

EAST GRINSTEAD TOWN COUNCIL

FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE – 24 MARCH 2011

Present: Councillor J Baldwin (Chairman)
Councillor Mrs V Waddingham (Vice Chairman)
Councillor S Barnett (Town Mayor)
Councillor B Mainstone (Deputy Town Mayor)
Councillor Mrs Brunson, Mrs Collins DL
Councillors Gillbard, Johnson, Marmara and Reed

351 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There being no members of the public present Members moved on to the next item of business at 7.46 pm.

352 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: Councillors Banks and Musk,

353 MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 27th January 2011 having been previously circulated, be confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

354 DECLARATIONS OF PREJUDICIAL AND PERSONAL INTEREST

- * Councillors Mrs Brunson, Mainstone and Reed disclosed personal interests in the West Sussex Pension Fund (minute 364), the former as an elected Member of the County Council and the others as part-time employees.
- * Those Members who have previously declared interests as Members of organisations referred to in minute 356 (fees and charges) again disclosed their interests.

355 ACCOUNTS FOR JANUARY AND FEBRUARY 2011 (Min 287 27.1.11)

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>
	£	£
Jan 2011	115,142.79	2,381.16
Feb 2011	66,877.57	2,103.85
	<u>182,020.36</u>	<u>4,485.01</u>

356 OLD COURT HOUSE AND EAST COURT – MISCELLANEOUS FEES & CHARGES 2011/2012 FINANCIAL YEAR (A&T Min 347 17.3.11)

RESOLVED: (a) where the Council Chamber is used for meetings by:

- (1) East Grinstead Town Twinning Association
- (2) East Grinstead Music & Arts Festival, and
- (3) In connection with Planning Inquiries in respect of the East Grinstead area no charge be made;

- (b) when the East Grinstead Town Twinning Association request the use of facilities at East Court Mansion or the Meridian Hall in connection with visitors from overseas, no charge be made other than for breakages or damage which may occur;
- (c) the use of a meeting room, free of charge, for monthly committee meetings of the East Grinstead Town Twinning Association;
- (d) the use of a meeting room, free of charge, for meetings of East Grinstead Council for Voluntary Service on up to 10 occasions;
- (e) the use of a meeting room at East Court, free of charge, for meetings of the East Grinstead in Bloom Committee, East Grinstead Credit Union, East Grinstead Fair Trade Committee and East Grinstead Pub Watch;
- (f) the use of a meeting room at East Court, free of charge, for meetings of East Grinstead Society to view planning applications once every three weeks;
- (g) the charges for East Grinstead Model Railway Club's use of rooms in the basement at East Court be £465 exclusive of VAT in 2011/2012 financial year and that all permanent hirers' charges be as agreed within their existing contracts;
- (h) the charges for civil weddings and same sex blessings in 2011/2012 in Meridian Hall and East Court (Main Hall and Cranston Suite) be unaltered at £250 for one hour on Monday to Thursdays and £320 on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays, which includes the attendance of a salaried member of staff and, for East Court, the dedicated use of both rooms.
- (i) the charges for hire of the Old Court Room be unaltered for 2011/2012 at a rent of £1,000 per annual sessions for community/charitable groups and £1,200 for commercial organisations, noting that sessions are 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.; 1.30 p.m. to 5.30 p.m., and 6.00 p.m. to 10 p.m. The charges for individual session hire of the Old Court Room for 2011/2012 were agreed as £25 for community/charity groups and £35 for commercial organisations.

357 TOWN COUNCIL FINANCES – POSITION STATEMENT (Min 287 27.1.11)

Members noted as satisfactory the Town Council's overall financial position statement as at 11th March 2011.

358 ANNUAL REPORTS FROM COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES (Min 340 25.3.10)

The Chairman introduced this item by thanking the Town Council's representatives

on outside bodies for their detailed written reports. He said that these are extremely valuable and help to inform decisions on those organisations to which the Town Council can give value by direct representation. (Town Clerk's Informative: In addition to the reports included on the written reports a subsequent report was received from Councillor Banks in respect of East Grinstead in Bloom, and this will be posted to Members with the next mailing).

In relation to the report submitted by Councillor Mrs Collins in respect of the Wallis Centre she said that a meeting of hirers had resulted in all such groups agreeing to be represented on an enhanced Management Committee. The meeting had requested that the Town Council make representations to West Sussex County Council to enquire about asset transfer of the site. The meeting RECOMMENDED to Council on 4 April 2011 that the Officers be instructed to make such an approach having regard to the content of the County Council's policy for such transfers, with a view to a full report with financial and management implications being brought back to the Committee at the earliest opportunity.

Turning to the report on East Grinstead Museum, Councillor Mainstone advised that the application for a capital grant to the Wellcome Foundation towards the proposed building extension to house the Queen Victoria Hospital collection, that reflects the work of Sir Archibald McIndoe and the Guinea Pigs, had been unsuccessful, primarily on sustainability grounds. It was understood there was soon to be a debrief from the Foundation and Members did RESOLVE that the Town Clerk write urgently to the Chairman of the Trust offering the Town Council's support in attempting to make a sustainability case, should it be possible for the application to be reconsidered.

