

## **FELIXSTOWE TOWN COUNCIL**

### **MINUTES OF THE FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE**

Held on Wednesday 31<sup>st</sup> July 2013

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

#### **134. APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Barber, Morris and Williams.

#### **135. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

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

Councillor Newman declared a Local Non Pecuniary Interest as a Member of Suffolk County Council and a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest with regard to the item relating to Suffolk Libraries.

All other interests in relation to matters pertaining to the accounts as previously declared.

Councillors Deacon, Jan Garfield and Jon Garfield declared a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in travelling expenses relating to the annual Civic Visit to Wesel and Salzwedel.

#### **136. MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2013, were confirmed as a true record by those present and the Chairman was authorised to sign them.

#### **137. ACCOUNTS**

<b>RESOLVED</b> that the accounts from 1 <sup>st</sup> April 2013 – 30 <sup>th</sup> June 2013 amounting to £160,363.42 presented to this Committee be approved.
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The Clerk and Finance Officer provided responses to any queries raised on the accounts presented. Members noted that the required repairs to the civic regalia had been carried out, and the painting of the Triangle railings funded by the Town Council had been successfully carried out by the Community Payback Team.

With regard to bus shelters, Councillor Sharman again reported from his enquiries a degree of misunderstanding over the ownership of bus shelters in the town. Councillor Newman reported that a number of bus shelters around the town had been provided by Suffolk County Council either directly or via locality funding, however in addition four shelters (in Grange Farm Avenue, Grange Road, Mill Lane and Coronation Drive) were understood to be owned by Suffolk Coastal District Council. This could be checked to confirm. The County Council had a small maintenance team who could carry out repairs to bus shelters separately. The Town Council funded the cleaning of four of the town's bus shelters, such cleaning being carried out by Suffolk Coastal Services.

**138. CIVIC VISIT TO WESEL AND SALZWEDEL**

*Councillors Deacon, Jan Garfield and Jon Garfield left the room during consideration of this item.*

The Clerk reported that the customary annual civic visits to Wesel and Salzwedel had been arranged for September 2013. It was agreed that all related travel expenses for those in the Civic party would come from the twinning budget.

**139. SUB-COMMITTEE AND WORKING PARTY REPORTS**

a. Report of the Community Services Group (Health Councillors) of 13<sup>th</sup> May 2013

The Chairman introduced the report of the Community Services Group (Health Councillors) of 13<sup>th</sup> May 2013 which included items concerning NHS 111 telephone service, telephone triage in Felixstowe surgeries, defibrillators, Health Watch, East of England Ambulance Service and a presentation by the Director of Public Health in Suffolk, Tessa Lindfield, Suffolk County Council.

With regard to the NHS 111 Telephone Service, the Chairman referred to recent reports that this service was in significant crisis nationally with NHS Direct, one of the national suppliers providing the 111 telephone service in several regions, having announced its withdrawal from arrangements. The Clerk was requested to clarify whether Suffolk was implicated in this latest development.

With regard to Healthwatch Suffolk, the Chairman reported that this newly established entity now replaced Suffolk LINK and the Community Services Group (Health Councillors) had recommended that Felixstowe Town Council should become a member of Healthwatch (at the cost of £1). Following discussion

<p><b>It was RESOLVED</b> that Felixstowe Town Council should become a member of Suffolk Healthwatch with Councillor Sharman appointed as the Town Council's nominee, reporting back as appropriate to the Finance and General Purposes Committee.</p>
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The Chairman reminded all Town Councillors that they were welcome to attend future meetings of the Community Services Group (Health Councillors) when guest speakers were in attendance. The next meeting was now on Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> September, however a speaker had not yet been confirmed.

<p><b>It was RESOLVED</b> that the report of the Community Services Group (Health Councillors) of 13<sup>th</sup> May 2013, circulated to all Members and recorded in the Sub Committee and Working Party Minute Book be approved.</p>
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b. Report of the Cemetery and Allotments Sub-Committee of 21<sup>st</sup> May 2013

The Chairman introduced the report of the Cemetery and Allotments Sub-Committee of 21<sup>st</sup> May 2013 which included items concerning update on matters relating to Felixstowe Cemetery: Network Rail Fence, Cemetery Path, roadways at the Cemetery, annual meeting with funeral directors and stonemasons, ongoing improvements and grounds maintenance, update on matters relating to allotments: Cowpasture site, enquiry regarding Micro-well, weed killing and Railway Hill.

Members noted that helpful work on allotment boundary clearance had been carried out by the Community Payback team (as well as the Triangle railing painting), and also noted that a day rate of £75 had recently been introduced by the team to cover transport and administrative costs. Members still were of the view that on balance the Payback team were a useful source of labour on activity which was of benefit to the community and which could offer constructive engagement. Feedback on results had been entirely positive. The financial consequences of the improvement of the internal Cemetery roadways were being looked into prior to Members' consideration.

It was **RESOLVED** that the report of the Cemetery and Allotments Sub-committee of 21<sup>st</sup> May 2013, circulated to all Members and recorded in the Sub Committee and Working Party Minute Book be approved.

c. Report of the Felixstowe Youth Forum of 26<sup>th</sup> June 2013

Councillor Savage introduced the report of the Felixstowe Youth Forum of 26<sup>th</sup> June 2013 which included items concerning update from Felixstowe Town Council, update from Felixstowe Futures, leisure facilities in Felixstowe, update from Level2, update from Colneis Junior School, update from Grange School, Felixstowe Academy, the New Big Question, invite from Level2, dates for future meetings and Year 6 pupils.

