

## EAST GRINSTEAD TOWN COUNCIL

### FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE – 22 SEPTEMBER 2011

Present: Councillor Mrs M Belsey (in the Chair)  
Councillor N Hodges (Acting Vice Chairman)  
Councillors Mrs Beckford and Mrs Brunsdon  
Councillors O'Brien, Osborne, Sillitoe, Whittaker and Wyan

Also present: Councillor Mainstone and 4 members of the public.

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

#### 145 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There being no public questions, Members moved on to the next item of business at 7.45 pm.

Councillor Mrs Belsey, in the Chair, explained that Councillor Webster, Chairman of the Committee, was unwell. The meeting agreed to send their best wishes to Councillor Webster. Councillor Mrs Belsey proposed that the Vice Chairman, for this meeting only, be Councillor Hodges and this was RESOLVED by the Committee.

#### 146 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: Councillors Mrs Bennet and Webster

#### 147 MINUTES

The Chairman advised under Minute 75 that the matter has been referred to Mid Sussex District Council and no further update had yet been received.

With regard to Minute 77 there have been some initial meetings but there is nothing at this time to report back to the Committee.

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 23rd June 2011 having been previously circulated, be confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

Councillor Mrs Beckford asked whether the dates for the Youth Council meeting had been received. The Town Clerk advised that they had not and she would chase this. Councillor Mrs Beckford further asked whether there was an update on the public toilets. Councillor Mrs Brunsdon, Chairman of Public Services Committee, advised that there had been an update at the Public Services Committee meeting on 8th September 2011, but nothing further since then.

#### 147 DECLARATIONS OF PREJUDICIAL AND PERSONAL INTEREST

\* Councillors Mrs Brunsdon and O'Brien declared personal interests in any matters on the agenda that referred to Mid Sussex District Council or West Sussex County Council in their capacity as elected Members of those Authorities, although both stated they did not believe there were any items that covered this.

\* Councillor Mainstone declared a personal interest in any matters on the agenda that referred to Mid Sussex District Council and West Sussex County Council as an employee of the County Council and as an elected Member of the District Council. He also disclosed a personal interest in agenda item 12 as a Trustee of East Grinstead Museum, a member of the East Grinstead Music & Arts Festival and a member of the Christmas Promotions Committee.

- \* It was agreed by the Committee that a general declaration of personal interest would be accepted for all Members concerning their representation on outside bodies in respect of agenda item 12.
- \* Councillor Mrs Beckford disclosed a personal interest in agenda item 12 as her member organisation was affiliated to the Council for Voluntary Service.
- \* Councillor Wyan disclosed a personal interest in agenda item 9 as Mr Piddlesdon is known to him.

148 ACCOUNTS FOR JUNE, JULY AND AUGUST 2011 (Min 66 23.6.11)

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>
	£	£
June 2011	126,127.59	3,906.51
July 2011	115,245.89	1,757.35
August 2011	83,093.23	752.67
	<u>324,466.71</u>	<u>6,416.53</u>

149 TOWN COUNCIL FINANCES – POSITION STATEMENT (Min 68 23.6.11)

Councillor Mrs Brunsdon asked whether all cheque signatories were now up and running. Mr Male advised that all signatories had been mandated by the bank but not all pin numbers had been received and activated for the remote authorisation process. He confirmed that there were adequate numbers of signatories able to sign cheques and carry out payment functions.

Councillor Osborne asked what the regular payment run is for the Council, asking specifically at what frequency the runs were carried out. Mr Male confirmed that there are two runs each month plus any urgent payments.

There was further discussion as to the limit for imprest cheques and the individual capacity of a signatory. It was noted that this may be something that could be considered by Committee at a later meeting.

There being no further questions the accounts were noted.

150 PERFORMANCE INDICATORS (Min 73 23.6.11)

Mr Male re-circulated the Performance Indicators as the comparable figures for the previous year had not been included in the agenda papers. The Chairman commented that it was pleasing to see that the sickness statistics were below the national average and the Town Council's staff were to be congratulated.

151 NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN WORKING PARTY (Min 74 23.6.11)

The Chairman of the Neighbourhood Plan Working Party, Councillor Mrs Brunsdon, spoke to her table report highlighting that consultation would be taking place in Sainsburys supermarket as well as the other venues mentioned in the report.

Councillor Mainstone commented that it would have been better for the report to have been circulated beforehand in order to allow Members and the public time to read this and to ask any questions. He further asked if the minutes of the meetings

of the Working Party were being made available to the public. Councillor Mrs Brunsdon responded that notes have been kept of the Working Party meetings and these can be made available via the Town Council's web site but stated that as a Working Party it was not a requirement for minutes to be kept or made publicly available in the same way as a Standing Committee. She further commented that the reason for the tabled report was to ensure that it was as up to date as possible as there are frequent meetings being held, which had included the previous Friday.

The Chairman summarised by stating that there was a lot of good work being done by the Working Party and the committee congratulated them on this.

The report was noted.

152 EAST COURT WAR MEMORIAL

The Chairman outlined the report and suggested that there were several options included in the paper that could be pursued. She then opened the matter up to Committee for views.

Councillor O'Brien suggested that this was an emotive subject and perhaps some community consultation as to amendments to the War Memorial would be appropriate.

