

EAST GRINSTEAD TOWN COUNCIL

FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE – 24 NOVEMBER 2011

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

Also present: Councillors Mainstone and Sweatman and one member of the public.

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

211 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

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

212 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: Nil.

213 MINUTES

The Chairman gave the following update from the previous minutes.

Minute 147: the Youth Council has requested only one Council member to attend for the time being, having had several volunteers. Councillor Mrs Bennett has been asked to attend the next couple of meetings with the intention of appointing a member formally at the annual council meeting.

Minute 151: the Town Council's website has now had a page added for the neighbourhood plan and updates are being made to the page, including the reports to the committee.

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 24th September 2011 having been previously circulated, be confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

214 DECLARATIONS OF PREJUDICIAL AND PERSONAL INTEREST

- * Councillors Mrs Belsey, Mainstone, Sweatman and Webster declared personal interests in all matters on the agenda that relate to Mid Sussex District Council, in their capacity as elected Members of that Authority.
- * Councillors Mrs Brunsdon and O'Brien disclosed personal interests in any matters on the agenda that referred to Mid Sussex District Council and West Sussex County Council as elected members of those Authorities.
- * Councillor O'Brien disclosed a personal interest in agenda item 13 as a member of Meridian FM.
- * Councillor Wyan disclosed a personal interest in agenda item 12 as Mr Piddlesden is known to him.
- * Councillor Osborne disclosed a personal interest in all matters relating to the Old Court House, as an occasional hirer of those premises.

- * Councillor Mainstone disclosed a personal interest in agenda item 13 as a member of the East Grinstead Music & Arts Festival.
- * All Members serving as Town Council representatives on outside bodies disclosed a personal interest in agenda items 9 and 13 where that body was under discussion.
- * Councillor Mrs Belsey disclosed a personal interest in agenda item 12 as an outside body representative on East Grinstead War Memorial Company.

215 ACCOUNTS FOR SEPTEMBER AND OCTOBER 2011 (Min 148 22.9.11)

Mr Male introduced the accounts and, in response to a question as to what the Architects payment was for, advised this as being a old invoice that had only just been settled but was in respect of drawings for the Parish Halls. The remainder of the 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> £
Sept 2011	443,436.04	2,488.49
Oct 2011	100,302.13	2,349.58
	<u>543,739.17</u>	<u>4,838.07</u>

216 TOWN COUNCIL FINANCES – POSITION STATEMENT (Min 149 22.9.11)

Mr Male introduced this item commenting that the balances were healthy and actually showed a slightly better position than this time last year, due mostly to the fact that the capital budget had not yet been spent.

In response to a query as to the £50,000 deposit with Santander Mr Male advised that the balances were all subject to different time restraints and he was not absolutely sure as to when this deposit would reach the end of its bond and considered it may have a further six months to run. He was aware of the financial problems in Europe but in accordance with the Town Council's policies, deposits in foreign banks did not exceed the amount that would be covered by Government bond should problems occur. He did, however, agree to maintain a watching brief and, if necessary, the sum would be withdrawn at the risk of losing interest should Santander become a high risk. The remainder of the report was noted.

217 PERFORMANCE INDICATORS (Min 150 22.9.11)

Mr Male advised that the slight reduction in performance was due to disputes on invoices or other issues of clarity and not due to staff inability to clear invoices within the target 30 days. Members commented that the performance figures were extremely good and staff should be congratulated in respect of the queries on invoices and also the number of days lost through sickness. The remainder of the report was noted.

218 TO RECEIVE RECOMMENDATIONS OF COMMITTEES (Min 154 22.9.11)

RESOLVED: (i) That in respect of minute 204 of Amenities & Tourism Committee meeting of 17th November 2011 the schedule of rates attached as Appendix A to the report to that meeting be approved and implemented for the 2012/2013 financial year, and

It was further discussed and proposed as a supplementary to the recommendation of the Amenities & Tourism Committee and that an actual amount be proposed as a budget for the Diamond Jubilee, to give a steer to the Budget setting deliberations which would come before committee at the next cycle. It was commented that as the allocation for the Golden Jubilee had been £4,000 this would be an appropriate figure.

RESOLVED: (ii) In respect and supplementary to minute 209(ii) of Amenities & Tourism Committee meeting of 17th November 2011, a budget of £4,000 be allocated for the Diamond Jubilee as part of the budget setting process for 2012/2013 financial year.

219 REPORTS FROM COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES (Min 358 24.3.10)

The reports from Members representing the Town Council on outside bodies were noted.

220 NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN WORKING PARTY (Min 151 22.9.11)

Councillor Mrs Brunson introduced her report and proposed the recommendations as outlined therein. It was suggested that when Councillors note their preferences of a sub-committee they should indicate first, second and third preferences. This was acknowledged as being the procedure to be followed. A further comment was made that during the consultation some members of the public had stated that they wished to add additional information. It was asked if this information could now be added to the web site along with the results of the survey. The Chairman of the Working Party stated that this had been discussed at the most recent meeting of the Working Party and that currently the officer time that would be needed to enter all of these comments would be quite considerable and therefore, at least for the time being, this additional information would not be added to the web site, but could be made available on request.

