

FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSE COMMITTEE
Tuesday 24th November 2009

PRESENT: Councillor J. Arbuckle in the Chair

Councillors: N. Hunt, D. Collins, G. Hudson, R. Hardcastle, K. Arbuckle, I. Scott, G. Kneeshaw, S. Ellis and T. Crossfield.

In attendance: T Ferry, and representing Friends of Hunger Hills Woods (FOHHW) Christopher Seller and Patricia Bell.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors, C. Windsor, I. Scott, and G. Kneeshaw.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

3. MINUTES FROM THE PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the last Finance & General Purpose Committee meeting held on the 1st September 2009 were received and confirmed as being a true and accurate record of the proceedings and were duly signed by the Chair.

4. MATTERS ARISING

Minute 9, Provision of Seats in areas of Horsforth.

Resolution (a) to this minute is superseded by Full Council minute 6 Resolution dated the 9th September 2009, which states,

- a. That a Working Group be formed to investigate the feasibility of seating and that Councillor Cleasby Chair this group.
- b. That the working group report back to Full Council with there findings.
- c. That funding is not to be considered until findings are presented by the working group to Full Council.

5. ACCOUNTS

- a. The treasurer, Councillor D. Collins provided a summary of the accounts to date and an itemised list of payments of £29,022.62 from the account to the 17th November 2009.

RESOLVED – That the accounts be approved and the list of payments of £29,022.62 to the 17th November 2009 also be approved.

- b. The Town Clerk presented the External Auditors report.

RESOLVED – That Members note this report.

- c. The Town Clerk presented the Internal Auditors report.

RESOLVED – That Members note this report.

- d. The Treasurer advised Members that a meeting of the Finance & General Purpose Banking Sub-Committee to consider future investments should be held as soon as practicable.

RESOLVED – That Members of the Finance & General Purpose banking Committee make arrangements outside this meeting to consider future investments.

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6. SPECIAL PROJECTS

The Community Committee have considered an application for funding from Friends of Hunger Hills Woods (FOHHW) to create a perimeter path in Hunger Hills Woods and recommend that the Finance & General Purpose Committee award funding of £35,000.

Christopher Seller and Patricia Bell represented FOHHW and presented the footpath Project to Members of the Finance & General Purpose Committee.

Members asked FOHHW if matched funding had been considered. Mr Seller explained that a letter has recently been sent to Ward Councillor Brian Cleasby requesting funding from MICE monies, no response has been received to date. Mr Seller also advised Members that funding had been rejected by National Lottery. Questions were raised about future maintenance and litigation in event of accidents. It was considered that both maintenance and litigation will fall to the land owner who is Leeds City Council and in any event, should Horsforth Town Council provide funding for this project it would be to a third party who would have to seek assurances from Leeds City Council that they will take responsibility for the paths. Members asked if horses were permitted to use the paths, and if any subsequent damage arises, or danger to walkers. FOHHW explained that horses do use certain paths and that this at times is a danger with paths only being a certain width. There was no evidence of damage to date. They did explain that Leeds City Council are aware of horses using the path. Christopher Seller and Patricia Bell left the meeting. Members agreed that this project would benefit the community but considered that the funding should be matched in some part and that FOHHW should seek other fund sources such as Leeds City Council and MICE money via Ward Councillors. The Town Clerk advised Members that it is possible to provide funding for this project using the Public Health Act 1875 S64 and in addition a Council has the power to give financial assistance to another person or body performing the same function.

It was agreed that the Finance & General Purpose Committee would recommend to Full Council to support the project. Members were divided to the amount to recommend.

Before resolving the recommendation to Full Council it was agreed to put to a vote the amount that should be considered, this was resolved by a show of hands.

5 Members voted for £15,000.

5 Members voted for £20,000.

In accordance with the LGA 1972 Sch 12, para 39(2) the Chairman of the Committee has the casting vote and the chair cast his vote to £20,000.

1st Resolution – That the amount to recommend to Council be £20,000.

Members then considered the terms of the resolution and agreed.

RESOLVED

Finance & General Purpose Committee have considered and support the Hunger Hills Woods Footpath Project in principle, to create a perimeter footpath and recommend that Full Council make available the sum of £20,000 with conditions:

- a. that the Friends of Hunger Hills Woods (FOHHW) obtain funding from other bodies to complete the project.
- b. that FOHHW provide evidence to Council that they are a constituted body so that Horsforth Town Council is permitted to grant funding.
- c. that as part of the funding conditions Horsforth Town Council receives publicity for the general good of the residents of Horsforth and that a permanent board or plaque be placed in a prominent place in the woods and publicity in FOHHW magazine to show that the Town Council have provided funding.

HTC/F&GP/15

7. HORSFORTH MATTERS AND HORSFORTH COMMUNITY DIRECTORY

Members were asked to consider if four publications of Horsforth Matters should be produced annually to fulfil the Quality Status requirements for communication with the electorate, and to consider the format if appropriate. Members were also asked to consider whether the production of the publication of Horsforth Matters and Horsforth Community Directory should be put out to tender to achieve 'Best Value'.

Members agreed it is appropriate to produce four publications as required and also to investigate best value for the production of both publications and that this Committee recommend to Full Council that a Working Group is formed to investigate this.

RESOLVED – That F&GP recommend Full Council ask for volunteers from Members to form a Working Group to investigate future publications of Horsforth Matters and the Community Directory to establish best value, the format and production of future publications, and for the publications to fulfil Quality Council requirements.

8. 2009 NALC PAY AWARD FOR EMPLOYEES

The Town Clerk presented the Employers and NALC pay award 2009 for employees. The agreement is that the Town Clerk will receive a 1% pay award from the 1st April 2009 and one additional days leave from the 1st April 2009.

RESOLVED – That this award is in line with the Clerks Terms and Conditions and is noted by Members.

9. PARISH & TOWN COUNCIL FORUM MEETING

Councillor K. Arbuckle reported that she had attended this meeting on the 29th October 2009.

The topic of the meeting was the Parish & Town Council Charter and its review. Planning was discussed in detail and concern was raised about the move to e-documentation and the cost implications to small Councils in purchasing equipment to cope with this. It was confirmed that Planning will remain flexible and that paper plans will be sent on request.

A working group was recommended to look at Highway's Services, Highway's Development and Public Rights of Way. These three areas were linked and it would be sensible to tackle them together.

Basic Allowance for Councillors was discussed and legal advice has been taken which makes clear that it is not possible for local councils to set their own allowances. Further guidance will be provided when it becomes available.

Also covered at the meeting was access to Web Pages for Parish and Town Councils with the opportunity to share Good Practice and have a link to the Parish & Town Council web sites.

RESOLVED – That Members note this item.

10. COMMITTEE BUDGETS AND PRECEPT FOR 2010

The Town Clerk provided Members with proposed Budgets from Committees for 2010. Members discussed how much reserves to consider for the commencement of Financial Year 2010 and took note of the External Auditors comments on the 2009 Annual Return. The Town Clerk provided text from Governance & Accountability for Local Councils Part 2, Paragraph 2.26 which states, "It is generally accepted that general (i.e. un-earmarked) revenue reserves usually lie within the range of three to twelve months of gross expenditure" Members took note of this when calculating the budget and precept, which is attached at Appendix 1 to these minutes.

RESOLVED – That the Finance & General Purpose Committee recommend that Full Council approve the budget for 2010 at £150,050.00 and that the precept is raised by 0.5% to £101,493.94.

10. ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDA

Roll of Honour Board

12. DATE OF NEXT MEETING – Wednesday 17th February 2010.

HTC/F&GP/17