

Witham Town Council

Town Hall
Newland Street
Witham
CM8 2FE

Tel: 01376 520627

Email: townclerk@witham.gov.uk

Website: www.witham.gov.uk



MINUTES

Meeting of: **Policy and Resources Committee**

Date: **Tuesday, 20th October 2015**

Present:	Councillors	M.C.M.	Lager	(Chairman)
		J.C.	Goodman	
		P.	Horner	
	Mrs	A.	Kilmartin	
	Mrs	J.M.	Money	
		T. A.	Pleasance	
		R.P.	Ramage	
		W.J.	Rose	
		R.	Williams	
		M.	Squire	(Town Clerk)
	Mrs	J.	Coleman	(Deputy Town Clerk)

And one member of the public.

APOLOGIES

The Chairman welcomed the Town Clerk back to the Town Hall after a brief period of illness. Apologies for absence were received from Councillors C.J. Bailey and Mrs J.A. Kempf.

33. MINUTES

RESOLVED That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee held 24th August 2015 be agreed as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

34. INTERESTS

Councillor T.A. Pleasance declared a non-pecuniary interest in Minute 44 – Remembrance Day Parade as a Member of the Royal British Legion. Councillor Mrs

J.M. Money declared a non-pecuniary interest in Minute 42 as the Town Council's representative on Homestart. Later at Minute 37(c) Councillor Mrs J.M. Money declared a non-pecuniary interest as one provider of Puppet Festival Accommodation.

35. QUESTIONS AND STATEMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

No comment was made by the member of public present.

36. TOWN CLERK'S REPORT

The Town Clerk thanked the Chairman for his kind wishes. The Town Clerk's Report on matters arising was received.

Local Council Award Scheme

It was agreed that a small panel of Members would undertake a self assessment review of what is required for the Council to fulfil Foundation Status initially, and then build on it. It was agreed that the Status gives the Town Council added credibility, especially in its use of social media and a web presence to demonstrate how effectively the council serves its community. Councillors J.C. Goodman, R.P. Ramage and Mrs A. Kilmartin volunteered to carry out the review, reporting to the next Policy and Resources Committee meeting on 8th December 2015. Councillor M.C.M. Lager to be available if required.

RESOLVED That the Town Clerk's Report be received and noted.

RESOLVED That a Panel consisting of Councillors J.C. Goodman, R.P. Ramage and Mrs A. Kilmartin undertakes a review of what further is required for the Council to fulfil Foundation Status initially and report to the forthcoming Policy and Resources Committee Meeting on 8th December 2015.

37. FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

(a) BANK RECONCILIATION

The Bank Reconciliations to 30th September 2015 were received.

RESOLVED That the Bank Reconciliations to 30th September 2015 be received, agreed and signed by the Chairman.

(b) BUDGET STATEMENTS

The Budget Statements to 30th September 2015 were received. The Town Clerk clarified certain items relating to the Toilet Block in the Town Park, and the insurance premium which he confirmed is reviewed regularly.

In response to a question about the opening times of the Toilet Block in the Town Park, the Town Clerk advised that he is not aware that these are locked during the day, but that members of the public may be mistaking the locked storage room for another toilet. It was agreed that a sign should be placed on the door indicating that it is a storage room.

RESOLVED That the Budget Statements to 30th September 2015 received and noted.

RESOLVED That a sign should be placed on the storage room at the Town Park Toilet Block to prevent confusion.

(c) **SCHEDULE OF PAYMENTS**

Councillor Mrs J.M Money declared a non-pecuniary interest as one provider of Puppet Festival Accommodation.

The Town Clerk noted that payments in respect of repairs and maintenance of the Town Clock requires the provision of a cherry picker, which adds considerably to the expense.

The Schedule of Payments and Receipts for the period ended 31st August 2015 and the period ended 30th September 2015 were received.

RESOLVED That the Schedule of Payments to 31st August 2015 totalling £29,378.94 and the Schedule of Payments to 30th September totalling £232,975.13; and Schedule of Receipts to 31st August 2015 totalling £58,189.55 and Schedule fo Receipts to 30th September totalling £63,207.16 be received, agreed and signed by the Chairman.

The Chairman indicated that the annual budgeting process will be getting underway shortly, when Members would gain greater clarity on what payments have to be made. This will also be the appropriate time for requests for additional funding to be factored in.

(d) **EXPENDITURE AUTHORISED BY THE TOWN CLERK**

The Town Clerk explained that following consultation with the Leader of the Council and Chairman of Environment Committee, he had authorised payment of an upfront fee to Essex County Council for the inspection of the cycleways on the River Walk.

RESOLVED That the information be received and the payment confirmed.

38. **ANNUAL RETURN**

The Annual Return and External Auditor's Certificate and Opinion for the year ended 31st March 2015 was received. The Town Council received a 'clean' audit report from the External Auditors.

RESOLVED That the Annual Return and External Auditor's Certificate and Opinion for the year ended 31st March 2015 be received.

39. STAFFING AND ACCOMMODATION SUB-COMMITTEE

The Minutes of the Staffing and Accommodation Sub-Committee held 3rd August 2015 and previously circulated were received and noted.

RESOLVED That the Minutes of the Staffing and Accommodation Sub-Committee held 3rd August 2015 (previously circulated) be received and noted.

40. MEMBERS' ATTENDANCE AT MEETINGS

Details of Members' attendance at Meetings were received. The Chairman commended Members on their good attendance record, and for giving apologies when not able to attend, which can be received up to 24 hours following a meeting. It was agreed to add percentage attendances to the report in future.