RESOLVED: To set up three sub-committees to be drawn from all Councillors to feed into the Working Group. The sub-committees' composition to be determined by each Councillor declaring a preference, with consideration of these preferences being made by the Neighbour Plan Working Party Chairman.

221 CONSULTATION WORKING PARTY (Min 158 22.9.11)

There was support from the Committee with regards to the response for paragraphs 44 – 47. This was felt to be a particularly important matter and one where lobbying for the Government to ensure a fair-handed approach should be supported. The remainder of the report was noted.

222 EAST COURT WAR MEMORIAL

The Town Clerk gave an introduction to the report and referred to the further research that had been undertaken and outlined the options available to the

Committee. It was commented that this was a sensitive issue and the Town Clerk was thanked for the extensive research she had completed, therefore allowing the Committee to make a decision with a degree of confidence as to original intentions.

Councillor Mrs Belsey, who is the Town Council's representative on the War Memorial Company, reported that the Company had discussed this matter at a recent meeting following consultation by the Town Clerk, and would support a separate plaque but did not wish to see additional names added to the existing war memorial.

There was general support from the Committee for including Corporal Creedy's name in a separate plaque for those who died during the 1939-45 War but not as a result of enemy action. It was

- RESOLVED:
- (i) To delegate to the Town Clerk arrangements for a simple plaque to be placed in the gardens of the War Memorial at East Court in memory of those who died while in Service during the 1939-45 War although not as a result of enemy action, and
 - (ii) That no additional plaque be added to the War Memorial itself.

Note: Councillor Mrs Brunson retired from the meeting at this point.

223 COMMUNITY REVENUE GRANTS (in 155 22.9.11)

Councillor Webster introduced the report and explained that all of the applicants had completed the application form and supplied supportive information, with the exception of Barn Field Place Management Ltd and therefore the application had been withdrawn application. He tabled a recommendation of awards to the remaining organisations that had applied.

In response to a question concerning the application made by Felbridge & Sunnyside Cricket Club as to why an organisation that fell outside of the Town should qualify the Chairman advised that 95% of the membership of the Club are East Grinstead residents and therefore an award is indeed in their interest, although he hoped that the parish council within the area of this Club would also be making a financial contribution. There were other comments in support of the Chairman's recommendations concerning the ability to support as many local groups as possible from a small budget. It was unanimously

RESOLVED: To allocate grants as tabled, as follows:-

	£
East Grinstead Music & Arts Festival	150
Meridian Short Mat Bowls Club	100
Jigsaw4U	150
Grenestede Talking News	100
FurniHelp Mid Sussex	200
Soroptimist International East Grinstead	200
Imberhorne Allotments Association	200
Meridian FM	350
St Catherine's Hospice	350
Felbridge & Sunnyside Cricket Club	150
National Childbirth Trust	350
East Grinstead Council for Voluntary Service	350
Armed Forces Day	300
Bluebird Community Transport	200

Tadpoles Swimming for the Disabled	150
East Grinstead & District Access Club	300
East Grinstead Town Football Club	150

224 VISIT EAST GRINSTEAD WEBSITE

The Town Clerk introduced the report and requested the Members' instructions as to whether they wished to proceed with the formulation of a new website. Councillors asked questions concerning the editorial control and it was confirmed that the website would not be static and there would be full editorial control to regularly amend text, pictures and other format. Councillors asked whether it was intended the website would become self funding and it was advised that this was very much the idea of the East Grinstead Business Association and that the ongoing costs would be covered through advertisements and sponsorship from the retail sector.

In response to further questions as to ongoing costs for existing websites the Town Clerk confirmed that currently the costs are around £90 per month. However, as the new website for the Town Council will move to a more flexible design, this expenditure is expected to reduce.

In response to a further query concerning which businesses would be advertising through the site it was advised that this would not be closed to East Grinstead Business Association subscribers only but that all businesses in the Town would be referenced and this was part of the income generation as a basic entry could be enhanced through subscription.

- RESOLVED:
- (i) To pursue the Visit East Grinstead.com website during 2011/2012;
 - (ii) To ensure best value by seeking a second quote based on the same specification before proceeding, and
 - (iii) That an editorial panel consisting of the Town Clerk, the Business and Tourism Manager and one representative of East Grinstead Business Association be set up in respect of the new web site

225 TOWN GUIDE CHARGING POLICY

The Chairman introduced the report. In response to a question from the Committee it was clarified that the current run is 4,000 copies per edition plus an additional 1,000 stand alone maps. Currently many of these are given away for free or disposed of at the end of the period and it would be the responsibility of the Town Council to control the releasing of these to the public to ensure that stocks did not run out if these were made freely available.

- RESOLVED: To remove the policy of charging for the Town Guide and to make it available free of charge.

There being no urgent business the meeting closed at 9.54 p.m.

SIGNED:

CHAIRMAN.