

Holme Valley Parish Council

MINUTES OF THE FINANCE AND MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE HELD ON WEDNESDAY 03 MAY 2006 -

Those present :

Chairman : Cllr P Robinson

Vice-Chairman : Cllr Mrs H P Smith

Councillors : Cllr M Bower, Cllr Mrs M Bower, Cllr J R Chilton, Cllr G Christofi, Cllr C E Collins, Cllr R P Dixon, Cllr A L Gosslin, Cllr R N Haynes, Cllr C M Kaye, Cllr R Oldfield, Cllr Mrs J M Osborn, Cllr A R Otterburn, Cllr Mrs J Spencer

Officers : Mrs MA Bewick

Councillors Chilton, Gosslin and Mrs. Spencer were present in their ex-officio roles as Chairman of the Council, Chairman of General Purposes Committee and Vice Chairman of the Council.

Cllr. Mrs. Osborn was present as a substitute for Cllr. Rogers.

Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were accepted from Councillors Firth, Garrod, Macpherson, Oldham and Rogers.

05 114 Disclosure of Interests

Cllr. Mrs. Bower declared a personal interest in item 10 (West Yorkshire Passenger Transport Authority), in that she serves on that authority.

Cllr. Christofi declared a prejudicial interest in item 8(1) (Grant Application - Holme Valley Business Association), in that he is President of the Association. He left the meeting during discussion of this item.

05 115 Admission of the Public

It was agreed that no items needed to be taken in private session.

05 116 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 6 March 2006 numbered 05 99 - 05 113 inclusive be received and adopted as a true record of the meeting.

05 117 Correspondence arising from the Minutes

- West Yorkshire Passenger Transport Authority - Minute number 05 107 - Members noted that a meeting would be held with the minibus operator to discuss possible variations to route H1. PTE officers would report back to the Council in due course.

05 118 Investment of Income

RESOLVED: (1) That the current rates of interest applying to the Council's accounts and the investment of the Council's income, including the investment of the precept for 2006-07 be noted and the Clerk's action approved

(2) That the Clerk's advice be accepted and the amount advised re-invested with Kirklees MC.

05 119 Annual Accounts

(1) RESOLVED: That the Financial Summary, Comparison and Income as at 31 March 2006 be approved.

(2) RESOLVED: That the Interim Statement of Receipts and Payments for the year ended 31 March 2006 be approved and presented to the full Council for adoption, and presented at the Annual Parish Meeting.

(3) RESOLVED: (1) That the Statement of Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2006 for the Holme Valley Partnership be approved

(2) That the Clerk be asked to investigate an effective disposal of the balance left in

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this account.

(4) RESOLVED: (1) That the information relating to the Annual Audit for 2005-2006 be noted, and the Clerk authorised to make all necessary arrangements for the audit processes

(2) That in view of the Accounts and Audit (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2006, the Council will produce an Annual Statement of Receipts and Payments, rather than an Income and Expenditure Account and Statement of Balances, as it was felt that this statement was more easily understood by more people.

05 120 Applications for Grant

(1) Holme Valley Business Association - although this application had been reconsidered at the last meeting, there had been some confusion about the amount of grant which should be awarded. The Council had now also been asked if it agreed to its listing as a sponsor to the Festival.

RESOLVED: That a grant of £150 be awarded to Holme Valley Business Association, and that it be agreed that the Council should be listed as a Sponsor of the Festival of Folk.

Cllr. Christofi left the meeting during discussion of this item in view of his prejudicial interest.

(2) Frances White - British Schools' Exploring Society - Peru Expedition - Summer 2006 - a previous applicant had already been awarded a grant to participate in this expedition. It was, therefore,

RESOLVED: That a grant of £100 be awarded, on condition that the applicant, on her return, comes to talk to the full Council, and must arrange to give a talk to students at the local High School; the Newsletter Editor also asked that an article be submitted for inclusion in the Council's newsletter at an appropriate time.

05 121 Administrative Matters

(1) Members considered various draft policy documents, and a Complaints Procedure:

(a) RESOLVED: That the attached Record Management - Retention of Documentation Policy be recommended to the Council for adoption, amended as discussed; it was also suggested that Members may wish to volunteer to assist in the implementation of this policy.

(b) RESOLVED: That the attached Information Technology Policy be recommended to the Council for adoption.

(c) Complaints Procedure - Staffing Committee minute 04 03 adopted the Model Code of Practice relating to complaints as issued by NALC and asked that it be amended to suit the Council's use.

