Littlehampton Town Council

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Town Clerk – **Peter Herbert**

MINUTES of the **POLICY AND FINANCE COMMITTEE** held in the **NEW MILLENNIUM CHAMBER, MANOR HOUSE, CHURCH STREET, LITTLEHAMPTON** on **MONDAY 29 APRIL 2013** at **6.30PM**

Present: Cllrs Long (Chair), Belchamber MBE Gammon, Hulmes, & Dr Walsh KStJ. The Deputy Mayor, Cllr Bowyer was also in attendance

2012/2013

57. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

In the absence of the Chair and the Vice Chair, Councillor Long was proposed as Chair by Councillor Bowyer. This was duly seconded and it was unanimously **RESOLVED** that:

Councillor Long be appointed Chair for this meeting.

58. EVACUATION PROCEDURES

The evacuation procedures were noted.

59. MOBILE PHONES

Members and the public were reminded that the use of mobile phones (other than on silent) was prohibited at Town Council and Committee meetings.

60. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillors Britton, Emberson, Squires and Weston.

61. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members and Officers were reminded to make any declarations of disclosable pecuniary or personal and/or prejudicial interests that they might have in relation to items on the Agenda. Councillors Bowyer, Gammon, Long and Walsh KStJ declared personal interests as Members of the District Council with regard to the items on the Electoral Review, the Draft Leisure Strategy and the Site Management Agreement between the Professional Fundraising Association and Arun District Council. Councillor Walsh KStJ declared a personal interest as a Member of West Sussex County Council in relation to the discussions on the East Bank Enhancement Scheme and the Littlehampton Traditional Bonfire Night.

62. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 25 February 2013 (previously circulated) were confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chair.

63. CHAIR'S REPORT AND URGENT ITEMS

63.1 **Operation Watershed**

The Town Clerk tabled an email from West Sussex County Council which contained information about funds that were being made available to help local communities tackle flooding issues. Local communities were encouraged to apply to The Active Communities Fund for grants to pursue projects aimed at alleviating flooding problems. Members noted that while there was no upper limit on grant requests, projects would be evaluated on a value for money, case by case basis and that match funding was likely to be sought. Members commented that some priority work had already been carried out in the Town and agreed to notify the Town Clerk should they identify any suitable projects. It was **RESOLVED** that:

Councillors would notify the Town Clerk of potential projects by 10th May.

64. PUBLIC FORUM

There were no members of the public present.

64. OFFICER'S REPORTS

64.1 **Arun Electoral Review**

The Town Clerk reported that he was seeking details of the position regarding the review process with a view to writing to Nick Gibb MP to see if he could exert any pressure when this proposal received Parliamentary scrutiny. Members were a little resigned to the outcome of the Review but considered it important that the Town Council's dissatisfaction with both the process and the outcome were pursued. The Committee was also keen to ensure that all information relating to the Review was retained for future reference. It was **RESOLVED** that:

The Town Clerk write to Nick Gibb MP seeking his support when the proposal receives parliamentary scrutiny.

64.2 **East Bank Enhancements**

The Committee considered an update (previously circulated) on progress with the flood defence and enhancement scheme for the East Bank. Members noted that the requirement to improve the eastern footpath had been retained but were extremely concerned that in an effort to reduce costs, some items had been omitted. These included some planters, but of more importance, the integrated LED lighting on the railings and steps. It was reported that a further £50,000 was required to deliver these, which practically could only be installed when the major works were undertaken. The Committee discussed the options and it was felt that the lighting, as well as adding to the aesthetics of the scheme, was also an important Health and Safety consideration.