Councillor Osborne raised some concerns as to the five names that had been identified by the roleofhonour.com web site, pointing out that Staff Sgt. Groombridge was killed after the War and therefore he wondered if this might set a precedent.

Councillor Mainstone suggested that further exploration to try to establish more about the five people may be useful and suggested contacting local historians, the British Legion and the War Memorial Company amongst others. It was

RESOLVED: That the whole matter be referred to a future meeting when more information has been gathered to allow Members to consider this more fully. The Town Clerk to be requested to write to the family involved to explain the decision.

153 RISK ANALYSIS REPORT (Min 360 24.3.11)

Mr Male commented on the Risk Register explaining that where there was a blank tick box which related to a past date this did not necessarily mean that there had been no action in this area, but that some of the matters were ongoing and therefore never actually completed. It was

RESOLVED: To approve the Health and Safety Policy as contained in Appendix B and to note the Risk Report.

154 TO RECEIVE ANY RECOMMENDATIONS OF COMMITTEES (Min 67 23.6.11)

The Chairman advised that there were none.

155 COMMUNITY REVENUE GRANTS APPLICATIONS (Min 174 23.9.10)

The Town Clerk advised that the closing date for receipt of applications was 10th September in any given year. However, it was not unprecedented for the Committee to consider late applications. Unusually there had been a flurry of late applications and five had been received since the compilation of the agenda.

Councillor Beckford asked why so few applications had been received when there were a large number of community organisations in the Town. The Town Clerk replied that the number was up on previous years and highlighted that the overall fund of £3,700 tended to result in a smaller but manageable number of applications.

Councillor Beckford asked what the criteria is for making an application. The Town Clerk advised that this was included on the application form and that there was a large amount of background information required to accompany an application. She further advised that copies of the applications were available on file should any Member wish to see them.

There was further discussion as to the types of organisation making applications and some general comments regarding one of the applications received. Discussions also centred on the need for applicants to adhere to the closing date in future years.

RESOLVED: That the consideration of revenue grants applications be deferred to the November meeting of Finance & General Purposes Committee and that no further applications received after today's date would be considered in this financial year.

156 DIARY OF MEETINGS FOR CIVIC YEAR 2012/13 (Min 174 23.9.10)

Councillor Hodges commented that when a decision is made for 2013/14 regarding the diary of meetings he would like consideration given to the Charities Committee not being an "add-on" to the meeting of the Amenities & Tourism Committee meeting. He felt that the Charities Committee should command its own meeting date.

Councillor Mainstone referred to the proposal to amend the start time of Committee meetings. He felt that the existing 7.45 p.m. was to accommodate the public in attending meetings and to ensure that Councillors who work out of the town would be able to return home, have an evening meal and then attend the meeting. He further suggested that if the Charities Committee could not be accommodated on a separate day then perhaps it could be a reversal of order whereby the Charities Committee could meet before the Amenities & Tourism Committee.

There was further discussion as to the proposal for changing the Committee start times, with many Members expressing a personal preference.

The proposal was made and seconded, and Councillor Osborne requested a recorded vote:-

Cllr Belsey	-	Agree
Cllr Beckford	-	Disagree
Cllr Brunsdon	-	Agree
Cllr Hodges	-	Agree
Cllr O'Brien	-	Agree
Cllr Osborne	-	Disagree
Cllr Sillitoe	-	Agree
Cllr Whittaker	-	Disagree
Cllr Wyan	-	Disagree

RESOLVED: (1) To accept the diary of meetings for Civic Year 2012/13 as set out in Appendix C of the report.

(2) To recommend that Standing Orders be altered to change the start of meetings to 7pm from the 2012 Civic year.

157 MEMBERS PROTOCOL FOR WEBMAIL SYSTEM AND ELECTRONIC MAILINGS

Councillor Osborne stated that he had difficulties with the webmail in that he could not save the contacts list and he would request that the system be kept under review.

Councillor Mainstone asked whether public copies would still be available in hard copy format. The Town Clerk advised that a couple of copies would be available for the public.

There was further discussion as to the possible projection of agenda papers onto a screen or wall of the Council Chamber. It was

- RESOLVED: (i) To approve the protocol;
- (ii) To confirm that the official contact route for Members will be the @eastgrinstead.gov.uk address, and
- (iii) That from the next cycle of meetings, except where necessary, hard copies of reports for circulation to Members will cease.

158 APPOINTMENT OF SUB COMMITTEE (Min 74 23.6.11)

The Chairman outlined the recommendation. There was discussion as to the need for a standard composition of a sub-committee. It was felt that where specific Members were needed to ensure that there was expertise this may be the most appropriate way to ensure consultation was balanced. The Town Clerk confirmed that where consultation was received by the Town Council this would continue to be sent out to all Committee Members who would then be able to report their views to the sub-committee for consideration be to included in the response.

There was additional discussion as to reviewing the makeup of the consultation sub-committee annually and a further suggestion that the relevant Chairman of a Standing Committee should be added for specific consultations.

- RESOLVED: (i) To approve the formation of a consultation sub-committee comprising Councillors O'Brien, Sweatman and Wyan, with the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of Finance & General Purposes Committee as ex officio Members in accordance with Standing Orders and the addition of the appropriate Committee Chairman for each consultation, and
- (ii) That the composition of the sub-committee be reviewed annually.

There being no urgent business the meeting closed at 9 p.m.

SIGNED:

CHAIRMAN.