

PETWORTH TOWN COUNCIL

A MEETING OF THE FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE WAS HELD ON TUESDAY 5TH NOVEMBER 2013 IN THE TOWN COUNCIL OFFICE AT 7.00 PM

PRESENT: Mr B Walsh, (Chairman), Mr K Lintill,
Mrs J Fynes, Mr C Kemp, Mr A Copus,
Dr R Pawsey and Mrs A Simmons.

CLERK: Mrs J Huggett.

1. There were no apologies.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

3. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 3rd September, having been circulated and passed at the Council meeting on Thursday 19th September, were signed.

4. MATTERS ARISING

(a) War Memorial: Mr Walsh said through English Heritage, there is a government grant available, from £3,000 to £30,000, for refurbishing War Memorials. It was agreed that the District Council Conservation Officer should be approached for his advice. Mr Kemp said he will meet him on site. The Clerk to follow this up, she said she has already asked for quotations for the work.

(b) Wetpour: Mr Walsh confirmed that Playsafe Playground's quotation of £2,400 has been accepted. No starting date has yet been received.

5. CURRENT FINANCIAL SITUATION

The Clerk had previously circulated copies of the current financial situation to 31st October. Mr Walsh said currently income exceeds expenditure, £3,333 has been spent out of the £5,000 Contingency budget. The £2,400 for the wetpour will be added to this which will take it over budget. A discussion followed, Dr Pawsey said if the Contingency budget has been used up there won't be anything for further unexpected expense. Mr Walsh said should this happen it could go under the heading of 'Unbudgetted', this was used last year when there had been no budget for extras.

6. ASSISTANT CLERK - UPDATE

Mr Walsh said Mr Lintill has asked for references, these have been received and four candidates have been selected for interview on 13th October. Mr Lintill will let the interview panel have copies. Mrs Fynes asked when is the expected start date. Mr Walsh said as soon as possible, there will be no delay between interview and appointment.

7. TO CONSIDER OTHER ITEMS AT THE CHAIRMAN'S DISCRETION

Grants - Purple Bus: Mr Walsh referred to the papers that had just been circulated and said a request been received yesterday for a grant towards the Purple Bus being taken to villages in the area for the use of youngsters. Mrs Fynes said last time the Council had given them £100, she proposed it be increased to £200. On a vote this was unanimously agreed.

Bus Shelter: Mr Walsh said Councillors may have seen that the bus shelter in Midhurst Road had been demolished during the storm by a fallen tree. The Clerk has been on to the Insurance Company and is now looking for a replacement. Mrs Fynes suggested that the council didn't go for a wooden shelter, but something more substantial in brick. The Clerk was asked to speak to the Insurance Company as it may be the shelter will have to be replaced by something similar.

Accounts Format: Mr Walsh said Mr Copus has expressed some concern about the way in which the accounts are presented each month, but he wanted to make it clear there is not any criticism of the way the Clerk has kept them. He had met with Mr Copus to discuss this, he circulated copies of the format proposed by Mr Copus and asked him to speak on it.

Mr Copus said he is not comfortable with the current practice and has suggested a way in which the accounts could be more accurate and meaningful. Allotments and Petworth Pages should be included in the budget, but as they are products with income and expenditure should be itemised under separate headings. He would also like to see the Balance Sheet and Bank Reconciliation at the end of the accounts where they can be compared against the Bank Balances. During the discussion that followed Councillors agreed that the format was clearer and it should be adopted. Mr Walsh said this will be effective from next year's accounts, it is only a matter for this committee and he will not be putting it to full council. To assist the Clerk he has said he will set the accounts up in the new format for her. Mr Kemp said he didn't think it was right for the to be on a Councillor's personal computer. The Clerk said the accounts are on her personal computer.

(Clerk's Note: Any file on a computer can be encrypted to prohibit access by others.)

Planning Applications: Mr Walsh said he had attended a meeting last Friday arranged by the District Council on, amongst other subjects, electronic planning applications. These will be brought in from April next year. In order to view the applications it will be necessary to buy a laptop, projector and screen. U3A, of which he is Treasurer, has just bought similar equipment, he will find out the details and cost.

Precept Grant for 2014/2015: He has received details of the grants proposed by the District Council next year. Petworth's grant will be reduced from this year's 9.42%

of the precept, £5,357.21, to 8.22%, £4,674.77, a reduction of over £700. Town and Parish Councils will need to find the shortfall.

Christmas Lights: Mr Kemp referred to the e-mail he had sent to the committee. In it he said he is short of 500 LED lights and asked if he could buy them this year. They will cost £1,150. Mr Walsh and Mrs Fynes said they had not received his e-mail, Mrs Simmons said as she is not on e-mail she didn't have any knowledge of this. Councillors asked the reason for the shortage. Mr Kemp said it was thought there were 10 strings of 100 lights but it turns out there are more. If Councillors agree then he is willing to have this deducted from next year's budget. After a short discussion it was agreed that Mr Kemp can go ahead and order them. He thanked Councillors and said he is planning to put the old light bulbs on ebay at 40p each.

Mr Kemp's E-mail: Mr Lintill said Mr Walsh and Mrs Fynes were not included on Mr Kemp's e-mail regarding the purchase of the lights and, as Mrs Simmons had said, she did not receive a hard copy. He told Mr Kemp that it is not in order for him to be selective. Mr Kemp apologised and said this was certainly not his intention.

8. ACCOUNTS PAID 1ST SEPTEMBER TO 31ST OCTOBER 2013

Time Talk	22.83	Office Phone - Sep
Mr A Dann	146.78	Hanging Baskets - Equipment
Mr J Bridle	372.00	Hanging Baskets - Watering Aug
Mr K Baigent	10.00	Window Cleaning
Kent County Council	45.19	Photocopier
Johnston Publishing	301.20	Advertisement - Assistant Clerk
Parkfield Retail	151.20	Rosemary Gdens Maint/Hanging Baskets
CDC	1,560.00	Office Rent
Naldretts Garden Services	497.50	Maintenance Contract - Aug
Mrs J Huggett	693.02	Salary, Expenses, Postage - Aug
Gala Lights	2,047.50	Christmas Event - LED Lights
Sussex Stone Masons	73.00	Boys' Memorial Contract
Southern Electric	260.05	Street Lighting
Petworth Pages	120.00	Petworth Pages - Delivery
Leconfield Estates	500.00	Allotments - Rent
Mr J Bridle	360.00	Hanging Baskets - Watering Sep
Littlejohn	360.00	External Audit
Leconfield Estates	105.86	Allotments -Water
Parkfield Retail	63.18	Rosemary Gdens Maint/Town Plants
Pipeline Plumbing Services	368.40	Grants
Inland Revenue	242.86	PAYE
Naldretts Garden Services	497.50	Maintenance Contract - Sep
Mrs J Huggett	721.39	Salary, Expenses, Postage - Sep

There being no further business the meeting closed at 8.05 pm.

