

## EAST GRINSTEAD TOWN COUNCIL

### FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE – 21 JUNE 2012

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

Also present: Councillors Burns and Favor, 5 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.

#### 55 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

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

Mr Thorpe wished to raise the planning application for development off Copthorne Road, he had representations that he wished to make and had some difficulty in contacting his local Councillors. Both his local Councillors were present and explained they had been away or had difficulty with communications over the past few days, but would be most happy to talk with the gentleman outside of the meeting. He gave his telephone number to the Clerk for further contact and he was also advised that the planning committee meeting on Monday 25<sup>th</sup> would be considering the application, if he can attend that meeting he would be able to make his representation directly.

Mrs Collins asked whether the Chairman of the Wallis Centre Management Committee would be invited to join the working party due to be set up to consider Youth Services. The Chairman advised that this matter was on the agenda and although various people with information and expertise to contribute would be invited to do so, the mainstay of the working party was due to be formed of Town Councillors.

Public question time was completed at 7.15pm

#### 56 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:

Cllr Sillitoe	On holiday
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#### 57 MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meetings held on 22<sup>ND</sup> March 2012 and 14<sup>th</sup> May 2012 having been previously circulated, be confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

#### 58 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

The Clerk confirmed that she had written to MSDC in response to the 31.3.12 deadline in respect of minute 357 22.03.12.

59 DECLARATIONS OF PREJUDICIAL AND PERSONAL INTEREST

\* In respect of Agenda item 16 Cllr Mrs Belsey gave a personal declaration in respect of the Wallis Centre as she is a Mid Sussex District Council representative to that body.

60 ACCOUNTS FOR MARCH, APRIL AND MAY 2012 (Min 353 22.03.12)

Mr Male explained the current position and took questions. The payment for sash window at over £1000 was clarified as one window and this was why the handyman was undertaking the other replacements in-house where possible.

The East Grinstead and District Access Group were confirmed as settled in the music room.

The exact explanation as to what a grave shield could not be given by the officers other than they are used in the cemetery and protect the grave plots.

RESOLVED: (1) That the accounts for March April and May 2012 as set out in the schedule submitted be approved and confirmed.

(2) The payment on the Capital Fund account for 2011/2012 financial year as set out in the schedule be approved and confirmed

61 TOWN COUNCIL FINANCES – POSITION STATEMENT (Min 354 22.03.12)

Mr Male outlined the position confirming that the overall position was strong but several capital projects have not as yet been completed therefore carried forward to this year. He confirmed that a NatWest term deposit has been secured at 3.25% for £175,000. In response to a question he confirmed that the deposit held with Santander is with the UK company and not the Spanish parent company which has been downgraded in its ratings. The UK company remains triple A rated.

The rest of the report was noted.

62 PERFORMANCE INDICATORS (Min 355 22.03.12))

Mr Male outlined the performance figures and this report was noted.

63 NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN WORKING PARTY (Min 357 22.03.12)

The Chairman supplemented his report by advising that the current survey has been extended to 23<sup>rd</sup> July to encourage as much response as possible, to date there were over 230 responses. In response to a question he confirmed that the Town Council was approaching the sixth form and other youth organisations in order to seek views of the next generation of East Grinstead.

In response to a question as to the effect of the Dawlish neighbourhood plan not

going forward to referendum, the chairman confirmed this was a big issue as it potentially undermined the process. The effect of the habitats directives were still unknown and it was difficult to prejudge this position as it would affect East Grinstead's plan. However he did stress that the Dawlish report had not been written with the intention of it going forward as a Neighbourhood plan at this stage and should be kept in context.

It was commented that perhaps the Town Council should refuse to make decisions on any further applications until a firm directive had been received from MSDC as the effect of the directive.

In response to a question for the meeting on the Atkins report and when it would be made public, the Chairman advised that WSCC wanted to meet to discuss the report first and although the Town Council and WSCC had provided availability one party still had to do so which was holding the process up, however the meeting was hoped to be held in the first week of July.

The report was noted.

#### 64 SIR ARCHIBALD MCINDOE MEMORIAL STATUE

In response to questions after the report, the Town Clerk was unable to advise whether the Town Museum trustees have been consulted on the proposal. But she was able to confirm that the cost of the work was far below the cost of the museum extension and as the appeal was to be an international appeal and not grant based, it was hoped that this would not be seen as a competition to the Museum extension. But a shorter project that would enhance the profile of the Guinea Pigs, Sir Archibald and the town itself, all of which could be a boost to the Museums longer term project of the extension to house the McIndoe collection.

