

## EAST GRINSTEAD TOWN COUNCIL

### FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE – 22 MARCH 2012

Present: Councillor N Webster (Chairman)  
Councillor Mrs M Belsey (Vice Chairman)  
Councillor J Saull (Town Mayor)  
Councillor Mrs Beckford and Mrs Brunsdon  
Councillors Hodges, Osborne, O'Brien, Sillitoe, Whittaker and Wyan.

Also present: Councillor Mainstone, 2 members of the public and no press.

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

#### 348 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There being no public present, Members moved on to the next item of business at 7.45 pm. It should be noted that two members of the public did arrive during the body of the meeting.

#### 349 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: Nil.

#### 350 MINUTES

Councillor Mainstone advised the Minute 281, of the last meeting stated that Councillor Mainstone had disclosed a personal interest as a hirer of the Old Court House. This should have stated Councillor Osborne's name. Subject to this amendment it was

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 26th January 2012 having been previously circulated, be confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

#### 351 DECLARATIONS OF PREJUDICIAL AND PERSONAL INTEREST

- \* Councillors Mrs Belsey, Mrs Brunsdon, Mainstone, O'Brien and Webster disclosed personal interests in all matters pertaining to Mid Sussex District Council as elected Members of that Authority.
- \* Councillors Mrs Brunsdon and O'Brien disclosed personal interests in all matters pertaining to West Sussex County Council as elected Members of that Authority.
- \* Councillor Mrs Beckford disclosed a personal interest in agenda item 9 as a member of the Wallis Centre Management Committee.
- \* Councillor Osborne disclosed a personal interest as an occasional hirer of the Old Court House.
- \* Councillor Mainstone disclosed a personal interest as a member of the East Grinstead Music and Arts Festival.
- \* Members present disclosed personal interests in agenda item 9 as follows:-  
  
Councillors Hodges and Osborne – East Grinstead Town Twinning Association.  
Councillors O'Brien and Saull – Mid Sussex Association of Local Councils

Councillor Wyan – Gatwick Area Conservation Campaign  
 Councillor Mrs Belsey – East Grinstead & District Access Group  
 Councillor Mainstone – East Grinstead Town Museum  
 Councillor Sillitoe - East Grinstead Christmas Lights  
 Councillor Osborne – Friends of East Grinstead Museum  
 Councillor Whittaker - East Grinstead Business Association  
 Councillor Webster – East Grinstead Council for Voluntary Service  
 Councillors Mainstone and O'Brien – East Grinstead Christmas Promotions  
 Councillor Mrs Belsey – East Grinstead War Memorial Company  
 Councillors Mrs Belsey, Mainstone, Saull and Webster – Mid Sussex  
 Association of Town Councils  
 Councillor Webster – Queen Victoria Hospital NHS Foundation Trust.

352 ACCOUNTS FOR JANUARY AND FEBRUARY 2012 (Min 282 26.1.12)

Mr Male explained the current position and his report was noted.

RESOLVED: That the accounts for the following months as set out in the schedule submitted be approved and confirmed:

	<u>Total</u> <u>Payments</u> £	<u>Imprest</u> £
Jan 2012	84,599.16	4,161.47
Feb 2012	95,970.80	1,983.96
	<u>180,569.96</u>	<u>6,145.43</u>

353 TOWN COUNCIL FINANCES – POSITION STATEMENT (Min 283 26.1.12)

Mr Male outlined the position. There was a question as to whether the figures were a direct comparison with the same period last year. This was clarified as being the case. The remainder of the report was noted.

354 PERFORMANCE INDICATORS (Min 284 26.1.12))

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

355 TO RECEIVE RECOMMENDATIONS OF COMMITTEES (Min 285 26.1.12))

It was clarified with reference to Minute 222 of the Public Services Committee meeting held on 8th March 2012 that the Sharps boxes contract is a separate contract to the cleaning one already in existence with Mid Sussex District Council and it was

RESOLVED: To confirm the recommendations nos. (i), (ii), (iii) and (iv) of minute 222 of the Public Services Committee meeting held on 8th March 2012.

356 REPORTS FROM COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES (Min 286 26.1.12)

The report concerning the Christmas Lights Committee was raised as to the concern about ongoing funding.

A question was asked of Councillor Wyan regarding his report on the Gatwick Area Consultation Campaign as to whether the GACC has started lobbying for local authorities surrounding Gatwick concerning the 2019 agreement not to have a

second runway as that date was fast approaching were there to be requests for an extension to this embargo. The response was that the Gatwick Master Plan made it very clear that the option for a second runway remains a possibility.

With regard to the report for the Wallis Centre Management Committee an update was requested following the departure of Stephen Pearson. The Chairman commented that it was unfortunate that Stephen Pearson was leaving, having made such an impact during the short period he was in post. A new appointment is believed to have been made but there is no knowledge as to whether there is to be a gap before the new post-holder takes position.

A question was asked regarding the Christmas Light Committee and whether there had been further talks with Melvin Phillips. The response was that the final bills for the electricity were still awaited and once these were received a meeting would be sought.

An additional update regarding the War Memorial Company logo competition was made and although there had been a relatively poor response from the schools a winner for a new logo had been selected.

