

## **CHESHAM TOWN COUNCIL**

### **MINUTES of the meeting of the POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE**

held on Monday 28<sup>th</sup> November 2005

**PRESENT** Councillor Ms. J.E. Bramwell, Chairman (presiding)

Councillor	A.K. Bacon	Councillor	Mrs P.R. Wilkinson MBE
"	N.L. Brown	"	P.W. Yerrell
"	C.H. Spruytenburg		

#### **In Attendance**

Councillors: E.L. Bamford, M.Z. Bhatti, Mrs J.C. Fulford and Mrs M. Molesworth

Officer: W. Richards - Town Clerk

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors V.M. Abraham, M. Fayyaz  
P.J. Murphy and P. Woodburn.

#### 27. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest that were brought to the Chairman's notice.

#### 28. **MINUTES**

It was

#### **RESOLVED**

that the minutes of the meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee held on 19<sup>th</sup> September 2005 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a true record.

#### 29. **REVIEW OF COUNCIL'S LITTER BIN PROVISION**

The Committee considered the comprehensive audit undertaken by the Parks and Premises team and the Parks and Premises Manager's recommendations thereof.

Members agreed that any new bins should be of a robust design and that closed top bins would be appropriate for certain areas such as the Moor where wildlife can remove litter from open bins. It was agreed that Paradigm Housing and Chiltern District Council be approached to provide new bins at Batchelors Way and Windsor Road respectively since they were the landowners. In view of the likely pressures upon financial budgets next year, it was agreed that priority should be given to the nine damaged bins that needed replacing in the next financial year.

It was

**RESOLVED**

that the Committee recommend that monies be placed in the estimates for 2006/07 to replace the nine damaged bins highlighted within the report and that a rolling programme to provide additional bins be implemented in future years.

30. **PROPOSED CLOSURE OF BOVINGDON FIRE STATION**

The Town Clerk reported that he had been approached by the Chair of Save Bovington Fire Station Action Group (SBFSAG) to elicit support for opposing this closure on the grounds it would have a detrimental effect on fire service provision within the town.

Members noted that the Chesham Station cannot field a daytime crew and that the Bovington fire service crew had crossed the county border into Buckinghamshire seventeen times to incidents in recent months and it is "first attendance" for a block of flats in Chesham because of its long ladders.

In view of the growing housing provision within Chesham and the apparent deficiency of appropriate fire fighting provision during the daytime, it was

**RESOLVED**

that the Town Clerk be instructed to write to the Save Bovington Fire Station Action Group expressing the Council's support for the campaign to oppose the closure of Bovington Fire Station.

31. **COUNCIL'S MAGAZINES**

The Committee reviewed the Council's magazines, which are currently produced four times a year.

Members expressed satisfaction with the contents and format of both the 'Town Crier', inserted in the 'Town Talk' magazine and the 'Council Newsletter' distributed with a local free newspaper. However, the Clerk advised that the latter publication currently had no sponsor and this could result in a cost in production for the Council.

Accordingly, it was

**RESOLVED**

that the current arrangements continue in regard to the Council magazines, subject to the costs of the 'Council Newsletter' being clarified and agreed and that formal contracts be considered only after the finances have been approved.

32. **NOMINATION OF COUNCIL TO STAND ON ASSOCIATION OF LARGER LOCAL COUNCIL'S EXECUTIVE.**

The Committee considered the Town Clerk's recommendation that the Council continue to put itself forward for election to the Association of Larger Local Council's Executive and it was

**RESOLVED**

the Council be nominated as an Executive member of the Association of Larger Local Councils for 2005/2006 and all future years, subject to there being no contrary recommendations from officers and/or Members.

33. **CIVIL PARTNERSHIPS ACT 2004**

The Committee was advised that the General Register Office has given notice that all existing licences for venues will automatically be extended to cover the provision of civil partnerships. It was noted that it is for the management of the venue to decide whether the establishment is to be made available for marriages, civil partnerships or both. It was further noted that it was the intention of Buckinghamshire County Council's Registration Service to make the Town Hall, currently licensed for marriages, equally available for both civil partnerships and marriages but was seeking the Council's agreement first.

A brief discussion took place on to whether this was appropriate and a view was expressed that civil partnership ceremonies were intrinsically different to the marriage services that the Council had originally agreed to licence the building for. However the opinion was also expressed that civil partnerships should be allowed in the interests of equality and dignity, particularly for single sex couples.

It was proposed by Councillor Mrs P.R. Wilkinson and seconded by Councillor N.L. Brown that *'that the Committee do not agree to civil partnerships being licensed at the Town Hall.'*

This motion was **LOST** by one vote to four.

*Councillor Mrs P.R. Wilkinson requested that her vote for this motion be recorded.*

The Committee then considered the recommendation of the officers' report and, following a vote, it was

**RESOLVED**

that the Committee agree to civil partnerships being licensed at the Town Hall.

