

# *Kesgrave Town Council*

## **Finance and Resources Committee**

Minutes of the meeting of the Finance and Resources Committee held on Monday 26th November 2012 at 7.30pm in the Council Chamber.

**Present:** Mr C Rayworth (Chairman) Mr G Lynch Mrs S Ogden  
Mr A Comber Mr P Mills Rev R Spittle  
Mr D Fairbrother

**In attendance:** Mr J Ogden  
Mrs J Smith  
Mrs V R Read (Clerk to the Town Council)  
Mrs L Bennett (Administrative Assistant to the Council)

### **1. Apologies**

None.

### **2. Declaration of interests**

Mr Comber declared a Local Non-pecuniary interest in Item 7, 2012/2013 Draft Budget with regard to the website maintenance as the Website manager, and remained in the meeting while consideration and discussion of the matter took place.

Mr Comber declared a Local Non-pecuniary interest in Item 7, 2012/2013 Draft Budget with regard to Rupert Fison Centre as a Director, and as a Leader within the Kesgrave Scout Group, and remained in the meeting while consideration and discussion of the matter took place.

Mr Comber declared a Local Non-pecuniary interest in Item 7, 2012/2013 Draft Budget with regard to Kesgrave News as Chairman of the committee, and remained in the meeting while consideration and discussion of the matter took place.

Mr Lynch declared a Local Non-pecuniary interest in Item 7, 2012/2013 Draft Budget with regard to Oak Meadow and Fentons Wood being a Member of Suffolk Coastal District Council, and remained in the meeting while consideration and discussion of the matter took place.

Mrs Ogden declared a Local Non-pecuniary interest in Item 7, 2012/2013 Draft Budget with regard to Oak Meadow and Fentons Wood being a Member of Suffolk Coastal District Council, and remained in the meeting while consideration and discussion of the matter took place.

Reverend Spittle declared a Local Non-pecuniary interest in Item 7, 2011/2012 Draft Budget with regard to Kesgrave Youth Club being a Youth Worker Employer, and remained in the meeting while consideration and discussion of the matter took place.

Reverend Spittle declared a Pecuniary interest in Item 7, 2011/2012 Draft Budget with regard to the grant to the Church Youth Worker, being the incumbent at All Saints Church, and left the room while consideration and discussion of the matter took place.

Reverend Spittle declared a Pecuniary interest in Item 7, 2011/2012 Draft Budget with regard to the grant to the Help Centre being the Chairman of the committee, and left the room while consideration and discussion of the matter took place.

### **3. Minutes of the last meeting held 6th August 2012**

These minutes having been circulated were taken as read, approved and signed by the Chairman.

#### 4. Matters arising

None.

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#### An adjournment was declared:

No Members of the Public wished to speak.

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#### 5. Audit Checks

##### a. Internal Auditors Report

Mr Farthing had visited the office earlier in the month and undertaken a routine check, his report from that visit was read to Members and is held on file.

##### b. Members Finance Checks

The Committee carried out checks to ensure that:–

- Accounting records are up to date
  - Income due is collected promptly and fully and is banked without delay
  - Interest earning accounts are employed to the maximum
  - Tax and NI procedures for staff are properly operated
  - Cash Book and Bank Statement totals agree
- and the Chairman signed the records accordingly.

##### c. Risk Register – Annual Review

Members considered the Risk Register and agreed an addition should be made at Item 10d. The Register is attached at **Annex 1** to the permanent copy of these minutes.

##### d. Effectiveness of Internal Audit – Annual Review

Members were reminded of the need to consider annually the Effectiveness of Internal Audit as advised in the External Auditors Bulletin. This states that the Review must cover the following five areas:

- i. Scope of Internal Audit** – has the scope of the Internal audit been discussed with the Internal Auditor to ensure that the audit covers all the relevant risks areas;
- ii. Independence** – is the Internal Auditor sufficiently independent, unbiased and objective;
- iii. Competence** – does the Internal Auditor have sufficient knowledge to be able to carry out the Audit;
- iv. Relationships** – are the relevant responsibilities of Members, Clerk/RFO and Internal Auditor defined;
- v. Planning and reporting** – is the body aware of a timetable of when the Internal Audit or Audits will take place and when a report, if any, will be reported.

It was **agreed to recommend to Full Council** that procedures are effective.

