

## EAST GRINSTEAD TOWN COUNCIL

### FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE – 20 SEPTEMBER 2012

Present: Councillor N Webster (Chairman)  
Councillor O'Brien (Vice Chairman)  
Councillor Mrs Belsey (Deputy Town Mayor)  
Councillors Mrs Brunsdon, Hodges, Mainstone, Osborne, Whittaker  
and Wyan.

Also present: 2 members of the public and 1 representative of the East Grinstead Courier and Observer.

Officers present: Town Clerk and Mr Barry Male, Responsible Finance Officer.

#### 136 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

The Chairman opened the meeting, thanked all for their attendance and opened the floor to public questions.

Mr Aitken asked whether the Town Councillors could advise if the Small scale housing assessment numbers were included in the Atkins report for committed development. The answer to this was yes, as far as the councillors knew this was the case.

He then asked if it was true that Atkins used ward data to assess the situation and town ward traffic was therefore excluded from the moat road considerations?

Cllr Mrs Brunsdon was not sure whether this was the case and offered to take this away from the meeting to establish the fact with West Sussex County Council, who were the sponsors of the Atkins report.

Mr Blakeston advised that a new development in Surrey had started now, what effect did the surrey development have on the Atkins report?

The response was that Atkins had considered only the build in East Grinstead and therefore Mid Sussex DC commitments not any commitments across the border. General growth in road use was also not factored in, so while development in Surrey would undoubtedly affect the road use it was not a factor that had been taken in to account.

Public question time was completed at 7.10pm

#### 137 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:

Cllr Mrs Bennett	At a Mayoral engagement (advised outside but prior to the meeting)
Cllr Saul	On holiday

#### 138 MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 21<sup>st</sup> June 2012 and having been previously circulated, be confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

139 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

The Clerk confirmed that the staff structure was now in place with one vacancy to be filled after the amenities manager reduced to part time in the new year. She would be circulating a new structure chart to members with the names and brief duties.

140 DECLARATIONS OF PREJUDICIAL AND PERSONAL INTEREST

- \* Councillor Mainstone made a personal interest declaration in respect of item 15 as a member of the Christmas promotion committee and a trustee of the museum. Also in respect of item 6 as recipient of cheque 19182
- \* Councillor O'Brien made a personal interest declaration in respect of item 15 as a member of the Christmas promotion committee and the Sports Club.
- \* Cllr Wyan made a personal interest declaration in respect of item 15 as a member of the sports club.
- \* Cllr Webster made a personal interest declaration in agenda item 6 as recipient of cheque 19194 and in respect of agenda item 15 as a member of the Trinity Methodist Church.
- \* Cllr Osborne made a prejudicial declaration in respect of agenda item 16 as an occasional hirer - he did not take part in the discussion or the vote at that part of the meeting.

141 ACCOUNTS FOR JUNE JULY AND AUGUST 2012 (Min 60 21.06.12)

Mr Male explained the current position and took questions. It was clarified that the staff overtime payments are included in salaries and not shown separately. There is an allowance for overtime in salaries and at this point in the year there is an under-spend on the salaries budget.

RESOLVED: (1) That the accounts for June July and August 2012 as set out in the schedule submitted be approved and confirmed.

142 TOWN COUNCIL FINANCES – POSITION STATEMENT (Min 61 21.06.12)

Mr Male outlined the overall position and the report was noted.

143 PERFORMANCE INDICATORS (Min 62 21.06.12))

Mr Male outlined the performance figures, highlighting that the staff sickness was very low and the payment of invoices is good, this report was noted.

144 RISK ANALYSIS REPORT (Min 360 22.03.12)

Mr Male reference the additional risks added to the register this year regarding the

reconsideration of Peninsula HR advice and the events for the jubilee.  
In response to a question it was clarified that most of the councils property holdings were registered with the land registry and this was the purpose of the current process to ensure that all are indeed clearly identified.

145 NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN WORKING PARTY (Min 63 21.06.12)

The Chairman supplemented his report by advising that Cllr Mainstone was taking the lead on involving schools in the consultation process for the plan. Cllr Mainstone gave a brief update on the contacts he had made and would be giving a more full report to the next meeting of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering group.

The report was noted.

146 CONSULTATION WORKING GROUP (MIN 70 21.06.2)

The report was noted.

147 SPORTS DEVELOPMENT GROUP

The Chairman of the group Councillor Whittaker endorsed the report and highlighted the positive reporting on sporting matters from the Courier and observer and reported that the sports reporter was an effective liaison for the group. In response to a question as to whether new membership enquiries were up following the Olympics, Councillor Whittaker said that the next meeting was at the end of October and this would be included on the agenda.

