

YEOVIL TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of **YEOVIL TOWN COUNCIL** held in the Council Chamber, Town House, 19 Union Street, Yeovil on **Tuesday 5 August 2008**

(7.30pm to 9.30pm)

Present:

Wes Read – Mayor	Peter Gubbins
J Vincent Chainey	John Hann
Philip Chandler	Steve Hawker
John Cruddas	Simon Hester
Clive Davis	Andrew Kendall
Bridget Dollard	Ruth Kendall
Tony Fife	Tony Lock
Dave Gooding	Ian Martin
Pete Goodman	Pat Martin
John Grana	Tom Parsley
Dave Greene	David Recardo

Also present:

Alan Tawse	Town Clerk
Alan Brown	Yeovil Vision Projects Director
Mark Pollock	Corporate Director – Economic Vitality (SSDC)

PRAYERS

Reverend Ed Bangay led the Council in prayers on behalf of the Townspeople of Yeovil.

GRANT PRESENTATIONS

The Mayor presented grant cheques to representatives of the following organisations for the purposes indicated:

Applicant	Amount	Purpose
Gryphon West Gym Club	£1,000	To help purchase a portable air track
Groovy Tots	£832	To assist with costs of hall hire
Yeovil and District Chrysanthemum and Dahlia Society	£250	Towards general running costs of Society and its shows
Yeovil Olympiads Athletic Club	£850	To support the annual Yeovil games
South Somerset Citizens Advice Bureau	£2,000	Towards general running costs

PUBLIC COMMENT

Paul Saunders, Secretary of the independent Allotment Tenants' Group expressed the Group's views on the proposals put forward by the Policy, Resources and Finance Committee regarding allotment rents and equipment.

He explained that whilst the Tenants' Group was not against the principle of an increase in allotment rents, they would like to know how the extra income that would be generated would be used.

Turning to proposed changes to the existing maintenance arrangements, the Group felt that the course of action being put forward by the Committee was disproportionate to the level of risk.

The Mayor thanked Paul for his comments, and indicated that they would be taken into consideration later in the meeting when the relevant items were discussed.

7/193 **MINUTES**

The Minutes of the previous meeting held on 1 July 2008, copies of which had been circulated, were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Mayor.

7/194 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Julian Freke and Alan Smith.

7/195 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

J Vincent Chainey declared a personal interest in Agenda items 6 (Allotment Rents) and 9 (Allotment Equipment) by virtue of his tenancy of an allotment plot at Rustywell Allotment Site.

7/196 **MAYOR AND DEPUTY MAYOR'S RECENT AND FORTHCOMING ENGAGEMENTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Details of the Mayor and Deputy Mayor's recent and forthcoming engagements and announcements were attached to the Agenda.

7/197 **CORRESPONDENCE**

The Town Clerk reported receipt of the following items of correspondence:-

- Letter of thanks from Town Centre Manager regarding the Town Council's ongoing support of the Town Centre Partnership and their contribution towards its costs in 2008/09
- Sureline – impending fare and service changes to Bus Services X37 and 212 operating between Weymouth, Dorchester, Maiden Newton and Yeovil
- Yeovil District Hospital Newsletter – Issue 4 - Summer 2008
- Firstline – Great Western Stakeholder Newsletter – June/July 2008
- Tree Talk – SSDC Conservation Unit Newsletter - July 2008
- Thatch – Community Council for Somerset Magazine – Summer 2008

7/198 **ALLOTMENT RENTS**

Council considered the report of the Town Clerk (agenda item 6 refers) and the recommendations of the Policy, Resources and Finance Committee set out in Minute 7/104.

The Town Clerk drew attention to the direct costs of managing and maintaining allotment sites across the Town, which amounted to £26,274. He explained that the income raised from allotment rents, which was estimated to be £7,000 in 2008/09, was used to partially offset these costs and that any increase in rental income would increase the proportion of costs met by tenants.

He added that whilst the proportion of let plots had increased, the level of income received from rents in 2007/08 had fallen short of the budgeted figure.

The Town Clerk indicated that a report on the maintenance work carried out at each site was presented to the Grounds and General Maintenance Committee on a regular basis, and that this enabled Members to monitor and review the work being undertaken.

During the ensuing discussion, reference was made to the expenditure that the Town Council had incurred in improving the quality and facilities at allotment sites over the years – including ongoing maintenance work, fencing and a rolling programme of water supply upgrades.

Members discussed the merits of the recommended increase, and it was recognised that the cost of renting an allotment was relatively cheap. Accordingly, it was felt that the proposals put forward by the Policy, Resources and Finance Committee represented a fair, realistic and affordable increase.

