

**UNADOPTED
POLEGATE TOWN COUNCIL**



FINANCE & POLICY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the Finance and Policy Committee meeting held on Friday 18th November 2016
Council Chambers 49, High Street, Polegate 9.30am

Present: Cllrs D Murray, D Watts, Mrs M Piper (ex officio), B Goodwin **(4)**

Not Present: Cllrs S Shing, E Board, M Falkner (3)

No members of the public present

Minute Number	Resolution
11900	Opportunity for Public Comment None
11901	Apologies for absence Cllr E Board (work), S Shing (work), M Falkner (medical)
11902	Declarations of interest in any items on the agenda None
11903	Approval of Accounts for payment A discussion took place on the vandalism and the costs. The clerk stated that it was now likely that the maintenance budget would exceed the budget at the end of the year and she would get figures for full council so that this could be approved, whilst the buildings and land group were in process of looking at what could be done with the toilets. The clerk was asked if signs could be put up asking people to treat them well, the clerk stated that this had been approved at the last full council and were there, but had not deterred the vandals. The chair stated he felt that it should be widely publicised that they were being vandalised. The clerk stated that she did put notifications on Facebook, but possible could have a press release asking for anyone who saw anyone vandalizing the toilets could report this to the police. It was resolved to approve the accounts for payment to the value of £6218.65 VOTE All in favour Cllrs D Murray, D Watts, Mrs M Piper, B Goodwin
11904	Budgets 2017/18 (first draft/preliminary) The first draft of the budgets was discussed at length. The chair checked that there was still an ear marked reserve for by elections. The clerk confirmed there was £16,657 which had been set aside from last year's budget decisions to ensure that should a poll or by election be held there would be sufficient funding for this. The clerk was asked about the maintenance and litter picker costs and could these be included in the recreation grounds etc. the clerk stated that the way the accounting system was set up did not allow for that. However, she had

obtained sponsorship for the litter picker from McDonalds and this was showing in the accounts but was not showing in the budget spreadsheets. The clerk agreed to add this to reflect the reduction in costs. £1038.24 income).

The clerk was asked to show comparable costs for other councils as the number of staff. The clerk stated that Peacehaven and Forest Row were the most comparable with precept and had much higher staffing levels. She had had figures in the past but would ask for updated ones ideally before the next full council meeting.

The clerk was also asked to show the much larger councils such as Hailsham, Uckfield and Crowborough which had much larger population and precepts and show the administrative costs as a %. The clerk agreed she would try to get this information prior to the next full council meeting.

A discussion took place on the possibility of being capped. The Mayor stated that he was going to a conference and may get the opportunity to speak direct with the minister concerned and would express the problems this would cause.

The chair stated that it was extremely difficult to keep costs low bearing in mind a lot of the work of local councils involved lower paid staff and that to keep up with the living wage the costs had to increase or services cut.

A Councillor queried the consultancy code, the clerk explained this was for the assistance of Mr Carden and Mrs Schofield on the visioning items.

The chair commented that there needed to be the £1000 in additional to the budget to be set aside for the removal of equipment at Oakleaf.

The clerk was asked about the aged equipment, she stated that if council had the available funds an ear marked reserve should be set aside for scheduled replacement of the play equipment over a set number of years.

The clerk was asked about the bus shelters figure of £6000. The clerk stated that the bus shelter at Lynholm Road (on the Pevensey Road) was in need of replacement and that was the figure included. However, a shelter had been requested at Gainsborough Lane also, but the negotiations were taking place to see if the advertising contractor would be able to add a shelter there.

The chair stated that he felt that the allotments should be self-funding, the clerks stated that up until recently they were but as lots of works were being done to improve the allotment and remove tenants who were not looking after their plots this had resulted in additional expenditure. Cllr Dunbar And Cllr Bennett had been speaking to the allotment holders and they had expressed a wish to do more on the maintenance, which in turn may reduce the costs to the council. At present this was being discussed.

The chair asked about the photocopier costs. The clerk stated that currently this contract was being prepared for new quotes. He asked if Councillor could be asked to print their own background papers and suggested **this be added as a motion to the next full council meeting. Any Councillor who took their allowance and had emails should use their allowance to print the background papers. Only the agendas would be sent out in paper format.**

The chair queried the website costs and IT Services. The clerk stated that the

website group had been looking at a contract with additional email function as many of the mail boxes were now getting full and with the possibility of needing to download papers etc this would be needed more. The chair of the website working group was present and explained that the figures may change depending on the contractor selected. This was to be approved at the next full council meeting.

The chair queried the figure for the council tax for the toilets. The clerk stated that this was based on the new provisional figures taken from the new valuations that had taken place by the valuation office.

The chair queried the pavilion electricity. The clerk stated that there was only electric heating and that this was generally for showers for both of the sports clubs. The committee asked why they were not paying. The clerk stated that historically the clubs had paid for their own by way of coin fed meters, and that after they had jammed the council had agreed many years ago to pay the electricity charges and be reimbursed. It appeared that over the years this had been ignored and a new session charge set up, which did not cover the costs. She explained that under the proposal that the sports clubs were putting forward, not only would that cover the cost of the running and upkeep of the building but may even have enough to fund improvements to the building. The council was still awaiting the proposal from the voluntary group and the sports clubs. The clerk stated that she would look at how many sessions the clubs generally used and the total costs of the pavilion and then show the actual cost of them using the pavilion versus the amount per session that was being paid. That would show to what extent the council was subsidising the clubs playing. The chair stated that although the clubs may feel they were already helping by paying for the upkeep of the cricket pitch and football pitches, this was a cost the council would not have should the fields just be for general recreation and therefore it was right that they paid for this themselves and not be subsidised by the other residents.

(Expenditure £3131 No. sessions 34 £92 cost per session (approx.)
(Income £1600 No. sessions 34 £47 income per session (approx.)

Amount being subsidized £45 per session £1530 per year.

The clerk also stated she would prepare a brief report on what the buildings and land group was discussing regarding the use of the pavilion and covering costs.

The committee was concerned that the clubs did not raise more money to cover the outgoings. The clerk stated that the council paid for the hedges to be cut and the grass cuts and there was minimal maintenance paid for at Wannock to keep costs low.

The clerk was asked to look at the Wealden big switch and to see if the rate for energy was cheaper than our current contract. The clerk stated that she would do this.

The clerk was asked if she could find out the tax base for Monday, the clerk stated that the district councilors were not given that information until next Monday and the information usually came in a few days later and that was why the council held the December meeting to discuss how it would affect their budget.

The committee resolved to out these figures as shown for full council review on

	28 th November with a view to amending once the tax base is known. The second meeting is on 12 th December 2016.
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The meeting closed at 10.37 am

Signed by _____ Chair of Finance & Policy

Dated _____