

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE FINANCE AND POLICY COMMITTEE HELD ON 20TH SEPTEMBER 2006

PRESENT

Mr. Steeples presided over Mesdames Harrison and Holmes, Messrs. Gray, Wren and Coward.

1. APOLOGIES

Mr. Mackin.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

At this point Mrs. Holmes welcomed two representatives of the Shefford Saints Football Club (Juniors) who arrived to update the committee on the situation regarding the repair work recently carried out on the Bellcote changing room and to update them on the pitch drainage situation. The committee was informed that the Saints had sought a quotation for the drainage of the pitch but the price had been somewhat exorbitant and at the present time they did not feel that such a vast amount of expenditure was worthwhile along with other considerations.

The Saints had not ruled out possible pitch drainage in the future but at the moment the situation was put on hold in the hope that possibly a more reasonable quotation for the work could be obtained.

The Planning and Environment committee stated that they were always ready to offer the Saints F C assistance if they could. The representatives were thanked for their attendance and agreed to keep the Council abreast of matters generally after which they left and the meeting continued.

It was agreed to pay the Saints F C £100 as a partial reimbursement for the work they had carried out on the Bellcote changing room by way of decorating and repairs.

3. REQUEST FOR FUNDING – SHEFFORD SCOUTS

A request for funding two Scouts to represent Shefford at the Scout Jamboree in 2007. It was hoped that the committee could offer finance from the Local Government Act 1972 s 137. However, advice was sought from the Beds Rural Communities Charity and it would appear that under the Local Government & Housing Act 1989 the benefit must be proportionate with the expenditure. This would allow the committee to give a grant to the Scouts as an organization (some of the inhabitants) but an award cannot be given to individuals as in this request.

4. REQUEST FOR FUNDING – ROAD VICTIMS TRUST

A request for funding has been received from the Road Victims Trust along with a brochure. After due consideration the committee decided they were unable to help on this occasion.

5. MBDC THE GAMBLING ACT 2005

Documentation has been received from the District Council informing the committee of various aspects of the Gambling Act. Mrs. Harrison agreed to study it and then report back at a future meeting.

6. BEDS C C – CHILDREN MISSING EDUCATION POLICY

The County Council has forwarded information regarding the above. Mrs. Harrison agreed to study the document and report back accordingly.

7. ST. MICHAEL'S PLAY AREA EQUIPMENT

Some literature and a quotation for removing some old equipment and installing new play equipment at the St. Michael's Play Area has been received from a contractor. It is **RECOMMENDED** to full Council that the quotation for a Playtrain and Playcarriage be accepted.

8. LETTER FROM AUDITOR

A letter has been received from the Internal Auditor regarding the Annual Accounts for the year 1st April 2005 to 31st March 2006.

The letter informed members that all financial affairs were in order and the correct procedures were in place.

9. APPRAISAL / REVIEW – CLERK

An Appraisal Form relating to the clerk's work performance etc.had previously been completed by both the Clerk and the Appraiser. It was agreed that the Clerk should be allowed to attend any training courses he thought would be of benefit and hence itemize any training needs.

The Clerk then left the meeting temporarily while the committee reviewed his salary. It was agreed that a salary increment was in order.

10. CONIFER TREES – NORTH BRIDGE STREET

The County Council's Arboricultural Officer has e:miled the committee regarding the conifer trees in North Bridge Street. A copy of this e:mail is to be forwarded to the solicitor for comment. The solicitor is also to be asked if the conifer trees can now be reduced to approximately 2 metres in height. The Insurer's have also requested that they are informed of the Council's maintenance programme for these trees.

11. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

It was agreed to pay £250 to the Shefford Lights Committee in lieu of the Bottle Bank.

Overall it was felt that the County Council had fallen short of their responsibilities and duties in the town, primarily in the areas of highway/pavement maintenance and weed control. It was agreed to write a letter to the Chief Executive to express the Town Council's discontent and disappointment at the County Council's overall performance.

The meeting closed at 8.55 p.m.