RESOLVED: The Town Council supports the project and will take over the maintenance of the statue once it is built, should the ownership be transferred to the East Grinstead Town Council.

#### 65 REPRESENTATION OF EAST GRINSTEAD IN LOCAL MEDIA

The Chairman commented that the position is improved with more balance being seen in stories and better efforts to work with the press in passing stories and information. Further comments followed:

The local press coverage of sports events and results had improved since Christmas and this was felt to be of a high standard.

The coverage of the Jubilee had been excellent and more pictures of happy smiling residents would be welcomed.

The Leveson enquiry has put the media firmly in the spotlight and the Town Council should not influence any editorial control.

Members should send stories to the press on local community activity in their wards to ensure that they are picked up by the Press. It is well known that "bad news sells papers", but sending in good news stories allows a happy balance of the good news in the town too. Official press releases will continue to be issued by the Town Council Clerk.

The sharps bins story was unfortunate and in drawing a line behind the past and moving forward would be helpful.

The EG newspapers are not dissimilar to the local papers in other towns, supplying the stories and information is necessary to ensure that all stories are covered as the

editorial team will then be aware.

66 COUNCILLORS' ALLOWANCES

The allowances were noted, along with comment that the Town Mayor for 2011/12 had carried out a great job of representing the town and the Town Mayors allowance is stretched at the seams to cover the costs of mileage and events undertaken. Cllr Saull was congratulated for his efforts in raising large contributions for his charities.

67 TO RECEIVE RECOMMENDATIONS OF COMMITTEES (Min 355 22.03.12))

The one recommendation was from Public Services for the setting up of a working group for consideration of the future of youth service delivery. This would be dealt with under item 16 where the working groups would be proposed for the coming year.

68 STATEMENT OF ANNUAL ACCOUNTS (Min 69 23.06.11)

Mr Male explained an amendment to the accounts in the Chartered Institute of Public and Financial Accounting had advised of a slightly different accounting method for assets on the balance sheet. With this slight adjustment it was

- RECOMMENDED
- (1) To approve the Annual Statement of Accounts for 2011/2012 as set out in Appendix A (as amended) of the F&GP Committee papers;
  - (2) To approve the Annual Governance Statement (as amended) as set out in Appendix B of the F&GP Committee papers and to confirm "yes", to questions 1 to 9 as set out in the Statement and to agree that this now be signed by the Chairman and the Town Clerk,.

69 APPROVAL OF INTERNAL AUDIT PLAN AND ANNUAL REVIEW OF EFFECTIVENESS OF AUDIT

- RESOLVED:
- (1) To formally note and approve the Annual Internal Audit Report for 2011/2012 prepared by the Council's Internal Auditor, Mr Paul Hartley MIOB, together with the schedule of management actions/responses prepared by the Town Clerk and Heads of Service.
  - (2) To include a review of procurement procedures specifically in respect of cumulative contracts.

70 APPOINTMENT OF WORKING PARTIES FOR 2012/13

- RESOLVED:
- (1) Neighbourhood Plan Working Party, Parish Halls Working Party, and Consultation Working Party to continue with the current memberships.

(2) To set up a working party for Youth Service Delivery in East Grinstead. The membership to be five Councillors plus Officer Support to be determined by the Chairman of Public Services in consultation with the Chairman of Finance and General Purposes. The working group will embark on a stakeholder engagement programme and will have the following included in the brief:

Focus and Objectives  
Local Context  
Demographic Data  
Current Delivery Arrangements  
Partnering Arrangements  
Arrangements elsewhere (lessons to learn)  
Outcome delivery

71 TO APPOINT TRUSTEES TO CHARITIES (MIN 71 23.06.11)

The Chairman thanked the retiring trustees and proposed four new trustees to serve on the committee.

RESOLVED: Cllrs Mrs Bennett, Mrs Belsey, O'Brien and Webster are appointed to the committee to consider awards to the Sidney Betchley, John Smith and Henry Smith Charities and for their terms to run for three years to bring them in to line with the local elections.

72 STAFFING REVIEW (Min 362 22.03.12)

The Town Clerk explained the structure as proposed at Appendix D and confirmed that the changes would result in a saving to the Salary budget due to some staff wishing to go part time. The overall establishment would increase by one post to ensure that the functions to support the committees and transact the business of the Council were adequately resourced.

RESOLVED: To approve the revised structure for the staffing establishment.

73 ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

There being no urgent business the meeting closed at 8.36 p.m.

SIGNED:

CHAIRMAN.