

REPORT OF THE POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE MEETING 21st SEPTEMBER 2010

MEMBERSHIP & ATTENDANCE

Chairman: * R Kipps

Councillors: N Eve
* M Green
* Mrs A Hayward
* Mrs M Jarrett
* G Liley
* S Watkins
Mrs J Worrall

*Denotes members present

There were no members of the public present

MINUTES

10/13 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were apologies from Cllr Eve and Cllr Mrs Worrall.

10/14 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declaration of interests

10/15 APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting dated 6th July 2010 were agreed as a true and correct record.

10/16 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINTUES

10/07 Restoration of the chairs in the council chamber An update regarding the chairs was requested. The Clerk advised that it was taking longer than expected, but the work was being carried out. She asked if members wanted to postpone the refurbishment of the remaining chairs until the summer of next year but members felt it would be better to get them all done at the same time and use the chairs from the village halls in the meantime.

10/09 Chorleywood Parish Council Website The Clerk advised that there had been insufficient time to be able to put a full report on this agenda however this would be rectified at the next meeting

10/17 FINANCIAL COMPARISON STATEMENT 2010/11

Discussion took place regarding the Parish Map. The Clerk advised there were still over 1000 copies available but due to redevelopment in the area the map was out of date. Members suggested that as the original costs had now been covered the cost of the maps should be reduced.

The Committee
RESOLVED
To note the report

10/18 DRAFT THREE RIVERS PARISH CHARTER

Members were generally happy about the content within the Charter and

The Committee
RESOLVED
To agree to the documents in its current form..

10/19 OUTCOMES FROM THE COUNCILLOR TRAINING

Training

Members generally agreed that the Councillor training had been a success. It was suggested that the Clerk contacts all Councillors to ask what type of additional training they would like in the workings of the Parish Council and to offer tours of the facilities. Cllr Mrs Jarrett volunteered to do a walk on the common and a tour of the allotment sites over a weekend which would not therefore have a cost implication on the council finances having to pay officers overtime. It was also suggested that Q&A sessions could take place before council meetings on specific topics. These suggestions would be incorporated into a questionnaire to be sent to all Councillors via email.

Council Surgeries

Members agreed that the Council profile needed to be raised. They agreed that Council Surgeries would be a good way forward. It was suggested that a surgery be held in Chorleywood library once per month and that this be published in Chorleywood Matters, the Council notice boards and on the Council website.

The Committee
RESOLVED
That the Clerk investigates a regular time slot with the library for the Parish Council to hold surgeries from 10-12 on a Saturday once a month.

Annual Meeting

Everyone agreed that the proposal put forward by the Chairman to hold the Annual meeting at the War Memorial Hall was a good one. Local organisations would be offered space to put up boards advertising what they did in the community and the Parish Council could also use this as an opportunity to advertise our services. The Annual meeting would be published in Chorleywood Matters and the Council website together with the notice boards and a guest speaker would be invited to address the meeting. The Clerk did advise that at present the Annual meeting and the Annual Parish meeting were scheduled for the same evening and therefore one would need to be moved however this would not be a problem. Cllr Mrs Jarrett also suggested that the Annual meeting did not necessarily have to be held on a Tuesday.

The Committee
RESOLVED
That the Clerk books the War Memorial Hall for the Annual Meeting on a date to be advised.
That the Chairman and Clerk investigate a speaker for the event
That Local organisations be invited to display their activities within the community

These were proposed by Cllr Liley seconded by Cllr Watkins and unanimously approved.

10/20 END OF YEAR INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT

The Committee

RESOLVED

To approve the End of Year Audit report and to congratulate the staff.

This was proposed by Cllr Mrs Jarrett , seconded by Cllr Mrs Hayward and unanimously approved.

10/21 FIVE YEAR PLAN

Office Accommodation – The Clerk advised that the office was currently leased from TRDC on a seven year lease which was due to expire in January 2011. The Clerk suggested that members may wish to consider approaching the landlords TRDC about the feasibility of purchasing the property. In the current financial climate property prices were lower than they had been in the past and borrowing rates are also low. It was envisaged that the property would increase in value over time and be an asset in the future, both financially and for security. If this was possible money could be borrowed to extend the building to give the additional space desperately needed. It was agreed that this idea needed a lot of thought and was dependant on outside bodies, such as the willingness to sell, planning permission and the ability to borrow money. It was also argued that at present the Parish Council had a building which did not cost any money in rental, therefore why should the parishioners be lumbered with a long term loan.

