

## YEOVIL TOWN COUNCIL

**MINUTES** of a meeting of the **POLICY, RESOURCES AND FINANCE COMMITTEE** held in the Council Chamber, Town House, 19 Union Street, Yeovil on **Tuesday 29 July 2008**

(7.00pm – 8.50pm)

### **Present:**

Tony Lock - Chairman	Steve Hawker
Philip Chandler	Andrew Kendall
Clive Davis	Pat Martin
Bridget Dollard	Tom Parsley
Tony Fife	Wes Read
Dave Greene	David Recardo

### **Also Present:**

Alan Tawse – Town Clerk

### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

There were no comments from members of the public.

### 7/97 **MINUTES**

The Minutes of the previous meeting held on 27 May 2008, copies of which had been circulated, were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

### 7/98 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Dave Gooding.

### 7/99 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Bridget Dollard declared a personal and prejudicial interest in Agenda item 13 (Yeovil Twinning Association) item in view of her independent appointment as a member of the Management Committee of the Association.

Andrew Kendall and Tom Parsley each declared a personal interest in this item by virtue of their having been appointed by the Town Council to serve on the Management Committee of the Association.

Tony Fife declared a personal interest in this item in view of his membership of the Association. Wes Read declared a personal interest in the item by virtue of his position as Patron of the Association.

Bridget Dollard declared a personal interest in Agenda item 5 (Applications for Grant Aid – Yeovil and District Chrysanthemum and Dahlia Society) given her association with the Hall used by the Society as the venue for its shows.

#### 7/100 **CORRESPONDENCE**

The Town Clerk reported receipt of correspondence from the Clerk to Misterton Parish Council concerning proposals by South West Trains to reduce the opening hours of a significant number of ticket offices in its franchise area – including Yeovil Junction Station.

He added that the closing date for representations was 4 August 2008, and that should Members wish to comment, he would use the Council's Emergency Procedure to ensure that a response was submitted within the consultation period.

During the ensuing discussion, reference was made to the following matters:

- Persons with a disability often required the assistance of railway staff to help overcome access problems
- The unavailability of the waiting room would put vulnerable members of society at risk
- Extended car parking tickets were currently unavailable except through the ticket office
- Wheelchair users required assistance to cross the lines and needed to give advance notice of their intention to travel. If assistance was unavailable, they would be forced to travel onto the next station where unaided access was possible – this could constitute a breach of the Disability Discrimination legislation
- Unmanned stations often attracted additional vandalism
- Other services such as railcards and advance tickets were unavailable from ticket machines
- The use of ticket machines discriminated against persons who did not hold a credit or debit card

#### 7/101 **APPLICATIONS FOR GRANT AID**

##### (a) **Yeovil Football and Athletic Club Ltd**

The Town Clerk reported that a reminder letter had been sent to the applicant requesting the attendance of a representative at the meeting to clarify a number of issues set out in earlier correspondence.

**RESOLVED** that consideration of the application be further deferred to the next meeting and, in the event that a

representative of the applicant is not in attendance at that meeting, the application be refused.

(b) **Gryphon West Gym Club**

The Town Clerk reported that the applicant had recently indicated that as the result of a successful application for funding from the Big Lottery Awards for All programme, the organisation was now seeking grant assistance of £1,000 rather than £3,500 from the Town Council.

**RESOLVED** that a grant of £1,000 be awarded to help purchase a portable air track. (S.137 of the Local Government Act 1972 - as amended).

(c) **Groovy Tots**

**RESOLVED** that a grant of £832 be awarded to assist with the costs of hall hire. (S.137 of the Local Government Act 1972 - as amended).

(d) **Yeovil and District Chrysanthemum and Dahlia Society**

**RESOLVED** that a grant of £250 be awarded towards the general running costs of the Society and its shows. (S.137 of the Local Government Act 1972 - as amended).

(e) **Yeovil Olympiads Athletic Club**

**RESOLVED** that a grant of £850 be awarded to support the annual Yeovil games. (S.137 of the Local Government Act 1972 - as amended).

(f) **South Somerset Citizens Advice Bureau**

**RESOLVED** that a grant of £2,000 be awarded towards the general running costs of the Bureau. (S.142 of the Local Government Act 1972 - as amended).