359 APPOINTMENT OF INTERNAL AUDITOR (Min 336 25.3.10)

Having given consideration to the report prepared by the Town Clerk, Committee RESOLVED to reappoint Mr Paul Hartley MIOB as the Town Council's Internal Auditor for the financial year ending 31st March 2012,

360 RISK MANAGEMENT (Min 159 23.9.10)

Committee gave consideration to the risk management update report, which focused upon a number of issues including review of job descriptions, buildings and buildings security, bad weather, and IT audit. Members expressed satisfaction that progress had been made and noted also the dynamic process of the review process, which sees new risks constantly being identified and addressed.

There was some discussion regarding bad weather, primarily around expectations and it was agreed this should be kept under close review. The possibility of engagement with Neighbourhood Panels in relation to management of grit bins was raised as a possible option to be looked at in the future, without commitment. Members also asked about the most recent lead theft from East Court and Mr Male confirmed the Council is in liaison with the insurers and that any requirements they might have would be met.

361 DRAFT ACCOUNTS AND AUDIT REGULATIONS 2011

The content of the Town Clerk's report was noted. It was appreciated by Members that the changes proposed would present no difficulties for the Town Council, especially as that relating to Council approval for the accounts is already being met.

362 PERFORMANCE INDICATORS (Min 86 24.6.10) (Min 293 27.1.11)

Details of Performance Indicators in respect of responsibilities falling under the purview of the Finance and General Purposes Committee for January and February 2011 inclusive were noted. Committee was reminded that the annual performance management report would be taken to the September meeting of the Committee.

363 THE FUTURE OF THE STANDARDS REGIME

Committee noted the Town Clerk's report. They further noted advice from Councillor Johnson that whilst Mid Sussex District Council's Standards Committee, under the new regime, would no longer deal with complaints against parish and town councillors, the Sussex Association of Local Councils was seeking to establish a mediation service within the sector. Further details of this, when established, would be reported to a future meeting.

364 WEST SUSSEX PENSION FUND – 2010 ACTUARIAL VALUATION AND EMPLOYMENT CONTRIBUTION (Min 83 24.6.10)

Committee note with pleasure that, at 31 March 2010, the "Small Scheduled Bodies Pool", which includes East Grinstead Town Council is 101% funded, a significantly better position than the Fund overall, which is funded to 86%.

365 INVESTORS IN PEOPLE – ANNUAL STAFF TRAINING REPORT (Min 338 25.3.10)

Committee noted and approved the Investors in People annual staff training report for the financial year 2010/2011.

366 A CODE OF RECOMMENDED PRACTICE FOR LOCAL AUTHORITIES ON DATA TRANSPARENCY

Committee noted details of the Government's consultation on the above Code. Having been advised by the Officers that the proposals would present no difficulties in achieving, it was RESOLVED to approve the response already made under delegated powers confirming this but also making clear also that aspects, including certain 'online' reporting may be more difficult for some of the smaller local councils due to lack of resources.

367 NEIGHBOURHOOD PANELS IN EAST GRINSTEAD (PSC Min 326 10.03.11)

Members noted that at the last meeting of Public Services Committee in the context of a lengthy deliberation about Neighbourhood Panels it had been recommended that consideration be given at this meeting to a proposal for funds to be set aside for the production of corporate material to promote the work of neighbourhood panels and their core objectives and provide contact details for each. It was emphasised that this could be used by all active neighbourhood panels (with documented meetings and transparent structures) to encourage enhanced engagement within the neighbourhoods, which, it was indicated, should be generally ward based wherever possible.

RESOLVED: That up to £1,000 be set aside from the current year's budget (code 400/4124) for the production of such material, the content of which to be agreed in partnership by representative(s) of each conforming neighbourhood panel.

368 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED THAT THE PRESS AND PUBLIC BE EXCLUDED FROM THE MEETING ON GROUNDS THAT PUBLICITY WOULD BE PREJUDICIAL TO THE PUBLIC INTEREST

PRIVATE & CONFIDENTIAL

369 ESTABLISHMENT REPORT (Min 346 25.3.10)

Committee noted details of the Town Council's establishment, including names of staff, positions and appropriate salary scales for 2010/2011 and 2011/2012 financial years.

RESOLVED: That the report be duly approved.

370 TRANSFER OF OWNERSHIP

Committee noted the content of a report from the Town Clerk advising that the Council has in its possession a Worcestershire lead pewter token and three lead seals that had originally come from the Museum when it was housed in the Church tower along with other artefacts. However, Members were advised that unlike all other items (except cups and trophies still temporarily housed in the basement pending transfer to the new Museum) these small items had not been passed across to the Museum Trust upon its formation (presumably because they had no relevance to the Town's history) but instead had been securely stored in the Town Council safe.

Committee RESOLVED that the matter should now be regularised and that these items should be properly passed across to the Museum Trust for them to do what they wish with and that this action be undertaken urgently.

The meeting closed at 8.47 p.m.

SIGNED:

CHAIRMAN.