



GILLINGHAM TOWN COUNCIL POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

The Town Hall, School Road, Gillingham, Dorset SP8 4QR
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Minutes of the **Policy and Resources Committee** meeting held on **Monday 18th January 2016** in the **Jubilee Room, Town Hall, School Road, Gillingham**, commencing at **7.30pm**.

Present: Cllr Mrs S Hunt (Chairman)
Cllr Ms A Baker, Cllr R Evill,
Cllr D Griffin, Cllr P Harris,
Cllr D Milsted, Cllr R Monksummers,
Cllr Mrs B Ridout, Cllr B Von Clemens
and Cllr D Walsh .

Non Members: Cllr M Gould.

In attendance: Mrs S Dobie, Town Clerk
Mrs C Ratcliffe, Office Manager/Deputy Clerk.

Members of the Public and Press: There was one member of the public present.
There were no members of the press.

Apologies: Cllr Mrs V Potheary (Deputy Chairman).

89. To approve the minutes of the last meeting held on Monday, 14th December 2015 (Precept).

Cllr Von Clemens proposed that **“the minutes of the Policy and Resources Committee meeting held on Monday, 14th December 2015 (Precept) should be approved and adopted as a correct record of that meeting”**. Cllr Milsted seconded and the vote was unanimous. **RESOLVED.**

90. Questions.

Cllr Ms Baker asked if the Band D equivalents were known.

The Town Clerk replied that the Band D equivalent figures had been released. The number of properties classed as Band D has fallen slightly on last year's figures and, therefore, the percentage increase on the precept has increased to 11.19% on a Band D equivalent. There has been no news on the possible concessionary grant from the district council.

Policy and Resources Committee Meeting – Monday 18th January 2016 (continued):

91. Declarations of Interest - Members are required to comply with the requirements of the Localism Act 2011, section 27 regarding disclosable pecuniary interests.

There were no pecuniary interests disclosed.

92. To receive working party reports, if available, for consideration and approval:

a) Gillingham Sports Land and Cycle Link

Cllr Milsted reported that a meeting was planned for Thursday, 21st January 2016 and a further meeting planned later in February to specifically discuss the footpath/cycle links. A representative from Gillingham Walkers, Mrs Shelia Messer, has been invited.

Cllr Monksummers added that the recent heavy rainfall has caused problems with the progress of the football pitch but nothing that is not insurmountable.

b) Health and Safety

Cllr Evill had nothing to report.

c) IT Working Party – replacement of projector and screen

Cllr Harris reported that a technical review had taken place on Wednesday, 13th January 2016. It was a good meeting. Positioning of additional electrical sockets – to remove current trip hazards - was discussed and this work will be done prior to the installation of the equipment.

Note since the meeting: It has now been arranged for the projector and screen to be installed on Monday, 25th January 2016, and should be ready to use at the Full Council.

93. Finance:

a) To approve cheques for payment for January 2016.

There were no comments by members regarding the list of payments.

Cllr Monksummers proposed that **“the cheques for payment for the month of January 2016 to the gross value of £8,719.81 should be approved for payment”**. Cllr Harris seconded and the vote was unanimous. **RESOLVED.**

b) To receive the third quarter financial accounts/statement for the Financial Year 2015/16.

The Town Clerk referred to Appendix A, which was circulated with the agenda prior to the meeting.

The Town Clerk reported that the accounts were on target with the exception of the maintenance and repairs budget which is currently 7% higher than expected due to purchase of a John Deere gator and gang mower at the beginning of the financial year.

Cllr Ms Baker queried the low amount of interest accrued. The Town Clerk replied that the interest on the investment account is not drawn down until the final quarter and therefore not shown.

Cllr Milsted proposed that **“the 3rd Quarter Accounts for FY 2015/16 as presented by the Town Council should be approved”**. Cllr Walsh seconded and the vote was unanimous. **RESOLVED.**

Policy and Resources Committee Meeting – Monday 18th January 2016 (continued):

93. Finance:

c) To receive the third quarter Internal Auditors Report for the Financial Year 2015/16.

The Town Clerk informed members that the Internal Auditor had undertaken an audit check on Friday, 15th January 2016. There were no irregularities or non-conformists and no recommendations had been made.

Cllr Walsh proposed that **“the Internal Auditors Report for the 3rd Quarter of Financial Year 2015/16 dated 15th January 2015 should be approved”**. Cllr Mrs Ridout seconded and the vote was unanimous. **RESOLVED.**

94. To receive the service charge accounts for consideration from Goadsby and Harding for Old Market Centre for the year ended 28th September 2015.