RESOLVED: (1) That the amended Complaints Procedure now be adopted by the Council in accordance with Staffing Committee minute 04 03

(2) That the Staffing Committee be asked to look at the formulation of a Stress Policy to reflect the Council's duty of care as an employer.

(2) Members noted information relating to the Local Government Pension Scheme (Amendment) Regulations 2006, and other documentation from West Yorkshire Pension Fund, and would advise all Members of the Council that these papers are available from the Clerk, if wished.

(3) Members considered membership of the Zurich Municipal Local Councils Advisory Service and following discussion:

RESOLVED: (1) That the Clerk be authorised to take out membership for one year, immediately, to benefit from the discount offered

(2) That investigations be made during the year re other companies offering similar insurance and advisory services to check which offered the best value to the Council.

Cllr. Haynes left the meeting during discussion of this agenda item.

05 122 Rural Transport

(1) West Yorkshire Rural Transport Partnership - Members noted information about changes to the structure and practice of the Rural Transport Partnership and agreed that a representative from the

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Council should be appointed to attend relevant meetings.

RESOLVED: That such appointment be included in the appropriate item at the Annual Meeting of the Council.

(2) West Yorkshire Passenger Transport Authority - Members noted the availability of papers for the meeting held on 5 April 2006.

05 123 Consultations

(1) ODPM - Standards of Conduct in English Local Government - minute number 05 92 - consideration of this document had been deferred at the last meeting, but it was reported by various of the Chairmen who had received copies of the consultation that they had not had time to consider a report back to the Committee.

RESOLVED: That, in view of the time delay, this consultation merely be noted and Members advised that a copy is available from the Clerk for perusal.

(2) Daniel Broadhead's Charity - At the last meeting of the Committee, recommendations had been made as to the appointment of Trustees; unfortunately, at the same time, the Solicitor dealing with this matter had approached one of the previous trustees who had also made recommendations as to possible new Trustees. In order to progress this matter, it was

RESOLVED: That, in view of the above information, the Council would withdraw its previous recommendation, and would now suggest the following names, taking notice of the recommendations of the previous trustee:

Cllr. Mrs. H. P. Smith; the Clerk to the Council, Mr. J. Kilner, and one other of his recommendations.

05 124 Representation

Members considered attendance at the following events:

(1) Local Government Information Unit - Good Practice Seminar - 18 May 2006 - London - The potential of Parish and Town Councils to support neighbourhood arrangements: although Members felt this would be a useful seminar, the date was not suitable for those Councillors interested in attending.

(2) NALC - 1-2 June 2006 - London - Local Councils: Local Vision Conference: This was also the case for this Conference.

(3) Zurich Municipal - Annual Health and Safety Seminar 2006 - 27 June 2006 - South Kirkby: As the Council had agreed membership of the Local Councils Advisory Service, attendance for one delegate at this seminar would be free.

(4) NALC - Annual Conference and Exhibition - 22-24 September 2006 - Liverpool: it was felt that attendance at this Conference should be open to all Members.

RESOLVED: (1) That the Clerk requests a copy of any conference/seminar reports from the first two above events

(2) That the Clerk attends the Annual Health and Safety Seminar 2006 on behalf of the Council

(3) That representation at the NALC Conference and Exhibition be considered at the full Council meeting to allow all Members the opportunity to attend.

05 125 Administrative Matters

(1) Members considered one costing received regarding the provision of an extra hand rail on the stairs to the Council Chamber. It had been felt that this might assist less able people to use the stairs, and seemed to be a reasonably cost-effective improvement for access purposes. Other users of the building occupying the upper floors had indicated that this seemed a useful idea.

RESOLVED: That the Clerk pursues this option further via the Building User Group for the Council Offices, and reports back in due course.

(2) Members considered the possible upgrade of the water cooler to be able to provide refreshments for visitors and/or meetings. Such an upgrade would allow Members easily to make their own refreshments. It was felt that this upgrade should be supported, and noted that the Council would then be providing all refreshments, and suitable disposable cups; in view of the Council's recent agreement

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to support Fairtrade status for Holmfirth, the Council should be purchasing Fairtrade products.

RESOLVED: That the Clerk be authorised to arrange for the upgrade of the water cooler and to purchase suitable Fairtrade products; it was also agreed that a contributions box should be provided to allow Members to contribute towards the cost of such refreshments, if they so wished; any such contributions would be used to purchase tea, coffee, etc.

05 126 Holme Allotments

Members considered a quotation for the repair of a section of the wall surrounding Holme Allotments. This indicated that several sections of the walls required repair, but that one section was of a greater priority. Although the quotation was for more money than remained in the sum held in trust for the Allotment holders, Members felt that the complete section should be repaired, and the extra cost borne by the Council.

