

BERKHAMSTED TOWN COUNCIL

Reports and Minutes of a Meeting of the

FINANCE & POLICY COMMITTEE

Held in the Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Berkhamsted
On **Monday 14th June 2010** at **7.30** p.m.

MEMBERS:

Councillors Mrs. C. Green – Vice-Chairman
Lindy Foster Weinreb
J. Lythgoe
P. Matthews

SUBSTITUTE MEMBER:

Councillors Dr. L. Handy
Dr. I. Reay

NON-COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

Councillors P.G. Gibbs

BERKHAMSTED YOUTH TOWN COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Ella Joiner
Alistair Heath

OFFICER:

Mr. C.R. Westwood - Town Clerk

58/10 ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN AND VICE CHAIRMAN FOR THE FORTHCOMING YEAR

On the proposal of Councillor Green, seconded by Councillor Foster Weinreb, Councillor Collins was elected as Chairman for the forthcoming year.

On the proposal of Councillor Foster Weinreb, seconded by Councillor Reay, Councillor Green was elected as Vice-Chairman for the forthcoming year.

59/10 TO AGREE MEMBERSHIP OF THE FOLLOWING WORKING PARTIES REPORTING TO THIS COMMITTEE

Membership was agreed as follows:

- a. Communications
Councillors Cowie, Collins and Foster Weinreb and Laws.

- b. Festival of Light
Councillor Collins
- c. Youth Matters
Councillor Foster Weinreb
- d. Support Services
Councillors Collins, Green, Laws, Lythgoe and Reay.

60/10 TO AGREE MEMBERSHIP OF THE ACCOUNTS SUB-COMMITTEE

Councillors Collins, Cowie, Green, Laws and Lythgoe

61/10 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Collins and Cowie.

62/10 TO RECEIVE DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST REGARDING ITEMS ON THE AGENDA

There were no declarations of interest regarding items on the agenda.

63/10 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on the 17th May 2010 had been agreed at Full Council and were signed by the Chairman.

Vide 52/10 b i. - Age Concern Dacorum – County Council funding
Councillor Reay said that he had made inquiries with the County Council about the withdrawal of funding from Age Concern and had been informed that the only withdrawal of services or funding in Berkhamsted had been the closure of the Manor Street facility.

64/10 CHAIRMAN'S COMMUNICATIONS

Notification had been received of the Annual General meeting of the Hertfordshire Association of Parish & Town Councils to be held at Woolmer Green Village Hall on Wednesday 16th June 2010 at 7.00 p.m.

A letter had been received from the Chairman of the Conservation Area Residents Association of Berkhamsted in relation to adult care facilities attaching a copy of the County Council Commissioning Strategy for Older People 2008/2010.

An email had been received from Danny Bonnett, Leader of the Transition Towns Berkhamsted Movement, notifying the Town Council of their car-free day initiative to be held on Tuesday 22nd June 2010. *The Town Council has already agreed at a previous meeting to support this initiative.*

A letter had been received from a resident of Victoria Road asking for the Town Council's attention to be drawn to the potential danger caused by foxes in urban areas and highlighting the fact that a family of foxes was known to be living in Manor Street. The Town Clerk had sent a suitable reply.

The following publications had been received:

The June 2010 copy of The Citizen the newsletter of Berkhamsted Citizens Association.

The summer issue of Pepper News affiliated to the Iain Rennie Hospice at Home.

65/10 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There were in excess of 45 people present all of whom were interested in the item regarding Berkhamsted Youth Centre, three of those people addressed the Committee when the item was dealt with.

66/10 FINANCIAL MATTERS

a. Grant Applications

- i. Vide 41/10 ii. - Berkhamsted Skate Addition – to consider plans to extend the Berkhamsted Skate Park at a cost of £45,000, and to consider an application to contribute towards the costs. In the absence of a reply this matter was deferred to the next meeting of the Committee.
- ii. Vide 41/10 iv. - 1st Gossoms End Scout Group – application for a grant of £1000 towards the cost of providing a mini bus to transport members to camps and outdoor activities.

The Chairman referred to correspondence received from Gossoms End Scout Group circulated with the agenda. Following discussion it was agreed to provide a grant of £1,000 towards the cost of the mini bus on condition that the facility was made available to all scout, guide and community groups in the area and that the balance of funding should be raised prior to the Town Council grant being paid. Grant to be made under Section 137 of the Local Government Act 1972.

Action Town Clerk

b. Other Financial Matters

- i. Town Council Accounts 2009/2010 – to approve the final account and the completion of the Annual Return to the external auditor:

Draft Annual Return

Income and Expenditure
Balance Sheet

Councillor Green referred to the Draft Annual Return, report of the Internal Auditor, details of income and expenditure and balance sheet for the year ending 31st March 2010, all of which had been circulated with the agenda. The Town Clerk made particular reference to Section 2 of the Annual Return in respect of which members had to be satisfied as it was signed by the Chairman on behalf of them all.

Following discussion it was

RESOLVED

- a. To approve Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Return and to authorise Councillor Green to sign them on behalf of the Town Council.
- b. To approve and adopt the Final Account for the year ending 31st March 2010 and to authorise Councillor Laws to sign it on behalf of the Town Council.