The Town Clerk explained that the service charge accounts were in respect of the workshops leased by the Town Council at Old Market Centre, Station Road. The accumulated surplus is to be earmarked for future car park improvements.

95. To receive an update report from the Project Co-ordinators for the Hardings Park project for consideration and to agree a way forward.

The Town Clerk referred to Appendix B, which was circulated to members prior to the meeting. The Town Clerk summarised the report.

Cllr Evill agreed with all the recommendations contained within the report but with the exception of the length of the proposed loan. Cllr Evill was of the strong opinion that the loan should be for a shorter term and suggested 10 years.

Cllr Ms Baker asked whether it was possible to pay off the loan quicker than the agreed term if funds became available.

The Town Clerk replied that there would be a huge penalty if the loan was paid off earlier than the agreed term.

The Town Clerk suggested that annual savings should be ear marked in the Precept towards future replacement and repair of equipment.

Cllr Milsted thanked the Town Clerk for her comprehensive report. It was disappointing that the trouble and expense of trying to source external funding had proved unsuccessful. As indicated at a previous meeting there is now no alternative but to apply for a loan from the Public Works Loan Board (PWLb). The suggested 15 year pay back is reasonable and almost cost neutral. We do need a technical project manager to ensure the equipment is installed correctly and to the specification required and this cost must be included in the application to the PWLB. The table tennis facility could be removed from Phase I and included in Phase II if there is not enough money to pay the fee for the technical project manager. The positive outcome of not securing funding from the Big Lottery Reaching Communities Fund is that the Town Council can now proceed without the constraints of funding applications. Planning permission for the skate park should be made as soon as possible.

Cllr Milsted proposed that **“Phase I of the project is delivered with the omission of the table tennis facility (funds may be obtained another source). A Project Team to consist of a: Project Manager (to be appointed), Town Clerk, Office Manager and Works Manager. The Project Team to oversee costings, installation and planning permission together with an application to the PWLB for a loan of £127k with a preferred repayment period of 15 years”**. Cllr Walsh seconded.

Policy and Resources Committee Meeting – Monday 18th January 2016 (continued):

95. To receive an update report from the Project Co-ordinators for the Hardings Park project for consideration and to agree a way forward (continued).

Cllr Gould supported Cllr Milsted's recommendation and added that inflation would 'eat up' the cost of the loan over the repayment period.

Cllr Ms Baker suggested a shorter loan period.

Cllr Harris also preferred a shorter loan period and added that a savings plan must be devised so that there was sufficient money available when it was time to replace the equipment in the future, given the estimated life span of play equipment is circa. 8-10 years.

The Town Clerk reminded members that it was not the Town Council that determine the loan period but the PWLB.

Cllr Evill made an amended proposal that **“Phase I of the project is delivered with the omission of the table tennis facility (funds may be obtained another source). A Project Team to consist of a: Project Manager (to be appointed), Town Clerk, Office Manager and Works Manager. The Project Team to oversee costings, installation and planning permission together with an application to the PWLB for a loan of £127k with a preferred repayment period of 10 years”**. Cllr Ms Baker seconded.

The Chairman asked members to vote on the amended proposal.

The amended proposal: 2 votes in favour. Cllr Harris abstained. Cllr Gould did not vote as he was not a member of the committee. The amended proposal failed.

The Chairman asked members to vote on the original proposal: the vote was unanimous with the exception of Cllr Harris who abstained. Cllr Gould did not vote as he was not a member of the committee. The original proposal was agreed and adopted. **RESOLVED. The proposal was carried.**

Cllr Mrs Ridout commented that she hoped the fundraising for Hardings Park would still continue and perhaps include the development of a Friends group.

96. Matters Pertinent.

- a) Cllr Monksummers informed the meeting that he had advised the organisers of 'Party on the Rec' that they should be a constituted organisation to save any difficult discussions in the future.
- b) Cllr Milsted informed the meeting that the Board of Wyvern Credit Union were very grateful to Gillingham Town Council for its decision to award a grant of £500 in FY 2016/17.
- c) The Town Clerk informed members that the 4 week on-consultation on the rural bus service began on 11th January. Cllr Mrs Baker added that the consultation appears to be more in the style of a survey rather than a consultation. Bus routes in Gillingham are unaffected.

The meeting closed at 8.10pm