

MINUTES OF THE POLICY & RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MEETING
HELD ON TUESDAY 11TH APRIL 2017

PRESENT: Cllr. Goodchild (in the Chair), Cllrs. Bunyan, Clifford, Holmes, Swann, Veitch and Warne.

Declaration of Interests, Dispensations, Predetermination or Lobbying:

Members are required to declare any interests, dispensations, predetermination or lobbying on items on this agenda. Members are reminded that changes to the Register of Interests should be notified to the Clerk.

92/16: Internal Finance Check:

Cllr. Swann confirmed that the internal finance check had been completed and everything was in order.

93/16: Authorisation of payments made after the March meeting:

A list of payments made after the March meeting is filed with these minutes.

94/16: Cheques for Payment:

Cheques for April were signed for payment as per the list filed with these minutes. It was proposed by Cllr. Goodchild, seconded by Cllr. Clifford and agreed to authorise payment of the cheques as presented.

These included:

Policy and Resources	£16,531.09
Burial and Properties	£16,538.08
Environmental Management	£ 1,170.00
Planning & Preservation	<u>£ 36.00</u>
Total	£34,275.17

In response to a query regarding the payment to Hurstways for the Vestry Hall Cottage repairs, Cllr. Clifford confirmed the damp issues had been resolved.

95/16: Change of date for May meetings:

An issue had arisen with dates for the NDP 3 day design forum and final presentation which had been arranged for the 11th May, this clashed with the Annual Full Council meeting also scheduled for that date. As the NDP event had been widely advertised Cllr. Veitch proposed that the date of the Full Council meeting be amended to 18th May, this was seconded by Cllr. Holmes and agreed.

96/16: Audit Plan 2017/2018:

The Clerk tabled the Audit Plan received from our internal auditors, Kent County Council. Cllr. Goodchild proposed the Internal Audit plan for 2017/18 be accepted, this was seconded by Cllr. Swann and agreed.

97/16: Staffing:

Cllr. Veitch reported that she and Cllr. Goodchild had carried out the annual appraisals for the Clerks. She commented on how well the new team worked together. Cllr. Veitch proposed that the Deputy Clerk had successfully passed the probationary period and that both Clerks receive their annual increment as per the terms of their contracts. This was seconded by Cllr. Goodchild and agreed.

Cllr. Holmes raised a concern on the amount of ad hoc parishioner enquiries the office had to deal with on a daily basis, adding to their workload. He suggested introducing an appointment system. Cllr. Goodchild reported that this, along with general workload had been discussed during the appraisal process and several possible solutions had been suggested to trial. We will report back next month.

It was reported that the recent anomaly discovered with the Caretakers' salaries had been addressed to the satisfaction of all parties by reducing their rent for the coming year. Members agreed that the rent and salary package would be reviewed during budget discussions later in the year and that a current market rental valuation would need to be sought in preparation for those discussions along with advice from the Management Consultant.

98/16: Councillor Email Accounts:

Concerns had been raised previously that the generic email addresses set up for councillors were not being used. The Clerk had raised this with our website/email provider who had confirmed that they could be cancelled at any time. All Councillors had been canvassed to ascertain if they use or wish to continue with these email addresses. Cllr. Swann proposed that the email accounts that were not used or wanted be cancelled. This was seconded by Cllr. Bunyan and agreed. Members were advised that any important correspondence in these accounts should be removed prior to their cancellation as it cannot be retrieved at a later stage. Cllr. Holmes reiterated that discussions should not be conducted via email and that meetings were the correct forum for all discussions and comments.