**vi. Councillor rota** The Clerk explained that despite the changes made in April the current rota is proving very ineffective and is time consuming for staff. A different approach was agreed whereby the Chairman of F&R will visit sporadically, as he has already been doing, to ask for clarification on issues as he sees fit; those Members of F&R who have not yet accomplished an Internal Audit will agree with the Clerk when they will visit to carry out an Audit but to fit in round the IIA visits; Mr Fairbrother will perform a Health and Safety check every 6 months starting in February.

#### 6. Budgetary monitoring report

The November report was issued at the meeting and is attached at **Annex 2** to the permanent copy of these minutes. The Committee having examined the reports, were satisfied that receipts and expenditure are broadly in line with budgetary limits.

## 7. 2013/2014 Draft Budget

The Committee considered the Budget document page by page. However SALC have recommended that a Precept is not set until the Central Government Autumn Statement due in early December and a draft paper due in late December are available and their implications understood. The Clerk explained the Band D equivalent numbers may be available before the December Council meeting and if so this will be factored into the budget document.

The Committee also noted a number of variables which must be taken into consideration, including possible Staff changes, Fentons Wood ownership, the introduction of the Resource planning document in place of the Guide, the proposed extension to the MSG Pavilion and its effect on both income and expenditure in the forthcoming year as well as the capital cost of the build.

The Committee discussed the situation at some length recognising a substantive document must be agreed before the end of January in order for the Precept to be set. It is hoped there will be an opportunity for this to be considered at the Full Council January 2013 meeting. However it is imperative that all the information from Central Government and advice from NALC are factored into the workings and it may therefore be necessary for Full Council to authorise F&R to make the final decision at a meeting towards the end of January 2013.

In the meantime the Clerk will take into consideration all the possible savings which the Committee believe could be made and prepare two Budgets, one for the worst case of being limited by Central Government to a less than inflation increase and the second for a best case scenario where all works which had been considered necessary, together with funding for the Pavilion, are included.

Some discussion was held on the possible implications of the Central Government Autumn statement and the draft paper and whether a call in by residents on the Precept may be allowed. Adding the proposed £50,000 to the Precept would be in excess of the percentage increase some people are stating will be imposed. Council need therefore to consider alternative ways in sourcing the funds, and an interest free loan from SPARK was considered a possibility.

## 8. Transfer of Reserve Funds

It was agreed to transfer £2,500 as per Budget to the Youth Club Reserve Fund.

## 9. Resolution to exclude the Public under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960

**The Committee resolved that the public and the press be excluded for consideration of Item 11 Staff, Hours monitoring report and Succession planning, since publicity would prejudice staff confidentiality, and that these matters be deferred to follow item 21 on the agenda.**

The following item was taken after item 20 and is minuted there.

## 10. Staff

- a. Hours monitoring report
- b. Succession planning

## 11. Grants

- a. ITFC Charitable Trust NIL
- b. Headway Ipswich and East Suffolk NIL
- c. Kesgrave Good Neighbour Scheme It was believed the Good Neighbour Scheme financial year runs January to December and the Committee **agreed to recommend to Full Council** if this is confirmed to offer £275 for the three month period January to March from the current budget, explaining that a further request could be considered in the 2013/2014 year but the total years funding of £1,100 could not be provided by the Town Council.

- d. **Magpas, The Emergency Medical Trust** NIL
- e. **Late items** None.

## **12. Insurance Cover including New Risks**

No increases to Insurance or New Risks were necessary. The Clerk explained a recent visit from the Insurers representative had resulted in a renewed offer at a considerably reduce cost. The Clerk will clarify some issues but the Committee agreed that if this raises no further queries the 5 year contract should be accepted.

## **13. Asset register**

Members considered and accepted the Asset Register, which also denotes those items which are not covered by insurance because their replacement value is £250 or less. A copy is attached at **Annex 3** to the permanent copy of these minutes.

## **14. Five Year Plan/Recession Planning**

This was covered, for the main part, at Item 10.

## **15. Model Publication Scheme**

The Committee and all other Councillors had been emailed that day the list of current policies held in accordance with their request at the November Council meeting.

