

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE FINANCE AND POLICY COMMITTEE HELD ON 19<sup>th</sup> SEPTEMBER 2007**

**PRESENT**

Mr. Steeples presided over Mesdames Harrison and Clark. Messrs. Mackin and Wren.

**1. APOLOGIES**

Mrs. Holmes and Messrs. Gray and Coward.

**2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None.

**3. PUBLIC CONVENIENCES – KNOWLES BENNING**

Knowles Benning solicitors have written to the committee regarding several points which should be considered regarding the transfer of ownership of the public toilets from Mid Beds District Council to Shefford Town Council. A copy of the Land Registry's Transfer Deed was also enclosed. It was agreed that the clerk would sign the deed subject clarification of the points mentioned.

**4. ST. MICHAEL'S PLAY AREA**

Knowles Benning solicitors have written to the committee informing them that they are currently reviewing their storage facilities for documents. At the present time they are storing the original lease for the above dated 20<sup>th</sup> October 1998 along with the Land Registry Land Certificates. Given the changes in Land Registry rules, this now means that the Land Certificate has no intrinsic value and as such does not justify professional storage. The letter also quoted the amount that Knowles Benning would charge for the storage of documents over a five year period should the committee wish them to continue the service. It was agreed that as the charges were minimal then Knowles Benning should continue with the storage and invoice the Council accordingly.

**5. GRATUITY – E P RUTT**

Two weeks ago the committee wrote to Knowles Benning to request their advice regarding the letter they had received from HM Revenue and Customs in respect of a gratuity paid to Mr. E P Rutt the previous clerk. A response has now been received and the advice considered accordingly. Although the committee is fairly sure of the action they intend to take, it was decided to pass the information received on to the auditors, Lubbock Fine, to enquire as to whether or not they would also like to make a comment.

**6. DONATION REQUEST – ROAD VICTIMS TRUST**

A request for a financial contribution has been received from the Road Victims Trust. Regrettably the committee felt that on this particular occasion they were unable to help.

## **7. DONATION REQUEST – SPRINGBOKS TRAMPOLINING & GYMNASTICS**

A request for a financial contribution has been received from the above as they are setting up a club at the Robert Bloomfield Middle School. The committee registered their concern that yet again Mid Beds D C was insistent that the group should contact the Town Council for a donation. The committee's feeling was that if Mid Beds intended to donate to a project, then they should make it independent of who else was likely to be similarly requested. This is the second time in just over a year that the D C has made such a comment regarding a financial request. A copy of the group's financial request which includes the D C's insistence that the Town Council should also be approached is to be forwarded to the Chief Executive and their Head of Leisure and Tourism. However, the committee stated that they would consider the application when setting their precept in December. The gymnastics group is to be contacted to ascertain as to whether or not they are a commercial enterprise or a registered charity and further enquire if the school will be charging them for hire of the hall and similarly will the group be charging the students for the tuition.

## **8. BANK RECONCILIATION**

The committee was issued with a copy of the bank reconciliation showing all monies held and any unpresented cheques as at 31<sup>st</sup> August 2007.

## **9. REVIEW OF POLLING DISTRICTS AND POLLING PLACES**

The District Council has a duty to review the existing polling districts into which the District is divided for the purposes of parliamentary elections. The location and access arrangements for all polling stations will be included in the review. The committee has received a schedule setting out the details of each polling district into which the Council's area has been divided. The Electoral/ Member Services Manager suggested several questions that should be considered. e.g. Is the area of the polling District(s) still relevant? Whether two or more existing polling districts should be combined? Whether the polling station(s) have suitable access for persons with any kind of disability? Overall the committee agreed that there was no need to change the existing polling arrangements.

## **10. DONATION REQUEST – CARERS IN BEDFORSHIRE**

A request for financial help has been received from the above organization. It should be noted that the group uses the Town Meeting Room for 9 monthly meetings a year.

It is **RECOMMENDED** to the full Council that £200 be donated to the Carers Group bearing in mind that in future a rent for the hire of the room will be charged in the future.

## **11. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

It was decided to have the carpet cleaned in the Town Meeting Room.

Three quotes are to be sought with a view to refitting the kitchen in the Town Meeting Room.

It was suggested that the clerk should be issued with a mobile phone. Bearing this in mind, the clerk is to ascertain from NALC as to whether or not this would be in accordance with the regulations under which a clerk is employed. Obviously the phone would be solely for business use.

The meeting closed at 9.15 p.m.