

Chesham Town Council

Bill Richards
Town Clerk



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31st July 2012

Dear Councillor,

You are **SUMMONED** to attend a special meeting of the **CHESHAM TOWN COUNCIL** to be held in the Council Chamber, The Town Hall, Chesham, on

MONDAY 6th AUGUST 2012 AT 7.30pm

AGENDA

1. Apologies for absence.
2. To confirm Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on 25th June 2012.
3. Declarations of Interest.
4. Granting of Dispensations in accordance with Section 33 of the Localism Act 2011
5. Possible Contribution to Chesham Jubilee Celebrations

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'W. Richards'.

Bill Richards
Town Clerk

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AGENDA ITEM NO: 5 - POSSIBLE CONTRIBUTION TO CHESHAM JUBILEE CELEBRATIONS

Reporting Officer: Bill Richards (01494 583824)

Summary

1. To consider underwriting the final cost of the Jubilee celebrations in Chesham.

Background Information

2. The Jubilee events were all organised by an independent Events Committee and, to date, has had no financial support from the Council other than officer support in kind.
3. At the Council meeting held on the 25th June 2012, it was resolved that *'that the matter be referred to the next Policy and Resources Committee following clarification on the likelihood of a grant from Chiltern District Council while noting that these events were not organised by this Council.'* (Min No. 25)
4. When the matter was due to be considered at the Policy and Resources Committee on the 2nd July 2012, a number of Members declared a pecuniary interest and left the Chamber thus rendering that part of the meeting inquorate.

Financial Implications

5. The Events Committee is requesting that the Council underwrite the final accounts to an amount of up to £4,368.43.

Strategic Objectives

6. Accords with Strategic Aim 1 *'To enable residents to enjoy high-quality social, recreational, and cultural facilities within the town and to seek the continuing improvement and development of these facilities in accordance with the desires expressed by the residents.'*

Equality Act Implications

7. The events organised were highly diverse and were intended to include those with protected characteristics.

Detailed Consideration

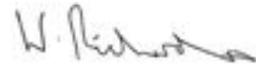
8. Members will be aware that the Events Committee organised and co-ordinated four days of very successful activities and events across the town. Moreover it had success in attracting grants and sponsorship from both statutory and non-statutory organisations and therefore did not initially approach this Council for a grant.

9. The final accounts are now drawn up **attached**. These have been provided as ‘private and confidential’ due to some private donations made and individual creditors listed. With a cash-flow issue, the Events Committee is unable to pay some of its creditors at the current time. Accordingly it is requesting that the Council be authorised to pay these outstanding bills underwriting the whole programme up to an amount of £4,368.43.
10. Members will recall that when the matter was first raised at the Council meeting in June, it was reported that the Events Committee was confident of receiving a grant from Chiltern District Council in the region of £4,000. It has now been confirmed that such a grant will definitely not be forthcoming, leaving a considerable deficit in the Events Committee budget. The Events Committee has also subsequently written to local fund-raising groups such as Rotary Club and Lions Club for retrospective contributions but has been unsuccessful in these requests.
11. At the Council meeting of the 25th July, while it was emphasised that it was not a Council-organised schedule of events, Members generally agreed that there was a perception that the Council was heavily involved and unpaid creditors may reflect badly on both the Council and the town.
12. As emphasised previously, it should be reiterated that many town and parish councils contributed directly to their Jubilee events, most notably Amersham Town Council, which committed £20,000 to its events. Moreover, the erection of the bunting cost much less than was expected (with outside contractors only required for half a day) and it can be taken down in-house by the Parks and Premises team. Members will recall that at the Council meeting of the 27th February 2012, the Council agreed to underwrite the cost of erection and taking down of the bunting at an expected cost of ‘several hundred pounds’ but the final bill was £177 which included the cleaning of the Archway at the north end of the High Street.
13. As a number of Members were involved with the Jubilee Events Committee, the matter of dispensations should be contemplated. Point 6.1 of the recently adopted Code of Conduct states:
‘On a written request made to the Council’s Proper Officer, the Council may grant a member a dispensation to participate in a discussion and vote on a matter at a meeting even if he he/she has an interest in Appendices A and B if the Council believes the number of members otherwise prohibited from taking part in the meeting would impede the transaction of the business; or it is in the interest of the inhabitants in the Council’s area to allow the member to take part or it is otherwise appropriate to grant a dispensation’
14. Following advice received from the Monitoring Officer at Chiltern District Council and in consideration of the pecuniary interest Members who are on the Jubilee Events Committee have, it is recommended that any time limited dispensation given to Members to contribute to the agenda item should be limited to speaking but those Members not be given voting rights. This will protect these Members directly from any accusations of making decisions based on financial benefit while ensuring the meeting should be quorate and therefore resolved.
15. The Jubilee Events Committee clearly acted in good faith and spent many unpaid hours organising the events. In retrospect, it has been accepted by those involved that

it was an error to book artists without having all income confirmed. However there is now a possibility that the members of the Committee could be chased individually and collectively for the outstanding monies which would seem disproportionately unfair for a community minded effort from organisers who consist of councillors from both main political parties and members of the public.

Recommendation

That the Council underwrite the final cost of the Jubilee celebrations in Chesham, to an amount not exceeding £4,368.43 from the General Fund.



Bill Richards
Town Clerk