

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE FINANCE AND POLICY COMMITTEE HELD ON 21ST SEPTEMBER 2005

PRESENT

Mr. Steeples presided over Mrs. Harrison and Mr. Wren.

1. APOLOGIES

Mrs. Holmes, Messrs. Mackin, Coward and Gray.

It was note that the meeting was not quorate due to insufficient members attending.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Mr. Steeples declared an interest in Agenda Item No. 7.

3. ROAD CLOSURES

Notices informing residents and businesses of the three forthcoming road closures have been printed and will be forwarded to Mr. Wren for onward distribution. The leaflets show the closure times and dates for the Charter Fair, Remembrance Service and the switching-on of the Christmas Lights.

4. TRAFALGAR DAY

It was decided not to proceed with a Trafalgar Day celebration as there is insufficient time to organise such an event.

5. MID BEDS COUNCIL FOR VOLUNTARY SERVICE

A letter has been received from the above informing members about the aims of their organisation, one of which is to support new and existing voluntary and community groups. The Service intends to produce a hard copy directory, in conjunction with the District Council, which will be made available to groups within Mid Beds to enable them to provide information to older people that they work with. Bearing this in mind, the Service has asked for a list and contact details of the voluntary and community groups in the town.

6. COMPUTER

It has been established that the current computer system needs updating. It is RECOMMENDED to full Council that Mr. Steeples works out a suitable specification in order to proceed with quotes for the renewal of the system.

7. DONATION

The Minister of the Methodist Church has written to the committee informing the members that they intend to cover the interior of the windows with 6mm thick polycarbonate sheeting in order to make the church less draughty and reduce oil heating costs. Contained in the letter was a request for financial support from the Council. It was decided to place this item on the agenda for the next meeting of the Finance and Policy committee in order to ascertain what funding is available.

8. OVPPF TROPHIES

A committee is to be formed which will study the nominees for the OVPPF Trophy. The general criteria for this award are one male and one female who is considered to have given their time unstintingly without reward for the benefit of the community.

9. QUOTATION – OFFICE PHOTOCOPIER

Two quotes have been received for the renewal of the photocopier. However it was generally thought that it was feasible to continue with the current photocopier contract and an enhancement to the production of photocopies could be made via the new computer system in due course.

10. SALARY REVIEW

It is RECOMMENDED to full Council that the honorarium paid to the Town Meeting Room Bookings Officer be increased by 3.75%.

11. DONATION REQUEST – VITALISE

A request for a financial donation has been received from Vitalise – (previously known as The Winged Fellowship Trust). However, the committee felt they would be unable to offer support as it was not pertinent to the town.

12. BUDGET/ACTUAL COMPARISON

Copies of the figures comparing the annual budget with the first quarter's actual expenditure and income were distributed to members. Overall it was felt that the actual figures were generally in line but a column for 'projected figures' should be added for the half year's report.

13. GRATUITY – PREVIOUS CLERK

A letter has been received from the Revenue and Customs Department informing members of the status of the previous clerk's gratuity. A copy of the letter is to be forwarded to the External Auditor for their comment.

14. GRATUITY – CURRENT CLERK

It was RECOMMENDED to full Council that investigations should be made into arranging a gratuity for the current clerk.

15. CONTRACT – CURRENT CLERK

A new contract has been drawn up in respect of the clerk's employment. A copy is to be forwarded to the Bedfordshire Association of Town and Parish Councils for their approval.

16. POLICE TREND SHEET

A request has been received from the Homewatch Group about the content of the fortnightly Trend Sheet. Namely, does it meet the needs of those using it, is it of value, does the committee feel the format should be changed. Mrs Harrison said she would study the document and report back accordingly.

17. CPRE/ EAST OF ENGLAND PLAN

CPRE have written to the committee enquiring if the committee would like to sign-up to a free update of information relating to the East of England Plan. As there was no involvement towards costs, it was deemed prudent to receive all pertinent information.

18. CHRISTMAS LIGHTS/SUMMER FAYRE

A representative of the Shefford Lights Committee has written a letter informing members of both their financial situation and the difficulties encountered in arranging insurance cover. A reply informing the Lights Committee of the Council's view is to be sent in due course.

19. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

None.

The meeting closed at 10.25 p.m.