RESOLVED That the details be received and noted and future reports amended to show percentage attendance.

41. BUSINESS PLAN

(a) **REVIEW**

Community Committee

The Chairman noted that the Healthcare Provision Working Group would be holding its inaugural meeting on 21st October 2015 when its terms of reference will be agreed, and appropriate stakeholders to be involved in future meetings identified.

Councillor R. Williams updated members on his work on Weather Preparations and his conclusions that the Council's existing Snow Clearance Policy is appropriate. A formal report will be made to the next Community Committee Meeting for approval and closure.

In response to a question, the Deputy Town Clerk confirmed that she had spoken to a local retailer about a supply of snow shovels and salt, which unfortunately couldn't be stored at the Town Hall. The Town Clerk noted members' previous discussions about participation in the salt bag scheme and decision not to participate. It was noted that in former years, residents were able to collect and fill up sand bags at the Town Hall, and that these are no longer supplied by Braintree District Council. This service could be considered in the future, if the storage issue is resolved.

Environment Committee

The Chairman noted that the Parking Strategy Task Force had met recently. Councillors J.C. Goodman and R. Williams reported on a meeting they had attended recently with the manager of the Chelmsford CCTV Centre when issues about system linkage with Witham Industrial Watch and the shopping centres were discussed. The talks concluded that linkages would be worthwhile subject to budget constraints. It was noted that a Member visit to the CCTV Monitoring Centre would be arranged in the New Year, following a system upgrade.

It was noted that members of Witham Industrial Watch are very concerned at proposals to reduce the police presence in Witham, and that improved CCTV monitoring may be a useful tool in ensuring security. Proposals will be made to the next Environment Committee Meeting.

RESOLVED That the information be received and noted.

(b) BUSINESS PLAN FOR POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

The Chairman noted that the Grant Policy Working Group had met recently, and their proposals are awaited. Councillor T.A. Pleasance indicated that the group is considering what level of budget is appropriate for next year. The Town Clerk noted that the new Community Officer is working on arrangements for next year's Puppet Festival and a Community Fun Day in the Town Park on Saturday, 11th June 2016.

RESOLVED That the report be received.

42. HOME-START

Councillor Mrs J.M. Money had declared a non-pecuniary interest.

A report regarding making an additional grant was received. Members were supportive of making the additional funding available, as they regard Homestart's work with families in Witham as very worthwhile and believe them to be a prudent and resourceful organisation.

Members agreed that they would like to support Homestart. As there is only £555 remaining in the existing Grant Budget. Members agreed to vire the remaining sum (£1,744) from the Witham Gateways Budget, as this work has now been completed, at less cost than anticipated. This additional grant is to be made on an exceptional basis, not creating a precedent and restricted for the support of families in Witham.

RESOLVED To make an additional grant of £,2299 to Homestart on an exceptional basis, not creating a precedent and restricted for the support of families in Witham, by viring £1,744 from the Gateways budget.

43. POLICE

A Press Release about the new Community Policing Team, the removal of PCSO (Policy Community Support Officers) and the proposed closure and sale and Witham Police Station was received.

Members acknowledged public perception and fear about crime, as being worse than reality, but would not wish to see the police station demolished. Witham has a growing population, and as such its policing needs should be recognised. Members agreed to suggest to the Police Commissioner and Chief Constable that Witham Police Station is ideally located for future use, given its proximity to the A12, and to the Fire and Rescue Service HQ at Kelvedon Park. A draft response will be circulated for comment.

RESOLVED That the suggestion will be made to the Police Commissioner and Chief Constable that Witham Police Station is ideally located for future use, given its proximity to the A12, and to the Fire and Rescue Service HQ at Kelvedon Park. A draft response will be circulated for comment.

44. REMEMBRANCE DAY PARADE 8th November 2015

Councillor T.A. Pleasance had declared a non-pecuniary interest.

A Road Closure Consultation for the Remembrance Day Parade was received. Members had no comment.

RESOLVED That no objection be made to the Road Closure Request for the Remembrance Day Parade.

A request for stewarding support for the Remembrance Day Parade from the Royal British Legion was received. Councillor T.A. Pleasance explained that there would be six stewards from the British Legion, and that the Town Council's help with setting up and dismantling the barriers would be most helpful.

RESOLVED That the Town Council would provide assistance to the British Legion to ensure the Remembrance Day Parade proceeds smoothly and safely.

45. TOWN CHRISTMAS TREE

A request for support from the Rotary Club towards the provision of the Town Christmas Tree for 2015 was received. There are sufficient funds in the Christmas Events Budget.

RESOLVED That this request be supported

EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED That under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the press and public be excluded from the Meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest.

46. TOWN CLERK'S REPORT (Continued)

ACCOMMODATION

A report was received.

RESOLVED That the report be received and noted.

LENGTHSMAN SCHEME

A report was received.

RESOLVED That the report be received and noted.

STAFFING AND ACCOMMODATION SUB-COMMITTEE

The Minutes of the Staffing and Accommodation Sub-Committee Meeting held 3rd August 2015 were received and noted.

A verbal report was given.

RESOLVED That the report be received and noted.

47. BOUNDARY REVIEW

A report was received.

RESOLVED That the report be received and noted.

48. PUBLIC DOMAIN

Members considered that no items should be moved into the Public Domain.

RESOLVED That no items should be moved into the Public Domain.

There being no further business the Chairman closed the Meeting at 9.23 p.m.

Councillor M.C.M. Lager
Chairman
JC/MS 21 10 15