

POLICY AND FINANCE COMMITTEE

22 FEBRUARY 2011

Chandler's Ford United Reform Church, Kings Road, Chandler's Ford
(7.00 pm – 8.40 pm)

PRESENT: Councillor Olson (Chairman); Councillors Mrs Atkinson, Broadhurst, Hughes, and Mrs Roberts

APOLGIES; Cllrs Davidovitz, Mrs Gault, Mrs Grajewski and Pragnell

ABSENT; Cllr Luffman

In attendance – Stephen Mursell, Parish Clerk.

1. MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

It was agreed that the minutes for the Policy and Finance Committee meeting held on 16 January 2012 be signed by the Chairman as an accurate record.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No members of the Committee made a declaration of interest.

3. MATTERS ARISING

Cllr Atkinson wished to update members with current events to commemorate the Queens Diamond Jubilee.

The Diamond Jubilee Gardens is on schedule to be completed in time for the official opening on 16 March 2012 when the Lord Lieutenant of Hampshire, Dame Mary Fagan, will officially open the garden. Members were given the draft schedule for the opening and Cllr Atkinson sought permission to agree a budget of £150.00 for refreshments at the opening.

It was AGREED that:

1) A budget of £150.00 would be provided for the official opening of the Diamond Jubilee Gardens, subject to ratification by the Parish Council

The Chandler's Ford Got Talent competition has not received sufficient support from the public houses to make the adult section of the competition viable. Cllr Atkinson suggested that the adult competition be cancelled to save the cost of booking the Hilt for that night. The Schools event however was going well with most schools indicating that they have arranged heats to select the acts for the finals.

It was AGREED that:

1) The adult competition will be cancelled and the booking at the Hilt on 24 March 2012 be cancelled

Cllr Hughes reported on progress with the Funtasia event with 7 or 8 teams committing to take part in the It's a Knockout Competition and stallholders were also booking to attend the event. Cllr Hughes requested that members consider setting a budget of £1,000 for the event to cover initial costs. It was anticipated that these costs would be recouped by the profit made at the event.

It was AGREED that:

1) A budget of £1,000.00 would be provided for the official opening of the Funtasia event, subject to ratification by the Parish Council

4. EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY

The Clerk introduced his report incorporating a draft of an Equal Opportunities Policy. As part of an on-going review of current policies the Clerk requested that members consider this policy.

It was AGREED that:

1) This committee recommend to the Parish Council that they adopt the attached Equal Opportunities policy

5. RETENTION OF RECORDS POLICY

The Clerk introduced his report incorporating a draft Retention of Records Policy. As part of an on-going review of current policies the Clerk requested that members consider this policy.

Members were concerned about data back up and although a backup system is already in use, members requested that the clerk investigate backup systems through a remote server or an equivalent solution.

It was AGREED that:

- 1) This committee recommend to the Parish Council that they adopt the attached Retention of Records policy
- 2) The Clerk would investigate a backup service through a remote server or an equivalent service and report back to members

6. COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

The Clerk introduced his report incorporating a draft of a Complaints Procedure. As part of an on-going review of current policies the Clerk requested that members consider this procedure. The Clerk advised that the procedure was unaltered except in circumstance where complaints are received against members. Complaints such as these should be referred to Eastleigh Borough Council Standards Committee.

Members commented that the title "Chairman" should be consistently used in the report rather than "she" as in the draft procedure. Cllr Broadhurst advised members that the Hampshire Association of Local Councils was in the process of providing standardised advice to all Parish Councils in Hampshire, when complaints are received against Parish Councillors.

It was AGREED that:

- 1) This committee recommend to the Parish Council that they adopt the attached Complaints procedure subject to the words "she" being replaced by "Chairman"
- 2) The Clerk would refer back the Complaints Procedure for consideration of amendment when further guidance is received from Hampshire Association of Local Councils

7. ASSET TRANSFER AND MANAGEMENT TEAM

Cllr Hughes updated members with progress on the transfer of assets. Current tasks included matching the schedule of works for the recreation grounds with the Parish Council workbook information to ensure that the current costs accurately reflected the value of the works carried out to the recreation grounds. Cllr Hughes also advised members that costings had been requested for the Hiltingbury Lakes to consider with the recreation grounds as potential assets for transfer.

Cllr Hughes stated that once these further investigations are concluded a firm recommendation will be brought to the next Policy and Finance committee meeting.

8. CHANDLER'S FORD IN BLOOM

The Clerk advised members that following two successful meetings with representatives of Gardening Clubs and residents it was decided that the categories of entry would be Blooming Schools, Its Your Neighbourhood, best front garden viewed from the pavement and best commercial premises with hanging baskets or containers.

The Clerk also advised members that he had been working with a local resident to produce a poster, application form and entry criteria ready for launch at the Chandler's Ford in Bloom committee meeting on 12 March. Local schools have already shown interest in the competition and further promotion of the competition will be made at the next Youth Council meeting on 20 March.