99/16: Procurement Quote:

Cllrs. Bunyan, Swann and Veitch had met with Selena Stray – KCC Procurement team and Jonathan White who had been allocated by TWBC to provide free advice and guidance to the Parish Council on the Community Centre. Our current Financial Regulations state that any supply contract in excess of £25,000 must go out for public tender on the government's Contract Finder website. KCC have a legally compliant approved framework of approved companies that can be used instead to avoid the amount of responses that would be received. Their framework can only be accessed via the Procurement Team. A quote of £5,000 had been received from KCC to procure the services of a multidisciplinary design team and separate quantity surveyor. Cllr. Veitch confirmed that our initial contract with Taylor Roberts had been procured under previous financial regulations. After a lengthy discussion, Cllr. Bunyan proposed that the quote be accepted but only activated as and when necessary. This was seconded by Cllr. Goodchild and agreed.

100/16: Grant Applications:

- a) A request had been received from Kent, Surrey & Sussex Air Ambulance for £250 to support ongoing costs of providing the life-saving service in the Parish. Members agreed that although not specific to us, that any parishioner could benefit from the service at any time. It was proposed by Cllr. Swann, seconded by Cllr. Goodchild and agreed to award the sum requested.
- b) An application had been received from Cranbrook in Bloom requesting £2,500 to assist with the purchase of plants, seeds and compost for all planters and troughs; for the watering of all plants; to maintain the library pond; maintenance of the Cranbrook/Sissinghurst Roundabout, the Wilsley Orchard other areas in the Town. A full discussion followed, it was proposed by Cllr. Goodchild to award an initial sum of £1,500 along with an invitation to make a further request later in the year, when budgeted funds could be assessed to ensure all applications received were given due consideration. This was seconded by Cllr. Swann and agreed.
- c) An application had been received from Cranbrook C of E Primary P.T.A. to cover the cost of a secure shed in which to store equipment for their Forest School. After discussion it was proposed by Cllr. Holmes, seconded by Cllr. Warne and agreed to award the £680.99 requested in full.

101/16: Promotion of Parish Council:

Previous discussions had identified a need for an 'A board' on which to promote Parish Council events and for use at the summer fetes. Several quotes had been obtained and were tabled by the Deputy Clerk. It was proposed by Cllr. Clifford, seconded by Cllr. Swann and agreed to purchase the A- Master Plus option from Iden Signs at a cost of £83.20 + VAT.

Cllr. Goodchild reminded the Committee that there was a litter pick in Cranbrook scheduled for Saturday 15th April, meeting outside the Parish Office at 9.00am.

Cllr. Clifford reported that the Parish Cake magazine was on schedule to go to press mid-June for delivery by Royal Mail from 1st July onwards. He reiterated that it would not go to press until all costs were covered by advertising revenue. The rate card being used for advertising sales was tabled, Cllr. Clifford pointed out they had been set to cover the publications costs but also to be competitive. It was proposed by Cllr. Clifford, seconded by Cllr. Veitch and agreed to formally approve the advertising rates for the magazine.

Cllr. Holmes reported that draft contracts had been drawn up for Coffee Shop Media and Nem Goodman, the person appointed to undertake the advertising sales. These were currently with our Management consultant to look over, they would be sent to our solicitors for final approval.

It was agreed that to maintain our Quality Status the magazine will need to appear in full on the Parish Council website. Cllr. Clifford suggested that in addition the publication would benefit from having its own freestanding website to improve search engine optimisation thus enhancing advertising sales. Although some concerns were raised, Members agreed to give this option consideration. The Clerks agreed to obtain details on website traffic to the Parish Council website.

It was proposed by Cllr. Bunyan, seconded by Cllr. Veitch and agreed that although the maximum two hours for a meeting had been reached, Members would continue until all items on the agenda were covered.

Cllr. Clifford stated that in the future he would like the establishment of a Youth Parish Council to be considered by this Committee.

102/16: Items for Information:

Cllr. Warne highlighted the new Sunday bus service between Cranbrook and Hastings provided by Stagecoach, timetables were expected soon.

Cllr. Holmes felt that current car parking facilities in the Town and future needs should be assessed. Members agreed that this subject should initially be raised under the responsible committee – Environmental Management.