64.3 The Committee discussed the possibility of utilising earmarked reserves as an incentive to encourage the relevant authorities, such as the County and District Councils, to re-instate these aspects of the scheme. The Town Clerk reported that such a scheme would fulfil the criteria of the Community

Resources Initiatives budget Earmarked Reserves where there was currently £9,600 unspent which could be set aside for this purpose. Members stressed that this was only viable if the relevant authorities were also willing to commit the remainder amount of the funding for this purpose. It was therefore agreed that the District and County Councils should be approached to bridge this funding gap, which in addition to making the area safer, would greatly enhance the aesthetics of what could otherwise be a very overbearing scheme. Members also agreed that a press release be issued to publicise the proposal and generate support. It was therefore **RESOLVED** that:

1. The Town Clerk write to County and District Councils with the Town Council's proposals to re-instate those aspects of the scheme which had been lost as outlined in paragraph 64.3 above.
2. The Community Resources Committee be recommended to approve that, subject to the agreement by the County and District Councils to the Town Council's proposal, £9,600 Earmarked Reserves be ring fenced for a potential contribution to the Scheme.
3. A press release containing details of the Town Council's proposals be prepared.

64.4 **Draft Leisure Strategy**

Further to the discussion at the Annual Town Meeting on 25th April, the Committee considered the current position regarding the outcomes of the Strategy. Members questioned the validity of the District Council's decision to relieve Inspire Leisure of the responsibility to provide certain core activities such as cinema, theatre and tennis facilities. The Committee remained strongly opposed to the processes and some of the outcomes of the Strategy and considered that the District Council's decision was not made in accordance with their Constitution. The Committee discussed the possibility of challenging the way in which the District Council had reached its decision by Judicial Review and through the Local Authority Ombudsman. Members noted that time wise, it was not practical to seek a Judicial Review and that the Local Authority Ombudsman could only deal with complaints from members of the public. The Town Clerk reported that he had yet to hear from Mr Cunard on the progress of his discussions with the District Council but he would keep Members informed. It was **RESOLVED** that:

The Town Clerk write to the District Council in response to their Chief Executive's letter highlighting the perceived failure of their decision making processes.

64.5 **Littlehampton Traditional Bonfire Night**

The Committee considered correspondence regarding a significant change from the County Council to the Bonfire Society which threatened the event (previously circulated). However, the Town Clerk was pleased to report that

the County Council had agreed to meet the costs this year. and that this year's event could now go ahead. The County Council would also investigate establishing a mechanism to deal with this in future. The Committee expressed its gratitude to the local County Councillors and Phil Graham at the District Council for their assistance in achieving this result. It was **RESOLVED** that:

The position be noted.

64.6 **National Association of Local Councils (NALC)**

The Committee considered a report (previously circulated) which set out proposals to allow some larger parishes in Surrey and Sussex to withdraw from NALC and take on an affiliate status at SALC. This had come about in response to concerns that have been raised by three parishes about the standard of service received from NALC. The Town Clerk explained that he had written opposing this proposal because NALC were recognised as the main body that represented the interests of local councils with Central Government and because the plans could potentially cause divisions at a local level. The Committee was very concerned at this development and supported the Town Clerk in his stance on the issue. It was therefore **RESOLVED** that:

The Committee noted and endorsed the Town Clerk's position on this matter.

64.7 **Site Management Agreement between the Professional Fundraising Association and Arun District Council**

The Committee considered a consultation from the District Council (previously circulated) in its capacity as the licensing authority which contained a draft agreement covering street collections. The Committee considered this was a sensible way forward and had no comments on the draft agreement. It was **RESOLVED** that:

The Draft Agreement be noted.

65. ACCOUNTS

65.1 Finance Report 2012/13

The Committee considered the latest periodic Finance Report for the financial year 2012/13 (previously circulated). It was **RESOLVED** that:

The report be noted.

66. MASTERPLAN – NORTH LITTLEHAMPTON

66.1 Further to the discussion at the Annual Town Meeting on 25th April, the Town Clerk reported that the local health Commissioning Group had confirmed that the provision of health facilities envisaged north of the Academy in the Littlehampton Neighbourhood Plan had been discounted. Use of the Enterprise Centre at Morrisions was being considered as an alternative leaving no detailed plans for the future development of the old community hospital site. It was **RESOLVED** that:

The position be noted.

The meeting closed at 7.29pm.

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CHAIR