

## EXMOUTH TOWN COUNCIL

### MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE FINANCE COMMITTEE HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, TOWN HALL, EXMOUTH ON MONDAY, 18<sup>th</sup> February 2008 AT 7.30PM

**PRESENT:** Councillor: S Sutton (Chairman)  
Councillors: V Duval-Steer L Elson  
S Wragg D Nicholas  
P Graham D Chapman  
B Taylor S Gazzard  
J Mitchell P Stott  
M Williamson J Humphreys  
M Mitchell M Ackland  
J Taylor

**OBSERVER:** Cllr T Cope

**APOLOGY:** Cllr I Stewart, E Wragg, J Whipps & M Hardy

**F48 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 17<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER 2007**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 17<sup>th</sup> December 2007 were approved and signed as a correct record.

**F49 PRESENTATION – UNIVERSITY OF PLYMOUTH – ROLLE COLLEGE CAMPUS**

The Chairman welcomed Mr Ken Turner gave a presentation on the situation with possible future educational use of the Rolle Campus. Mr Turner explained that education for those aged 16 to 19 was the responsibility of the Learning Skills Council (LSC). The LSC had funded a feasibility study on the proposal.

Whilst capital funding was available, a shortfall of £2m remained and the University had withdrawn from the exclusivity agreement on 20<sup>th</sup> November 2007. Questions were asked and it was noted that negotiations would continue and pressure would be brought to bear to provide a community based educational solution.

**F50 PETITION – ROLLE CAMPUS**

The Town Clerk reported that a Petition from the Students Union at Rolle Campus had been presented to the Mayor and was submitted to the

Committee. It was agreed to pass this on to Mr Turner as evidence of support for the work he was doing.

#### **F51 NEIGHBOURHOOD PROJECT FUND**

The Committee received the report from the Deputy Mayor in which he proposed a community involvement fund to enable people to engage in local projects which would directly benefit their lives.

Any resident or local club would be encouraged to apply for funding.

Some discussion took place concerning the types of schemes which had been suggested and concern was expressed that the Council should not lay itself open to ongoing revenue support.

#### **RECOMMENDED that**

- (a) a Neighbourhood Projects Fund competition be implemented as proposed in the report;**
- (b) a capital projects list be commenced to include ideas raised from the community providing it does not incur on-going revenue costs for the Council;**
- (c) the Journal be engaged to help implement the scheme and engage the public;**
- (d) Principal Councils be engaged as appropriate;**
- (e) The scheme be reviewed after 12 months.**

#### **F52 EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK**

The Committee received the report on adoption of the Employee Handbook to ensure that Exmouth Town Council met all necessary compliance with current employment law.

**RESOLVED that the Conditions of Service Review Panel be requested to review the Employment Law and HR System Handbook, the Employee Handbook and the new style Contracts of Employment and report back to this Committee.**

#### **F53 ANNUAL SALARIES REVIEW**

The Committee received the report of the Town Clerk showing annual incremental progression of salaries for staff.

**RESOLVED that the annual increments and cost of living pay increases in accordance with the National Conditions of Service be approved for all staff as from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2008 including nationally agreed allowances.**

#### **F54 FEES AND CHARGES**

The Committee received the report of the Town Clerk. The fees and charges were agreed with the exception of the charges for the services of the caretaker, which the Committee felt should be reviewed. It was suggested that the hourly rate was set too low.

**RESOLVED that the annual increase of fees and charges from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2008 be applied as recommended, subject to the charge for caretaker being reviewed.**

#### **F55 AUDIT COMMISSION – APPOINTMENT OF EXTERNAL AUDITOR**

The Committee received and NOTED a letter from the Audit Commission dated 28<sup>th</sup> January 2008 concerning appointments and fees for the next 5 years commencing with the 2007/2008 accounts

#### **F56 TOURIST INFORMATION CENTRE (TIC)**

The Committee received the notes of the TIC Joint Group held on 12<sup>th</sup> December 2007 and 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2008 and the recommendation that a Service Level Agreement be agreed with the Chamber of Trade and Commerce.

The Council had already adopted a decision to commit to financial support of £3,000 and any change to that would be subject to the 6 month rule under Standing Orders.

The Joint Group had come to the view that the TIC was important to the economic well being of the town and that an appreciable change in the balance between private and public funding had occurred. It was considered reasonable by the group that the grant of £10,000 should be maintained but with stronger controls in place based on Service Level Agreement (SLA) and certain terms being met.

Various actions already under way were the circulation of a questionnaire to a sample of TICs to benchmark services and how they are funded. Support being sought from Lloyds Bank and possible University Business Schools to provide business planning support.