66/10 POLICY MATTERS

- a. Vide 42/10 a - Berkhamsted 2010 Festival – Progress report
Councillor Matthews said there was nothing further to report and arrangements were continuing.
- b. Vide 42/10 b - Town Guide 2010 – Progress report
The Chairman noted that the Town Guide had been published and distributed.
- c. Vide 42/10 c - Quality Status application – Progress Report
The Town Clerk thanked those Councillors that had returned their Training & Development documents and asked for those outstanding to be forwarded to him as soon as possible. A meeting had been arranged with HAPTC to hand over the required documentation following which he hoped that Quality Status would be confirmed for the next four years.
Action Town Clerk
- d. Neighbourhood Policing – to discuss a letter from the Chair of the Police Authority
The correspondence received from the Chairman of the Police Authority was noted.
- e. Berkhamsted Youth Centre – to consider the implications of the closure of the existing lease with effect from 10th December 2010. The Chairman suspended Standing Orders to allow Alistair Heath of Berkhamsted Youth Town Council to address the Committee. He said

that the BASH Club facilities were good for young people and provided a high quality indoor and outdoor area. There was a Club for single mothers and affordable childcare facilities. It would be a mistake to lose this facility. Sport was encouraged which was important to the health of young people. He hoped that the Town Council would support the continuation of the Youth Centre and help to keep it afloat.

Kelsey then said that there was a high strength of feeling amongst her peers who had been using the facilities for 10-12 years. It was the only facility without cost in that part of the town where young people could go without travel expense. Use of the Astroturf was also free which provided healthy exercise. Use of the facility was important for the BASH Club and playgroups. It was a true community facility with no problems and provided much enjoyment, especially during school holidays, when it was open and free. The Swan Project was good for inside activities but outside the Youth Centre was the only additional facility available. 280 people of all ages had contributed to her Facebook page in support of the Youth Centre. They were willing to help maintain and obtain funding. They would not let it go without a fight and would chain themselves to the fence to keep it going.

Mrs. Jane Thompson said she was a parent who used the BASH Club. The building was not in a bad state of disrepair but needed the support of local Councillors, with the County Council, to keep it going for another 21 years. The 23rd June 2010 would see the election of a new management committee. A letter had been sent to every parent who used it to inform them of the situation and to lobby for its continuation.

The meeting was reconvened.

Councillor Reay explained that the building was constructed from public donation 21 years ago as a Youth Club. Because the terms of the lease were not being adhered to the Borough Council had given notice of the closure of the lease but at the time of doing so they were not aware of its popularity and how much it was used. The Borough Council were now talking to the County Council as a preferred option for the County Council to manage the facility and to include nursery use, BASH Club and youth clubs in the evening. He recommended that the Town Council should express its support for this arrangement in letters sent to the Portfolio Holders at the Borough and County Councils. The Town Council should offer local management support in the form of Trustees or a management committee which should include parents.

Following discussion it was agreed that the recommendations made by Councillor Reay should be approved and letters should be sent to the Portfolio Holders at the County and Borough Councils encouraging the adoption of a new lease by the County Council and offering Town Council support in the management of the facility.

Action Councillor Reay & Town Clerk

67/10 BERKHAMSTED COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP

- a. Vide Item 54/10 - The Chairman referred to a discussion at the previous Committee meeting concerning the grant of £3,000 to be paid to the Community Partnership as agreed in the budget. A letter and financial statement had been received from the Chairman of the Partnership and circulated to members. Following discussion it was agreed that sufficient information was now available to enable the grant to be paid.

Action Town Clerk

- b. Last meeting held on Tuesday 8th June 2010 (minutes to follow).

68/10 BERKHAMSTED CASTLE LIAISON GROUP

- a. Progress report
Councillor Gibbs said that there was nothing to report and the next meeting would be held in October.
- b. Provision of toilets
Councillor Gibbs referred to the campaign by a local resident to have toilets installed at the Castle site. He did not agree with the campaign and said the installation of toilets would not be compatible with the ancient Castle and nor should portable toilets be permitted on a permanent basis. It would also be impossible to excavate the site to allow permanent toilets to be installed due to its archaeological importance. For these reasons he did not support the suggestion that toilets should be installed.

Councillor Matthews said that during discussions with English Heritage in respect of the postponed theatre event at the Castle it became apparent that hiring organisations would be required to supply portable toilets at a cost to them. There may be a need to review public toilet facilities nearby and in the town.

Ella Joiner from Berkhamsted Youth Town Council said lots of people complained about the lack of toilet facilities in Berkhamsted, especially girls. The public toilets were always locked at night. There should be a 24 hour facility which should include nappy changing facilities. There were no toilet facilities near the Castle for young families.

It was agreed that the Town Council did not support the campaign for toilets to be installed at the Castle site and it was further agreed that the opening and closing times of the existing public facilities in the town, including the Railway Station, should be investigated.

Action Town Clerk

69/10 WORKING PARTY REPORTS:

- a. Communications

- i. Berkhamsted Town Council News
To consider the future compilation, editing, printing and delivery of the Town Council newsletter.
The Committee debated whether or not the newsletter should continue to be printed and delivered to each household in the Parish. Consideration was given to having the main publication on the Town Council website backed up by hard copies being made available in public places. The Town Clerk reminded members that the Quality Status criteria required the Council to produce and publish a newsletter at least four times a year and make it readily available at public sites across the Parish. In addition the Annual Report should be published annually by the 30th June and made publicly available.

Following discussion it was agreed in order to maintain and improve the profile of the Town Council with its electorate that the newsletter should continue to be printed and distributed to every household in the Parish. It was further agreed that the Communications Working Party should participate more in the editing and production of the newsletter.

Action Communications Working Party

- b. Festival of Light 2010.
 - i. Report of first meeting held on Monday 7th June 2010
There was nothing to report.
 - ii. To adopt and approve Terms of Reference for the Working Party
The Terms of Reference circulated with the agenda were approved and adopted.
- c. Youth Matters
 - i. Youth Town Council
Councillor Foster Weinreb said that the presence of two members of Berkhamsted Youth Town Council was welcome and she thanked them for attending. They said they had enjoyed the experience and were looking forward to getting more done.
 - ii. Swan Youth Project – progress report
There was nothing to report.

70/10 CLOSE OF MEETING

The meeting closed at 8.26 p.m.