Finally, concerning the Town Museum it was reported that the Museum has asked to make a presentation to the Committee during the next civic year to update the Town Council on the plans and progress of the Museum at this time. It was confirmed that the next meeting of the Finance & General Purposes Committee had been offered for this presentation to be made. Following the presentation to Committee a visit to the Museum for a behind the scenes look would be arranged.

The Chairman thanked all Members for submitting their annual reports for their outside bodies and stressed the importance of their attendance at these meetings and of reporting back to the Finance & General Purposes Committee to ensure that information was circulated.

357 NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN WORKING PARTY (Min 287 26.1.12)

Councillor Mrs Brunsdon gave an update as follows:-

"Following detailed examination of the emerging draft traffic data, costings and modelling the conclusion of the steering group is that Proceeding with development within the town or on greenfield sites would result in an unacceptable impact on junctions on the A22 in East Grinstead if no action is taken.

In order to ensure that current levels of congestion do not worsen a set of junction improvements "do minimum" should be implemented. This would provide the capacity to accommodate only existing commitments of 765 homes (homes with permissions granted and allocated in previous local plans or small housing documents)

It is considered that further measures could be undertaken to increase capacity further to accommodate a further 190 homes in a "do something" scenario, but these would require further significant additional up front investment and planning and may therefore be undeliverable in the short term.

Putting these findings together regrettably this leads us to have to justify a zero growth approach to the East Grinstead neighbourhood plan until additional capacity can be delivered on the A22 junctions."

The Chairman thanked Councillor Wyan for all his work on the Steering Group, as he had recently stepped down.

It was further commented that the emerging Neighbourhood Plan and Mid Sussex District Council's requirement to supply housing figures is a matter of bad timing. The analysis from the emerging Atkins stage 3 study has suggested that further discussions and public engagement will be necessary to determine the Town Council's position in regard the Neighbourhood Plan. It was confirmed that presently 765 dwellings have existing allocation or planning permission and these are before any additional growth is considered by the Town Council. It was clarified that the Town Council cannot clarify any expected costs as yet for the junction improvements and although the draft Atkins Report does give initial figures this report as yet is not in the public domain and therefore cannot be discussed at this time.

A final comment was made that the work of the Town Council's Planning Committee would be most challenging over the coming 18 months whilst the new statutory plans are put in place. It was commented that without growth how can the Town grow and meet the needs of the residents but that such constraints that are being suggested creates a monumental dilemma. It would appear that the Town Council is in a Catch 22 situation and no-one wanted to be in this position. It was

- RESOLVED:
- (i) That the Town Clerk write to Mid Sussex District Council in response to the 31st March 2012 deadline to confirm the agreed ceiling of growth as 765 homes that being taken from (existing commitments and allocated sites);
  - (ii) To confirm that to proceed with the aforementioned existing commitments that junction improvements a "do minimum" scenario must be implemented to ensure that the impact on the A22 junctions is acceptable;
  - (iii) To include in the response that it is not clear that the further transport improvements outlined in the emerging analysis would permit ANY future increase capacity even up to an additional 190 homes. This scenario would require significant up-front investment and planning, and may therefore be undeliverable in the short term. It may also generate traffic and wider network implications;
  - (iv) That Committee approve that as the Chairman of Planning Committee has changed to Councillor Whittaker then he be part of the Steering Group, replacing Councillor Wyan who has recently stood down, and
  - (v) To delegate to the Town Clerk, in consultation with the Chairmen of Finance & General Purposes Committee and the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group, the appointment of an appropriate Planning Consultation to draft the Neighbourhood Plan.

358 CONSULTATION WORKING PARTY (Min 288 26.1.12)

The report was noted and specific thanks given to Councillor O'Brien for his significant input to the Southern Water and CIL responses.

359 APPOINTMENT OF INTERNAL AUDITOR

RESOLVED: That Mr Paul Hartley be appointed as the Town Council's Internal Auditor for the financial year 2012-2013.

360 RISK MANAGEMENT

The report was noted.

361 ANNUAL STAFF TRAINING REPORT

RESOLVED: To approve the Town Council's training programme as outlined in the report.

The remainder of the report was noted.

362 ANNUAL ESTABLISHMENT REPORT

It was confirmed that the Consultant's staffing review report recommendations will be without allocated budget and that the budget for 2012/2013 salaries has been reflected for expected changed. It was confirmed that staff who had reached the top of their spinal column point did not receive additional uplift in salary.

The remainder of the report was noted.

363 COMMUNITY SPONSORSHIP REQUESTS

- RESOLVED:
- (i) To unanimously agree to award £200 to the East Grinstead Swimming Club for their centenary World Record Breaking Attempt project, and
  - (ii) To sponsor the Bluebell Railway's Track Trek in the Autumn of 2012 to the total cost of £1,000, and to delegate to the Town Clerk, in consultation with the Chairman and Vice Chairman of Finance & General Purposes Committee to determine the split of budget allocation for this award.

364 ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

Councillor Mrs Brunsdon referred to the edition of the East Grinstead Courier and Observer of the previous week and commented that the quality of reporting and the tone of the stories was not helpful in that it sensationalised and focused on the worst elements of a potential story and she would like this matter be placed as a future agenda item for the Committee to consider any possibilities.

There being no urgent business the meeting closed at 8.55 p.m.

SIGNED:

CHAIRMAN.