The Council would then look in the next year at the sections which were of a lower priority.

RESOLVED: That the quotation of £34 per metre plus VAT for rebuilding 7 metres of the wall at Holme Allotments be accepted, which will use the balance of the sum held on behalf of the allotment holders; the Council to bear the remainder of the cost.

05 127 Awarded Quarries

(1) Voluntary Registration - Members considered correspondence from Lupton Fawcett in relation to Towns Quarry. As advised, the Clerk had requested an extension to the period during which the Council must respond in respect of this application. This had been granted until 2nd June 2006. Members indicated that they felt that this voluntary registration must proceed, whilst noting that such a decision would have cost implications for the Council. Given the history of the site and previous agreements with the local landowner, it was felt that the Council had an obligation to pursue the matter as such land was held on trust.

RESOLVED: That the Clerk advises the Council's Legal Advisers that the Council wishes to proceed with this application for registration, and that it accepts that there may be cost implications in this decision.

(2) White Wells - Members noted advice from the Council's Legal Adviser relating to the encroachment of the boundary at this site and accepted the advice offered. It was also noted that this land had now been registered with the Land Registry.

RESOLVED: That the Council's Legal Advisers be asked to notify the gentleman concerned that the plot has now been registered, but that any further discussion about resolving the issue of encroachment would have to await the establishment of a charitable scheme, and the advice of the Charity Commission.

(3) Jackson Bridge - closed Public Conveniences - Members considered a letter from the proposed tenant regarding this building. Although he was agreeable to taking on this extra tenancy, he did not wish use of the building and would prefer it to be demolished. He was interested in buying the whole site, including this extra area which he had been offered at a rental of £50 per annum.

RESOLVED: (1) That the tenant be advised that the Council has noted his wish to purchase this complete site, but that no progress can be made with this until a charitable scheme had been established and the guidance of the Charity Commission received regarding any possible sale

(2) That the tenant be informed that the Council has no objection to his demolishing the closed public conveniences, provided that this is at his cost, and that the site is made safe in accordance with all necessary permissions regarding utilities, etc.

(4) General - Members were circulated with further correspondence from the Council's Legal Advisers received the day before indicating that a further nine awarded quarry sites had now been registered to the Parish Council. This information was welcomed, and Members considered the individual sites, noting the following:

White Wells - Youth Club site: some difference in the site registered to the plan prepared for the lease for the Youth Club; noted, but no further action to be taken at the moment; noted that some work was ongoing at this site on the south-western boundary.

Sude Hill - the Clerk was asked to query the placement of the boundary on the eastern side of the plot

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registered; this did not accord with previous plans.

RESOLVED: (1) That the above registrations be welcomed, with the exception of the plot at Sude Hill which the Clerk was asked to query; that it be accepted, where indicated, that the Land Registry had not included areas which had already been registered to other parties

(2) That the other information, as reported by the Clerk, be noted, but no action be taken at the moment.

05 128 Freedom of Information Act 2000

(1) Members considered advice received relating to the release of personal information in respect of its employees. Acknowledging this advice, Members agreed interim Council procedures, both in terms of release of information and relating to Dignity at Work issues. As employers, the Council had a duty of care towards its officers, and should take cognisance of its responsibilities. The Committee wished to confirm the position taken in relation to the disclosure of personal information and would seek further clarification of this position, as there was a lack of clear guidance.

RESOLVED: (1) That the Council confirms its position re the release of personal information relating to specific employees

(2) That the Council should seek advice from its Legal Advisers re its position as an employer in this respect, and seeks information from Kirklees MC about its policy in this respect

(3) That, in view of the above, the Clerk be authorised to group together payments to, or on behalf of an employee, as listed in the monthly schedule of payments, presented for Council approval

(4) That interim procedures relating to the release of information and dignity at work issues be approved, until further clarification and guidance is received which may require further consideration of these procedures

(5) That the Council confirms its support for its officers.

(2) The Clerk reported several requests for information which had recently been received addressed to Members; these had not cited the Freedom of Information Act, but came within the context of such. Two requests had been, or would be answered shortly, as they came within the Council's Publication Scheme, but it was felt that the other requests covered Council policy and required approved responses.

RESOLVED: (1) That the Clerk's responses in respect of those requests covered by the Publication Scheme be approved

(2) That the Clerk be asked to draft replies in respect of the requests for information relating to Council policy for approval by the full Council, following the Committee's views and advice.

(3) RESOLVED: That, under the Council's Publication Scheme, supporting papers for any item within the public session of the meeting be made available, if requested, after approval of the Minutes by the full Council.

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Chairman