The Chairman requested that the committee consider setting a budget for the event which may incorporate marketing expenses, prizes and other miscellaneous costs. It was felt that following the next In Bloom meeting a budget will be prepared for presentation to the Policy and Finance Committee.

It was AGREED that:

- 1)The Clerk will present a draft budget for the Chandler's Ford in Bloom competition to

the next Policy and Finance Committee

9. HALC INTERNAL AUDIT SERVICE

The Clerk advised members that following the last Committee meeting he had researched alternative providers of Internal Audit services as instructed by members. Based on the current service providers the Clerk recommended to members that the Parish Council remain with the current service provider, Eleanor Green.

It was AGREED that:

1) The current service provider, Eleanor Green will be instructed to carry out the Internal Audit service for the financial year 2011-12.

10. FINANCIAL UPDATE

The Clerk updated members with regard to the current financial position and confirmed that all financial spending was within budget.

Members requested that the accounts should reflect where provision had been made for various projects such as the Diamond Jubilee Garden project. By showing the budget commitment it would be easy to identify where projects run over budget. In addition members requested a breakdown of the amount in provisions.

It was AGREED that:

1) The Clerk will reflect these requests in producing Sage summaries in the future

It was also noted that a provision had not been made for the Diamond Jubilee Beacon and it was suggested that a provisional budget of should be considered.

It was AGREED that:

1) A budget of £1000.00 would be provided for the official opening of the Diamond Jubilee Beacon, subject to ratification by the Parish Council

The Clerk also advised that other Parish Councils who had recently held elections had received larger bills than had been expected from Eastleigh Borough Council, and that they were proposing to hold a meeting to discuss the issues. Should a meeting be called the Clerk will advise Councillors so a representative from our parish may be sent. The Clerk advised members that in anticipation of future elections Eastleigh Borough Council would provide an accurate breakdown of election costs.

It was AGREED that:

1) The Clerk would provide further information to members on how election costs are broken down in order that adequate provision can be made for future elections.

Members considered the Income and Expenditure for the allotment sites and queried whether the former tenant had paid for the skip hire.

It was AGREED that:

1) In the absence of payment of the skip hire the Clerk would send a reminder to the former tenant for payment to clear the allotment plot relinquished

11. GARDEN SHARING

The Clerk reported that the process had commenced for referral of potential candidates to participate in the garden sharing scheme.

Members considered that there was no further involvement in the scheme for the Parish Council other than providing referrals for potential garden sharers as requested.

It was AGREED that:

1) This Committee would not be updated in the future on the Garden Sharing scheme and would only refer potential garden sharers for consideration by the organisers of the scheme.

12. PARISH COUNCIL NEWSLETTER

The Clerk advised members that he had investigated the costs of producing and distributing a newsletter through a local distributor and this appeared prohibitively expensive. The suggestion of a combined newsletter with the Local Area Committee had not been positively received due to the publication moving towards an e-newsletter.

The Clerk had been contacted by a local resident who wished to help with publicity for the In Bloom competition and the Clerk suggested that residents might be able to assist with the production and potential distribution of a Parish Council newsletter.

Members wished to see local sponsorship of a newsletter and also advertising from local businesses in a newsletter but they also sought assurance over the legality of such advertising. Members wished to consider a budget for the production of a newsletter and whether the newsletter should be targeted to avoid unnecessary distribution costs.

It was AGREED that:

- 1) The Clerk will contact the local resident to assess whether he will be able to assist with the production of a Parish Council newsletter
- 2) The Clerk will contact Hampshire Association of Local Councils to confirm the legality of providing advertising in newsletters for local businesses
- 3) The Clerk will contact a range of Parish Councils to ascertain the style and advertising content of their newsletters

13. SAFER PLACES SCHEME

The Parish Council had been contacted by Hampshire County Council with a request to

take part in the Safer Places scheme. The scheme provided adult vulnerable people with a network of safe places to go should they feel unsafe or disorientated in the community. Members wished to express an interest in the scheme but did not wish to commit to take part in the scheme due to accessibility issues at the parish office. Members also wished to consider the commitment to the Clerk and the Council if they agreed to participate in the scheme.

It was AGREED that:

1) The Parish Council would wish to express an interest in receiving information about the Safer Places scheme without committing to take part until further information is available

14. PARISH COUNCIL STATIONERY

The Clerk introduced the report on business stationery as a result of further discussion on better quality stationery and increased print runs to achieve better value for money. On the basis of best value BML were recommended to members as the preferred supplier.

It was AGREED that:

1) The Clerk will confirm to BML the intention to place an order for business stationery based on the quotation received

15. DATE OF NEXT MEETING AND BUSINESS

The next meeting is scheduled for 4 April 2012 at

Items of business:

1. Recommendation from Asset Transfer and Management Team for the transfer of the Hiltingbury and Fryern recreation grounds together with Hiltingbury Lakes
2. Financial update
3. Queens Diamond Jubilee events update
4. Agreement of budgets for Diamond Jubilee Beacon, Chandler's Ford in Bloom
5. Recommendation for Parish Council newsletter
6. Policy updates