7/102 **CAPITAL FUND**

The Committee considered the report of the Town Clerk (Agenda item 6 refers).

During the ensuing discussion, reference was made to recent developments regarding the marketing of the former Yeovil Ski and Activity Centre.

**RESOLVED**

- (1) that the current position concerning the Capital Fund be noted; and

- (2) that the further developments regarding the impending disposal of the former Goldcroft Allotment site and the marketing of the former Ski and Activity Centre be noted.

### 7/103 **ALLOTMENT EQUIPMENT**

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

Attention was drawn to health and safety advice received since the introduction of the present allotment tenants' maintenance scheme, which casted doubt over the viability of continuing the scheme in its present format.

Members discussed the alternative proposal of allowing tenants to hire appropriate equipment direct from reputable tool and equipment suppliers. However, whilst was acknowledged that this approach would reduce the potential liability of the Town Council, it was felt that all allotment maintenance work involving the use of machinery should only be undertaken by suitably qualified and experienced contractors.

#### **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, subject to the approval of the Town Council, all allotment maintenance work involving the use of machinery be undertaken by suitably qualified and experienced contractors only, and the Town Clerk be requested to explore the options available with a view to putting the necessary additional maintenance arrangements into effect; and
- (5) that in the event of (4) above being supported, the Town Clerk seek early expressions of interest from horticultural machinery dealers for the disposal of the existing equipment at best consideration.

### 7/104 **ALLOTMENT RENTS**

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

The Town Clerk reported that the independent Tenants Working Group had now met and had concurred with the views of the Grounds and General Maintenance Committee on the matter.

Attention was drawn to the level of income received from rents in 2007/08, which had fallen short of the budgeted figure.

During the ensuing discussion, reference was made to the relatively cheap cost of renting an allotment plot, and the need to recover an increasing proportion of the costs of managing and maintaining allotment sites from the tenants.

**RESOLVED**

- (1) that the matter be noted;
- (2) that the recommendation of the Grounds and General Maintenance Committee be not supported; and
- (3) that, subject to approval by the Town Council, an increase in allotment rents of 5p per m<sup>2</sup> 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).

7/105 **MONMOUTH HALL CAR PARK**

The Committee considered the report of the Town Clerk (Agenda item 9 refers).

**RESOLVED**

- (1) that the matter be noted;
- (2) approval be given to the drafting of a new licence (at no cost to the Town Council) that supersedes any historic agreements and which:
  - excludes the car parking spaces and releases them back to Yeovil Town Council; and
  - only covers access to and from the store, with or without a vehicle at a peppercorn rent; and
- (3) that, in view of the ongoing contribution made by the Boys Brigade to the Annual Civic Service, the annual access charge of £100 be waived.

7/106 **FINAL ACCOUNTS 2007/08**

The Committee considered the report of the Town Clerk (Agenda item 10 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.

#### **7/107 ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT**

The Committee considered the report of the Town Clerk (Agenda item 11 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.

#### **7/108 OUTSIDE BODIES**

The Committee considered the report of the Town Clerk (Agenda item 12 refers).

#### **RESOLVED**

- (1) that, subject to Council approval, 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.

#### **7/109 YEOVIL TWINNING ASSOCIATION**

The Committee considered the report of the Town Clerk (Agenda item 13 refers).

#### **RESOLVED**

- (1) that the matter be noted; and
- (2) that the Mayor, Chairman of the Policy, Resources and Finance Committee and (in view of the debarring interest of the Chairman of the Buildings and Civic Matters Committee) the Vice-Chairman of the Buildings and Civic Matters Committee be appointed to represent the Town Council at the proposed meeting, along with the Town Clerk.

#### **7/110 FINANCIAL STATEMENTS – APRIL/MAY 2008**

The Committee considered the report of the Finance Administrator (Agenda item 14 refers).

**RESOLVED**

that the Financial Statements and payments therein for the above months be approved.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

There were no comments from members of the public.

7/111 **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.

7/112 **WAR MEMORIAL**

The Committee considered the confidential report of the Town Clerk (Agenda item 15 refers).

**RESOLVED**

that approval be given to the recommendations outlined in the above report.

7/113 **STAFFING ISSUE**

The Committee considered the confidential report of the Town Clerk (Agenda item 16 refers).

**RESOLVED**

that the matter be noted.

Chairman

AT  
30/07/08