34. **GETTING CLOSER TO COMMUNITIES - SURVEY OF PARISH AND TOWN COUNCILS**

The Buckinghamshire County Council's 'Getting Closer to Communities' – Town and Parish Council questionnaire was presented to the Committee.

The Chairman suggested that individual Members reply directly to the County Council with responses but that, if so desired, Members submit their own consultation questionnaire to the Town Clerk for collation by the 9<sup>th</sup> December 2005 so he could compile and submit a corporate response.

35. **TOWN CRIER'S CONTRACT AND APPAREL**

Members paid tribute to the excellent work the current Town Crier was undertaking in promoting the town. However the Committee was advised that he had no formal contract or guidance on events to appear at. Moreover, it was noted that his suit had to be hired by the Council and other groups from a private individual at a charge of £10 per event plus a £25 deposit. This was proving very time consuming for officers.

Members agreed his work for the Council should be clarified and, following advice from the Ancient and Honourable Guild of Town Criers, he should be allowed to undertake a certain amount of freelance work, subject to the event being deemed suitable by the Town Clerk.

A brief discussion took place on whether a more elaborate outfit should be purchased but it was agreed that, since a bespoke outfit may not fit the current Town Crier's successor, this was not advisable.

It was

**RESOLVED**

- i) that the purchase of the Town Crier outfit from the current owner for the sum of £100 be agreed.
- ii) that the Council pay for an annual clean of the outfit and pay for the Town Crier's membership to The Ancient and Honourable Guild of Town Criers for the sum of £50 for the first year and £25 thereafter on an annual basis.
- iii) that the honorarium of the Town Crier, committing the post-holder to attending the Schools of Chesham Carnival, the Victorian Shopping Evening and up to a maximum of six additional functions be agreed.
- iv) that the Town Clerk, in liaison with the Town Mayor, be delegated to agree attendance by the Town Crier to the six additional functions not specified.

- v) that the use of the Town Crier outfit for the Town Crier to attend any

private functions under his own arrangements be agreed, subject to the event being deemed suitable by the Town Clerk, and that any cleaning or maintenance incurred on the outfit be met personally by the Town Crier.

36. **INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT**

Members considered the report of the newly appointed internal auditor and agreed his recommendations thereof.

It was

**RESOLVED**

that the report be noted.

37. **FIRST AID TRAINING**

The report from the Finance and Contracts Manager advised that, because of the specialist health and safety issues at the Elgiva, it had been deemed best practice to ask the Technical Manager and Technical Assistant at the facility to obtain an advanced level of First Aid at Work training, which required attendance in April this year at a full week's course with an assessment. Both employees passed the assessment and now have a First Aid at Work Certificate, valid for three years.

In noting that it was common practice for both the public and private sector to pay some financial remuneration in recognition of gaining this award, it was

**RESOLVED**

that a payment of £2.00 per week be made to each of the post of Technical Manager and Technical Assistant at the Elgiva, (subject to the relevant post holder holding the appropriate full First Aid Certificate) commencing from 1 December 2005 and to be increased in line with the average annual pay award from the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2007.

38. **REGISTERING OF COUNCIL LAND WITH THE LAND REGISTRY**

Members were advised that the Land Registry is seeking to register all land by the year 2012 and is encouraging large landowners to register their estates. The Town Council has a number of current unregistered properties and the Land Registry has offered to undertake all the necessary work to register these for a sum of £525.

It was accepted that buying into the service would not only help the Land Registry in its efforts to register all land, but guarantee title of Council owned property, eliminate the necessity to store many deeds and simplify future conveyancing.

It was therefore

**RESOLVED**

that the sum of £525.00 be put in the 2006/07 estimates for the purpose of engaging the Land Registry to undertake registration of Council land, subject to further financial consideration at the estimates meeting of this Committee in January 2006.

39. **FINANCIAL REPORT FOR SEVEN MONTHS**

The Financial Report for seven months to 31<sup>st</sup> October 2005 was presented.

It was

**RESOLVED**

that the Report be noted.

40. **INFORMATION ITEMS**

The items presented on Information Sheet No. 15 were received and noted.

41. **EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC AND THE PRESS**

It was

**RESOLVED**

that the public and the Press be excluded in accordance with the Public Bodies (Access to Meetings) Act 1960, as matters which are confidential are about to be discussed.

42. **OUTSTANDING DEBTS**

The Committee was advised of the outstanding debts owed to the Council. It was noted that, while the few outstanding debts were mostly insignificant in financial terms, the football pitch hire fees owed by one football club was of concern. Members accepted that it was difficult to get sports clubs to pay all fees in advance but felt that this debt was unacceptably large.

Accordingly, it was

**RESOLVED**

that a letter be sent to the secretary of the named football club threatening legal proceedings unless monies were forthcoming on account.

43. **CLOSE OF MEETING**

The meeting closed at 8.25 pm.

CHAIRMAN

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