be signed by the Vice-Chairman as a true record.

449. MINUTES OF THE FINANCE SUB-COMMITTEE

It was RESOLVED that:

The Minutes of the Finance Sub-Committee Meeting held on 26 November 2014 be received by the Committee and signed by the Vice-Chairman as a true record.

450. ACCOUNTS TO 31 DECEMBER 2014

The Committee considered a detailed report showing income and expenditure from the start of the financial year 2014/15 to 31 December 2014.

RESOLVED that the Accounts to 31st December 2014 be received and noted as presented with no other action required at this time.

451. LEVEL TWO YOUTH PROJECT FUNDING

The Committee considered additional funding for Level Two.

The Vice-Chairman suspended Standing Orders and invited Mr S Wyatt, Vice-Chairman of the Felixstowe Youth Development Group Management Board, to respond to Members' questions.

In response to Members queries on fund-raising initiatives, Mr Wyatt described how the majority of the group's funding came via local authorities and charitable trusts rather than fund-raising events, which were not able to provide the security and level of income required.

Standing Orders reinstated.

Members commented on how the youth club service provided by Level Two provided a valuable resource for any young person in Felixstowe, highlighting the level of demand and scale of need for accessible support and mentoring

services for young people which, if not provided by Level Two, would be lacking in the town.

Following further discussion it was proposed that a total of £10,000 be awarded to Level Two for the financial year 2015/16, funded via Community Fund Projects (cost centre 305) from the Council's Community Fund Earmarked Reserve. It was proposed that this funding be limited to one year only, pending any review taken during the budget setting process for 2016/17.

The Clerk was asked to enquire whether Level Two would wish to invite a representative appointed by the Town Council as a non-executive board member to the management board.

It was RESOLVED that £10,000 for Level Two, funded via Community Fund Projects (cost centre 305) from the Council's Community Fund Earmarked Reserve, be included in the final budget estimates for 2015/16 for Council approval.

452. ANNUAL GRANTS

The Committee considered Annual Grants for 2015/16 as recommended by the Finance Sub-Committee at its meeting of 26 November 2014 (*Minute #396 of 2014/15 refers*).

It was RESOLVED that £6,800 for Annual Grants, as per the schedule in the agenda report, be included within the final budget estimates for 2015/16 for Council approval.

453. MAYORAL ALLOWANCE

Committee considered the Mayoral Allowance for 2015/16.

RESOLVED that Council be recommended to:

- i. Approve no increase to the Mayor's Allowance for 2015/16, being £7,000 for the purposes of defraying the costs associated with the office of Town Mayor; and,**
- ii. Formally advise the Town Mayor that the allowance should be used to defray any legitimate costs incurred by the Deputy Mayor when officially deputising for the Mayor in his/her absence.**

454. BUDGET AND PRECEPT 2015/16

Members considered the final draft budget as presented in the report. It was noted that a number of amendments had been included to reflect the updated projected outturn position for 2014/15.

Following the earlier resolution of Committee to increase the funding provision to Level Two from the Community Fund Earmarked Reserve, the Clerk provided a further explanation on the affect this would have on the overall

budget. Committee noted that the Community Fund Earmarked Reserve would receive a total of £59,050 from the General Fund in 2015/16, of which a total of £41,866 was committed from this reserve to fund approved expenditure as detailed within the Community Fund Projects heading (cost centre 305).

It was RESOLVED that:

- i. **With the amendment to increase the funding arrangement for Level Two to £10,000 for the forthcoming financial year, as approved by Committee earlier the same evening, the draft budget 2015/16 be finalised and presented to Council on 4 February 2015 for adoption; and,**
- ii. **It be recommended to Council that, on the basis of a nil increase to the council tax charge for the forthcoming year, the Precept demanded by Felixstowe Town Council for the financial year 2015/16 be set at £522,361.**

455. MEETING SCHEDULE 2015/16

Committee noted the Meeting Schedule for 2015/16 as presented.

It was RESOLVED that the Meeting Schedule for 2015/16 be recommended to Council for adoption as presented in the report.

456. OCCASIONAL GRANTS POLICY

Committee considered the policy for Occasional Grants as presented in the report. A number of minor amendments were proposed to the policy as follows:

- i. Addition of the words '*approved*' and '*financial*' to the sentence in the section headed How Do I Apply so that it reads "You will need to submit a summary and copy of the *approved* year-end accounts for the latest two *financial* years.",
- ii. Correction of the word 'first' to 'second' in the heading titled "Deadline for submission for the first round is 30 November",
- iii. Amendment to Grant Conditions so the section reads "All successful applicants ~~will~~ *may* be required to:"; and,
- iv. The condition for successful applicants to provide, within three months, feedback detailing how the grant was used be amended to extend the period to 12 months.

It was RESOLVED that, subject to the approved amendments being incorporated, the Occasional Grants Policy be recommended to Council for adoption.

457. SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

Committee considered the Social Media Policy as presented. Members highlighted concerns surrounding the reputational cost to the Town Council should users be drawn in to debate or respond to criticism of the Council when online and whether maintaining such accounts would unnecessarily increase staff workloads. The Clerk gave assurances to Members that the policy provided Council with the opportunity to respond to queries appropriately and set guidelines as to what would or would not be acceptable. It was noted that social media was being used by many local authorities as it offered a further method of communication with no additional cost.

The use of social media would not replace current methods used to communicate Council activities.

It was RESOLVED that the Social Media Policy be recommended to Council for adoption as presented.

458. LGPS DISCRETIONS POLICY

Committee noted the requirement for a discretions policy in respect of The Local Government Pension Scheme Regulations 2013.

It was RESOLVED that, subject to a minor amendment to make clear that any mention of 'members' referred to 'scheme members' and not 'Council Members', the LGPS Employer's Discretions Policy be recommended to Council for adoption.

459. RISK MANAGEMENT POLICY

Committee noted the amendments being proposed for Council's Risk Management Policy for 2015. It was further noted that the Clerk and Council's Finance Officer had met with the Council's insurers earlier in the day. At this meeting it had been confirmed that the Council was insured to the sum of £250,000 against Libel and Slander and to the sum of £58,600 for Office Equipment.

It was RESOLVED that the proposed changes presented in the report be approved and the Risk Management Policy for 2015 be recommended to Council for adoption.

460. CLOSURE

The meeting was closed at 8.59pm. The next meeting was noted as being scheduled for 18 March 2015 at 7.30pm.

Date: _____

Chairman: _____