RESOLVED

- (1) that the matter be noted;
- (2) that the recommendation of the Grounds and General Maintenance Committee be not supported; and
- (3) that an increase in allotment rents of 5p per m² be levied with effect from 1 October 2009, it being noted that, for a typical plot, this would result in an effective increase of £7.15 per annum (approximately 14p per week).

(John Grana and Simon Hester requested that their vote against the passing of the above resolutions be recorded).

7/199 FINAL ACCOUNTS 2007/08

Council considered the report of the Town Clerk (Agenda item 7 refers).

RESOLVED

- (1) that the position concerning the £9,361 operating budget deficit for the year ended 31 March 2008 be noted;
- (2) that the position concerning the General Reserve, the Capital Fund and the Asset Register be noted; and

(3) that the Statement of Accounts for 2007/08 be received and approved.

7/200 **ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT**

Council considered the report of the Town Clerk (Agenda item 8 refers).

RESOLVED

- (1) that the matter be noted; and
- (2) that a positive Statement of Annual Governance in respect of the Financial Year 2007/08 be approved.

7/201 **REPORTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FROM COMMITTEES AND OTHER MEETINGS**

The Chairmen of the various Committees of the Council presented the Minutes from the previous cycle of meetings, drawing attention to specific references to Council, any matters of particular interest and answering any questions.

Planning and Licensing Committee

30 June 2008
14 July 2008

Grounds and General Maintenance Committee

7 July 2008

Promotions and Activities Committee

15 July 2008

Buildings and Civic Matters Committee

22 July 2008

Policy, Resources and Finance Committee

29 July 2008

7/103 **Allotment Equipment**

Council considered the recommendations of the Policy, Resources and Finance Committee on this matter (Minute 7/103 refers).

The Town Clerk informed Members that, following the meeting of the Policy, Resources and Finance Committee, he had consulted South Somerset District Council who had confirmed that they had sufficient capacity to take on the additional maintenance work that would arise in the event that the Town Council supported the recommendations of that Committee.

The Chairman of the Policy, Resources and Finance Committee indicated that should the recommendations be adopted, the tenant representatives on the allotment sites concerned would be consulted to ensure that future maintenance works were carried out to an appropriate specification.

During the ensuing discussion, reference was made to the need to clearly define within any adopted policy the areas which tenants were responsible for maintaining (their individual let plots) and the other areas on allotment sites which the Town Council was responsible for maintaining (unlet plots and those areas not forming the let plots).

Attention was drawn to the need to clarify the legal obligations on tenants using machinery to maintain their plots and the role of the Town Council in enforcing any such obligations.

Reference was also made to the legal and financial implications of the Town Council disposing of redundant machinery to individuals.

RESOLVED

- (1) that the report be noted;
- (2) that the recommendations of the Grounds and General Maintenance Committee be not supported;
- (3) that in light of the advice received, the practice of allotment tenants using the purchased equipment cease forthwith;
- (4) that, recommendations (4) and (5) of the Policy, Resources and Finance Committee be deferred and considered during the next cycle of meetings following clarification of the legal obligations on tenants using machinery to maintain their plots and the role of the Town Council in enforcing any such obligations; and
- (5) that, in the meantime, the Town Clerk make arrangements for the necessary additional maintenance arrangements (in respect of unlet plots and those areas not forming the let plots) to be undertaken by South Somerset District Council to an appropriate specification, and that the tenant representatives of each of the allotment sites involved be consulted on this specification.

7/108 Outside Bodies

RESOLVED

- (1) that, as a matter of policy, the Chairman of the Policy, Resources and Finance Committee be appointed, on an ex-officio basis, to serve as the Town Council Member representative on the Yeovil Vision Project Management Board; and

- (2) that the Vice-Chairman of the Committee be appointed, on an ex-officio basis, to act as the Member substitute representative.

7/201 **REPORTS FROM REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES**

The Minutes of the following meetings of Outside Bodies were attached to the Agenda and Members were given an opportunity to raise matters relating to them: -

Yeovil Crematorium and Cemetery Committee

16 July 2008

Yeovil Youth Council

21 July 2008

7/202 **EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

RESOLVED

that the press and public be excluded from the remainder of the meeting in accordance with Section 1 (2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 on the grounds that publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

(Tom Parsley requested that his vote against the passing of the above resolution be recorded).

7/203 **YEOVIL VISION - UPDATE**

The Committee considered the confidential report of the Yeovil Vision Projects Director (Agenda item 11 refers).

Alan Brown, Yeovil Vision Projects Director gave a presentation on developments to date in respect of the Yeovil Vision, and Members were provided with an opportunity to comment and to ask Alan questions about progress of the initiative and plans for the future.

The Mayor thanked Alan for his interesting and informative presentation, and it was

RESOLVED

that the matter be noted.

Mayor