## **16. Appeal for 1 The Walk, decision delegated to F&R**

In accordance with the decision at Full Council the Clerk had spoken with Mrs McCallum regarding the manner in which the Appeal is to be heard. Mrs McCallum had spoken with the Head of Planning Services at SCDC. Although a request could be made by the Town Council for the Appeal to be an Informal Hearing, as SCDC wish it to be considered by Written Representations, if the Appeal is lost KTC would be liable for costs. F&R therefore agreed the Clerk and Mrs McCallum should work together on their respective responses to ensure all issues they would have raised at a Hearing are documented. The Clerk will then get approval for the KTC response from the P&D Chairman before it is sent to the Inspectorate.

## **17. MSG**

An A3 map had been fixed to a small notice board with different coloured pins to depict the various responses to the consultation. There is a good spread across the Town for Option C (build an extension) but the majority of responses for B (demolish the building) are clustered around the site. It was also noted the Option D responses (alternative ideas) are in the main for a variation of C.

Mr Rayworth and the Clerk are to meet with the partner organisation on Friday to discuss the issues raised by the SCDC Planning Officer in the pre-determination discussions. The Committee were pleased to note most of the answers required are documented in the response to the consultation by the Kestrels Secretary.

## **18. Oak Meadow, Play equipment**

The delay in deciding on the Play Equipment has resulted in a re-quotation from the chosen supplier which is considerably higher than that originally offered. Miss Hall has therefore been required to go out to tender again and to put in amendments to the Planning Application in order to update the grant

applications. The deadline for grants is now February and so the alternatives for consideration will be put to the January Full Council meeting.

**19. Kesgrave News article suggestions**

Full Council had already agreed the January article should be an attempt to glean residents views on the Library. Following the meeting at SCDC attended by Mr Rayworth and the Clerk, this will now be encompassed in an article about the need for residents to understand the implications of divestment. As, with the Youth Club, divestment from the higher tiers does not result in a lower tax demand from them, but if services are to continue to be delivered this can only be achieved through the Town Council and paid for by a higher Precept collected from the local Council Tax payer.

**20. To receive such other communications or matters of sufficient urgency and importance that the Chairman will allow for discussion**

The Clerks had been visited by the Barclays business manager for the area to introduce himself. The discussion had been very productive with 3 issues for Council to agree at the December meeting:

- the Business Saver account to be altered to an alternative which operates in exactly the same way but attracts an interest rate of 0.39% as opposed to 0.05%;
- Mrs Bennett to be added to the mandate;
- a credit card in the name of the Town Council but authorised for each of the Clerks (one designated card each) with a named limit (suggested as £250 which is the petty cash limit) can be issued free of charge for one year. If no transactions are made then the card will be withdrawn, if Council wish to continue it there is an annual charge of £32. This will relieve the Clerks of using their personal cards and reclaiming at a Council meeting.

**Later:** It was established that each card would incur a charge of £32. However all three would be free for the first year and if any were not used then the details of the named Clerk would be held on file for reinstatement in the future if required.

**21. Date of next meeting 29th April 2013**

The next Full Council Meeting will be held 10th December 2012.

**The Members of the Public left.**

**10. Staff**

**a. Hours monitoring report**

The Clerk gave details of the average hours worked by the Clerks in the current financial year.

	Contracted hours	Average hours worked
Mrs V R Read	<b>34.00</b>	<b>34.39</b>
Mrs J Francis	<b>26.00</b>	<b>27.04</b>
Mrs L Bennett	<b>22.50</b>	<b>23.14</b>

Miss Hall has averaged 1.62 hours against a budgeted figure of 4 hours.

**b. Succession planning**

The Committee considered the paper which is attached at **Annex 4** to the permanent copy of these minutes.

Some considerable discussion took place on the advisability of increasing staff numbers at a time when budgets are so tight. However it was recognised the Council could be criticised for not addressing an inevitable situation when there is a possibility of both the Senior Clerks leaving at the same time

without the third Member of staff having had sufficient preparation in all the tasks involved. It was also recognised that divestment and increased responsibilities will require further staffing hours and this must also be prepared for. A policy will be prepared for consideration on Promotion from within and Mr Lynch was asked to aid this preparation because of his expertise in this area. The Chairman of F&R and the Clerk will then proceed with the recommendation to liaise over a job description and specification for an additional member of staff to take on the receptionist duties 3 mornings a week (initially 9 hours in total) with a view to that role increasing to take on the day to day finance role currently undertaken by the Deputy Clerk.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 11.10pm.

**Chairman**