148 TOWN COUNCIL SURGERIES

The Chairman introduced the report saying that the surgeries which had been suspended (although acknowledging that the Liberal Democrat Party had continued to attend the library for surgeries) were now to be reinvented as a meaningful help point for members of the public. The recommendation in the paper would facilitate this. Councillors of both parties spoke to support the recommendation and the following questions were answered:

Will the rota include all Town Councillors? - Yes while other Councillors may be invited from county or district this will be a town councillor lead surgery and others will not be on the rota.

How will it work in inclement weather? – it may be that if the weather is particularly uncomfortable that the Town Council gazebo will be insufficient then arrangements with local coffee shops may be entered in to. It will only be a couple of hours so should not be too intrusive but this is not as yet determined.

How many Cllrs will be rota'd at a time? - If only 2 they may be very infrequently attended by a Councillor, if several at once this may mean very frequent attendance. - It is likely to be around four each time, specific reference was made to the minority party being represented and this may be quite onerous. The detail still to be agreed.

Would elected Members and Officers/ other Members by invitation be the only people included? Yes to avoid confusion only Town Councillors and invited services will be in attendance.

The leader of the minority group said that his group intended to carry on with the library surgeries also.

It was suggested that the surgeries should be weekly not monthly, a show of hands for preference however showed that monthly at least initially was preferred.

RESOLVED:

- I. To introduce the new style surgeries once a month in the High Street and review this after six months
- II. The new surgery would start from the 1<sup>st</sup> Saturday in October
- III. To write to West Sussex CC to thank them for the free use of the Library in the past

149 PROJECT EG WORKING GROUP

RESOLVED:

- I. To constitute the group in accordance with the terms of reference
- II. That the group will comprise Cllrs O'Brien, Saull, Sweatman, Webster, Wyan, one councillor from the minority party (to be confirmed) Stuart Scholes from EGBA, the Town Promotions Manager and Business Support officer.

150 COMMUNITY REVENUE GRANTS

- RESOLVED: (i) To award the grants as set out below.  
(ii) Any remaining balance to be delegated to the Town Clerk to award to any emergency applications submitted during the remainder of the year. Any awards to be subsequently reported to the committee.

Organisation	Amount requested	Amount recommended 2012/13
East Grinstead Visually Impaired (VIP) Readers Group	150	150
Tadpoles Swimming Club for the Disabled*	400	400
East Grinstead & District Access Group*	300	300
East Grinstead Sports Club Limited	500	0 (capital project)
Trinity Methodist Church New Build	500	0 (capital project)
East Grinstead Council for Voluntary Service*	350	350
East Grinstead Macular Group	350	200
Grenestede Talking News*	100	100
West Sussex Mediation Service	200	200
Vitalise	181.50	181.50
Nautical Training Corps T.S. Resolution	1500	To award the difference between the WSCC award and £1500 subject to an overall maximum of £350.
East Grinstead & District Association for Mental Health	300	300
Furni-Help Mid Sussex*	350	350
total	5181.5	2531.50

151 TO RECEIVE RECOMMENDATIONS OF COMMITTEES

RESOLVED: The three recommendations from the Amenities and Tourism Committee were approved as follows:

- (1) To set aside in the 2013 budget an amount to underwrite the Councils maximum liability of £2000 for the 2013 Sussex Living Marathon
- (2) To make allowance in the 2013 budget for the East Court Events programme and staging
- (3) To approve the east court buildings fees for hirers 2013 as set out in the appendix to the Amenities and Tourism agenda of 13<sup>th</sup> September 2012.

152 COUNCILLOR ALLOWANCES REVIEW

There was discussion as to the merits of the variances in the East Grinstead Town Council adopted scheme and it was suggested that the care element that is included in the scheme be recommended to MSDC. It was further suggested that the criteria to access these payments could be relaxed to be more flexible. A final suggestion on the scheme was that an enhanced payment for the leader of the Council could be considered and consideration as to whether the Mayor's allocation was reasonable.

It was stated that although not a remuneration the package being adequate to cover costs and ensure that Councillors were not out of pocket in discharging duties was necessary to ensure that candidates for office were encouraged and not discouraged. The Councillors further requested that the review of the paperless agenda setting be carried out and the Clerk undertook to advise of the savings that have been achieved through the change in the system

RESOLVED: Councillors to provide further comment on the Mid Sussex Councillors Allowance for Parish Councils scheme to the Town Clerk by 27<sup>th</sup> September

153 TOWN COUNCIL RESPONSE TO THE ATKINS REPORT

There was a robust debate as to the merits of the report. The discussion in principal agreed that the report should be welcomed and the Town Council must now work with the District and County Councils to ensure that Do minimum is prioritised and made a reality within the next two years and Do Something then phased to ensure that the town can continue to prosper and not be frustrated by the overloaded road system.

It was further stated that do nothing was not an option and that developer contributions must be strongly secured to ensure that the road improvements can be achieved through any planning permissions given. Atkins must be a message to all developers that significant contributions to the solution must be made.

154 ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

There being no urgent business the meeting closed at 9.00 p.m.

SIGNED:

CHAIRMAN.