#### **RECOMMENDED that**

- (a) in principle an SLA be entered into with the Chamber of Trade and Commerce from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2008 for 3 years based on an annual contribution of £10,000 inflation proofed;**
- (b) this be conditional upon receipt of a realistic business plan to be reported back to the committee on 16<sup>th</sup> June;**
- (c) Councillors Mark Williamson, Ian Stewart and Vivian Duvall-Steer be appointed to the TIC Joint Management Committee to be set up under the SLA.**

**F57 MAGNOLIA CENTRE KIOSK**

Based on a suggestion by Councillor Jean Mitchell the Town Management Partnership Board had considered and recommended that the Magnolia Kiosk not be staffed this year. The kiosk could be made available to local groups and organisations (not for commercial purposes) to use if they wished to do so in association with publicity and fundraising activities. It was proposed that it be continued to be used for publicising local notices and information. A saving of around £2,000 a year on staffing costs would result. The question of charging was raised. It was felt that this should be put on hold to see what use is made of the kiosk in the forthcoming summer season.

**RESOLVED that the Magnolia Centre Kiosk be used in the way described above by local groups and organisations but not for commercial purposes.**

**F58 EXMOUTH TOWN PANEL – ON THE EXE ESTUARY TRAIL**

The Committee considered a proposal to install a town information panel on the Exe Estuary Trail to inform users of facilities within the town when they arrived here. The cost was estimated to be between £500 and £600. It was suggested that this could be funded from earmarked reserves for Rights of Way. This would need to be cleared with Devon County Council as the money was from the Parish Paths Partnership.

**RESOLVED that the purchase of a new town information panel be approved within the costs estimated.**

**F59 GRANTS**

It was reported that the grant of £500 to Home Start had been returned as the organisation was being wound up and could not now use the money.

The following applications were considered:

**(1) Exmouth Cricket Club**

A request for £750 towards installation of new all weather non turf pitch to facilitate junior and ladies coaching/development was considered.

**RESOLVED that £300 be awarded to the Exmouth Cricket Club for the purposes described.**

**(2) National Coastwatch Institution – Exmouth Station**

A request for £1,600 for purchase and installation of specialised windscreen wiper for Tower Visibility (£500), purchase and install emergency band scanning radio (£500) and computer update (£600) was received.

**RESOLVED that £500 be awarded to National Coastwatch Institution – Exmouth Station for the purposes described.**

**(3) Littleham Cum Exmouth Parish – “Chill”**

A request for grant of £2,500 to support this new youth club for 11 to 16 year olds by providing for new equipment was received.

**RESOLVED that £1,015 be awarded to Littleham Cum Exmouth Parish – “Chill” for the purposes described.**

**Note:** Cllr J Mitchell declared a personal interest in this item as she attended this church.

**(4) Exmouth Tennis and Leisure Centre**

A request for £1,000 to assist with costs of hosting the East Devon International Men’s Tennis Tournament was received.

**RESOLVED that £400 be awarded to Exmouth Tennis and Leisure Centre for the purposes described.**

**F60 GRANTS**

**1) Bay FM**

The Committee was minded to provide a grant for Bay FM but because of the 6 month rule deferred consideration to the next financial year.

**2) Age Concern Exmouth and District**

Deferred for consideration of a Service Level Agreement

**3) Relate**

Defer to the next Financial year for further consideration.

**F61 UPDATE ON PARA OLYMPIAN DAVID HILL**

The Council had previously supported David Hill with grant funding and his Mentor Lionel Rigby had sent an update on his current progress which was NOTED with pleasure.

**F62 EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS**

**RESOLVED** that the public and press be excluded for the following items it being in the public interest to do so for reasons relating to business and personal information to be considered.

**F63 SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENT (F29 – 12/11/07)**

The Committee had before it a report of the Town Clerk to consider which organisations to invite to join the Council with a Service Level Agreement arising from the adoption of the new grants policy by the Finance Committee on 12<sup>th</sup> November 2007.

**Resolved** that the following organisations be approached with a view to entering into SLAs starting from the 2008/9 year:-

- Exmouth Swimming and Life Saving Club
- Exmouth Beach Rescue
- Centre Stage
- Exmouth Musical Theatre Company (formerly Exmouth Amateur Operatic Society)
- Exmouth and District CAB
- Exmouth Council of Voluntary Services
- Exmouth in Bloom
- Ring and Ride
- Age Concern – Exmouth and District
- Tourist Information Centre

**F64 ALLOTMENT PLOTS 12 & 13 Hamilton Lane, Exmouth (GP – Min G28 – 7/07)**

Consideration was given to a letter from the District Valuer concerning sale of land to the owners of 25b and 25a Greenhill Avenue. An offer had been made which he considered represents best price.

**RESOLVED** that the advice on the offer from the District Valuer be accepted and that the District Valuer be advised that he should continue negotiations on that basis subject to:-

- (i) a covenant to prevent the land from being used for any purpose other than a garden attached to the properties;
- (ii) No access being permitted via that allotments or through Gorfin Hall land (access only from the properties themselves);
- (iii) Permission to sell former allotment land from the Secretary of State.

**F65 INTERIM FESTIVAL ORGANISER**

Report circulated at short notice and item deferred to next meeting.

The meeting closed at 9.25 p.m.

**SIGNED**.....

**DATED**.....