It was **RESOLVED** that the report of the Felixstowe Youth Forum of 26<sup>th</sup> June 2013, circulated to all Members and recorded in the Schools Minute Book be approved.

d. Report of the Working Party Concerning Play/Leisure/Outdoor Sports Facilities for Young People of 1<sup>st</sup> July 2013

The Chairman introduced the report of the Working Party Concerning Play/Leisure/Outdoor Sports Facilities for Young People of 1<sup>st</sup> July 2013 which included items concerning update on Play Space Fund and Sports Fund, Langer Park, Allenby Park, Cavendish Park, Coronation Sports Ground, South Seafront, Gosford Way, Walton Recreation Ground, Suffolk Coastal Services grounds maintenance, volleyball and yacht pond. With regard to Walton Recreation Ground, Councillor Deacon confirmed that happily the improved play equipment was well used and the improvements had encouraged a greater use. So much so that Councillor Deacon requested consideration of the further extension of play facilities there. It was agreed that this should be added to the agenda of the next Play meeting for discussion by the Working Party. More generally, a variety of views were expressed with regard to the timeliness of despatch of Council agendas which Town Council staff were asked to consider.

It was **RESOLVED** that the report of the Working Party Concerning Play/Leisure/Outdoor Sports Facilities for Young People of 1<sup>st</sup> July 2013, circulated to all Members and recorded in the Sub Committee and Working Party Minute Book be approved.

140. **MEMBERSHIP OF SUFFOLK LIBRARIES**

*Councillor Newman left the room during discussion of this item.*

Members considered a Clerk's Briefing Note with regard to Suffolk Libraries and the Town Council's potential application for membership thereof, and explanatory information from Suffolk Libraries to those organisations interested in joining Suffolk Libraries. Members noted that at present there was no Felixstowe membership of

Felixstowe Libraries and that Suffolk Libraries were looking to Felixstowe Town Council to fulfil this role. No other entity or group had come forward. Members discussed the practicalities of membership, which amounted to completion of an application form and payment of £1 for membership. Each member organisation was required to nominate an individual as its representative who would attend in person (or by proxy) any general meeting of Suffolk Libraries and would be entitled to vote. (The individual member could in future should they so wish put themselves forward to be nominated and elected as a Director on the Suffolk Libraries IPS Board). The amount of Community Contribution for Felixstowe was £5,200, however it was understood from Suffolk Libraries that the Town Council would not be expected to underwrite that amount. Following discussion

It was **RESOLVED** that Felixstowe Town Council should apply to become the member for Felixstowe of the Suffolk Libraries IPS for the sum of £1 from the Community Fund, on the understanding that such membership would not require, imply or include a financial contribution of £5,200.

It was agreed that the appointment of the nominee (and substitute) for the individual representing the Town Council should be an agenda item for the next meeting of the Town Council.

**141. PRECEPT REFERENDUMS BILL**

Members noted correspondence from the Suffolk Association of Local Councils in respect of the Town Council's view of the Precept Referendums Bill. Councillor Slemmings referred to a meeting which had taken place between a number of Town Councillors and Dr Therese Coffey MP on this subject and circulated some informal notes taken. Feedback was given to Dr Coffey that in broad terms the proposal to introduce a precept referendum was neither sensible nor workable. Councillor Smith also circulated some figures he had prepared to illustrate this, which may also be of assistance should other Members wish to refer.

**142. PRECEPT DATA**

Members noted a briefing note from the Suffolk Association of Local Councils concerning precept data, and particularly with reference to the above minute.

**143. ELECTORAL REVIEW OF SUFFOLK COASTAL**

Members noted correspondence from the Review and Programme Manager, Local Government Boundary Commission for England announcing the start of a consultation on new ward boundaries in the Suffolk Coastal District, open until 1<sup>st</sup> October 2013, on the basis of a proposed size of 43 Councillors for the area. Members discussed various points in relation to this proposal, including how it may affect arrangements at a Town Council level, however recognising that lengthy discussions were taking place at Suffolk Coastal District Council who had established a specific working party to consider the review in more detail. It was suggested that the Town Council may also wish to consider the establishment of its own Working Party. Following discussion

It was **RESOLVED** that Felixstowe Town Council establish an Electoral Review Working Party including representation of one Councillor per Town Council Ward, and the Clerk be given delegated authority to set this up in the event of and following approval by full Council.

**144. STAFFING CHANGES AT SUFFOLK CONSTABULARY**

Members noted correspondence to the Clerk's predecessor from the Felixstowe and Woodbridge Local Police Commander advising the Town Council of a number of staffing changes affecting Felixstowe, Woodbridge and Kesgrave. In so far as these affect Felixstowe, changes were that Sgt James Harper would be leaving Felixstowe for a new role at Martlesham HQ, to be replaced by Sgt Peter Street. Following discussion, it was agreed that the Clerk should write to Inspector Dee clarifying contact details and passing on the concerns of Councillors at the lack of SNT meetings in recent weeks, with consequential results on local policing priorities.

**145. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

<p><b>RESOLVED</b> that in view of the confidential nature of the business about to be transacted it was advisable in the public interest that the public be temporarily excluded and they were instructed to withdraw.</p>
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This item is recorded in the confidential minute attached.

**146. REVIEW OF TOWN COUNCIL ARRANGEMENTS WITH SUFFOLK COASTAL SERVICES**

CHAIRMAN