The Committee

RESOLVED

That the Clerk contact TRDC to discuss the feasibilities of both the purchase of the building and or extending the building to create additional space.

Storage Cllr Green was concerned about the amount of documents currently stored in the loft. The Clerk advised that minutes of meeting had to be kept indefinitely, however there was a facility at the Herts County Records Office which would store these on behalf of the Council.

The Committee

RESOLVED

That the Clerk ask for volunteers to have working party to weed through the boxes in the loft in view of creating additional storage space.

Office Decoration In view of the item on office accommodation,

The Committee

RESOLVED

That this be kept on hold until further investigation had taken place on the office accommodation but in the meantime the Clerk ask the Rangers to power wash the outside of the building

Parish Plan It was agreed that this item should remain on the agenda but not actioned in the foreseeable future.

Salary Review The Clerk advised that she was going on an Appraisal training course following which an appraisal system would be put in place, as part of this officers would be asked to review their job descriptions and with the Clerk update them. These would then be put to this committee for approval before being sent off to an independent organisation for review. The Clerk also advised the committee that the present system did not include the Clerk and members may wish to set up a system for that.

10/22 HEALTH AND SAFETY UPDATE

Members had read the report from Peninsula with interest. It was agreed that whilst the report was critical many of the procedures were in place but the necessary paperwork to back these processes up were not. It was agreed that time needed to be set aside to implement these systems. Cllr Mrs Hayward and Cllr Liley volunteered to help with this process. The Clerk also advised that the necessary H&S

training would be organised for the staff. Cllr Kipps asked if this could include Councillors. The Clerk stated that this too would be investigated

The Committee
RESOLVED

That time be set aside on a weekly basis and that officer with the help of Cllrs Mrs Hayward and Liley set up the administrative processes.

That the Clerk arranges safety training for the staff and investigates the possibility of Councillor training.

10/23 CRICKET CLUB ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The Clerk advised that the Cricket Club had put in a new application to TRDC to remove the lime tree. In view of the fact that the committee may be called to discuss issues in the future

The Committee
RESOLVED

That the Cricket Club Advisory Committee be 'mothballed' until required

This was proposed by Cllr Liley, seconded by Cllr Mrs Jarrett and unanimously approved.

10/24 REPORT ON THE FUTURE OF GRANT FUNDING AND ALLOCATION OF FUNDS

Members first discussed how money given to the Chiltern Open Air Museum should be allocated.

The Committee
RESOLVED

That the budget head called Subscriptions be changed to Subscriptions and Annual Donations

This was proposed by Cllr Mrs Jarrett, seconded by Cllr Watkins and unanimously approved

The Clerk read out a list from the other Parish Councils within the Three Rivers area regarding the amount of grant funding made available. It would appear that Chorleywood give away far less than our neighbours. Members generally felt that especially in difficult time the Parish Council should be supportive of local organisations and that the grants criteria should be reviewed together with the grant funding available.

The Committee
RESOLVED

That the Clerk issue members with a copy of the grant funding criteria with the aim of reviewing this together with the amount available as part of the budget process for the next financial year.

10/25 BUDGET STRATEGY 2011/12

Members discussed the report and the current economic situation. They recognised the Council had to ensure that they continued to offer value for money and agreed that one way of keeping the precept down would be to increase income. The need to be more proactive on applying for grant funding was recognised and the Chairman agreed to ask Councillors for a volunteer to take on this role. However Members also felt that it would not be prudent to try to work on a Nil budget for a second year as this was likely to lead to very high increases in the future.

It was recognised that the Council was a service industry which had to buy services in, therefore it was difficult to control spending on things like fuel and utilities. The Clerk advised that officers were mindful when ordering goods and services to get the best prices and that the Parish Councils within Three Rivers had investigated a purchasing consortium for items that could be bought in bulk, however storage costs and transportation had proved to be more costly overall.

The Clerk was asked what the bottom line would be if the precept was increased by 5%. The Clerk confirmed that this would equate to a total increase in the budget of £19,400 which in turn equated to an annual increase of £3.21 per annum for a Band D property. Given this calculation

The Committee

RESOLVED

That the Clerk be asked to calculate budgets for all committees on a 5% increase, and to report back to the next meeting.

This was proposed by Cllr Liley, seconded by Cllr Mrs Jarrett and unanimously approved

The meeting having started at 8.00pm, finished at 10.10pm

These minutes have been checked by the Chairman.

Signature these minutes have not been checked by the Chairman Date.....22.09.10.....

These minutes were agreed as a true and correct record at the Policy & Resources meeting and signed by the Chairman.

Signature Date