

KENILWORTH TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of the Finance and General Services Committee

Commencing at 7.00 pm on Tuesday 17 December 2019

PRESENT: Councillor R G Dickson (Chair)

Councillors: P Austin, M F Coker, J A Cooke, S A Cooke, A M Dearing, J A Dearing, K S Dickson, T J Drew, A J Firth, G D Hyde, P J Jones, A J Kennedy, A W Milton, J E P Worrall.

Town Clerk: Miss M S Field.

Deputy Town Clerk: Mr N. Eaton.

No Members of the Public were present. The Press were not represented.

FGS.61 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made.

FGS.62 APOLOGIES

Councillors: R J Barry (Other Business), A G Chalmers (Other Business)

FGS.63 MINUTES

Members NOTED the Minutes of the Finance and General Services Committee held on 10 October 2019.

MATTERS ARISING

FGS.64 TOURISM (FGS.6, FGS.23 and FGS.39)

Councillor Alix Dearing reported that good progress was being made and a full update will be given at the next meeting. Needs had been identified and significant community engagement obtained. Funding streams were being explored, including working with the BLEF funding project.

Councillor Michael Coker highlighted the need for a new leaflet, in time for next years tourist season. The Chair asked for this to be looked into.

Members NOTED this update.

ACTION: AD

FGS.65 REVIEW OF ARRANGEMENTS FOR SHOP WINDOW COMPETITIONS
(FGS.13 and FGS.40)

Councillor Sam Cooke presented her published update report.

With regard to Survey Monkey and other communications issues, the Chair asked that the Shop Window Working Group investigate this further, including cost options, for consideration in conjunction with other Town Council IT and Communications requirements.

Councillor Cooke explained that her proposal to reduce competitions to three a year was based on participants feedback. This would not include the VE75 Competition next year, which is a special event. Members asked that contestants should be further consulted on the main annual themes, since Twinning may not easily fit in with their own plans.

Councillor James Kennedy volunteered to join the Working Group, to assist in any way necessary.

Members NOTED this update.

ACTION: SC

FGS.66 ABBEY FIELDS MANAGEMENT PLAN (FGS.6, FGS.28 and FGS.42)

Members NOTED a verbal update report from Councillor James Kennedy. They requested that this matter becomes a Standing Agenda Item on the Town Council until the Management Plan is adopted.

FGS.67 TWINNING REPORT (FGS.18, FGS.26 and FGS.43)

Members NOTED a verbal update report from Councillor Pippa Austin as a Council representative at the Twinning Meetings.

STANDING MATTERS

FGS.68 REVIEW OF GRANTS AWARDED 2019-20

Members NOTED that a report has been received from New Hope Counselling.

FGS.69 INTERNAL AUDIT – REPORTS AND ACTION

The Chair reported that the internal auditors report has been received on Quarter 2. In summary, everything is in good order with no apparent queries or problems. The Auditor thanked everyone on keeping this aspect of KTC's activities in good and correct shape.

Members NOTED this update, thanking the Town Clerk and her Deputy for their work.

NEW MATTERS

FGS.70 APPLICATION FOR GRANT / FUNDING – THE SHAKESPEARE HOSPICE

Members considered an Application for Funding support in the sum of £1,000.00 from The Shakespeare Hospice.

Detailed discussion took place. There was support for the bid, and it was:

RESOLVED that a sum of £1,000.00 be granted to the Shakespeare Hospice.

FGS.71 APPLICATION FOR GRANT / FUNDING – ROYAL LEAMINGTON SPA ARCHERY SOCIETY

Members considered an Application for Funding support in the sum of £198.99 from the Royal Leamington Spa Archery Society.

Detailed discussion took place. There was support for the bid, and it was:

RESOLVED that a sum of £198.99 be granted to the Royal Leamington Spa Archery Society.

FGS.72 WARWICKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL GRANT

Members NOTED that an application was submitted to Warwickshire County Council by the Clerk for a grant for a Street Tree Planting Project. Notification has been received that a grant of £2,450 has been awarded by Councillor Alan Cockburn for this project. The sites identified for trees to be planted are scattered around the Town, but the streets targeted are Glasshouse Lane, Randall Road and Amherst Drive.

Members further AGREED that Kenilworth Town Council approves acceptance of the grant for a Street Planting Project from Warwickshire County Council and authorised the Clerk to complete the Acceptance Form and information required for the end of project monitoring. In doing so, they wished to query the efficacy of targeting Glasshouse Lane, which is likely to be subject to traffic and other new development issues.

FGS.73 WARWICK ROAD PEDESTRIAN SAFETY SCHEME

Councillor John Dearing reported that following delegation from the Town Council on 5 December, this Meeting needed to discuss the Council's response to Warwickshire County Council following evaluation of feedback for the different schemes that have been offered, and receipt of information regarding traffic displacement that has been undertaken.

In debating this matter, Members accepted that whereas such a pedestrian safety scheme was needed for Warwick Road, supporting traffic displacement data was insufficient. However, some felt this was only one of a number of issues likely to affect future traffic in the Town. That was a separate matter and required long term, holistic traffic planning.

It was proposed, seconded and:

RESOLVED by majority that Kenilworth Town Council welcomes the WCC proposals for a pedestrian Safety Scheme in Warwick Road and recognised the need, having regard to previous accidents. However, the Town Council remains concerned over the effect of traffic displacement onto other roads and points out the need to take this into account in future planning.

Members further AGREED that Councillor John Dearing, as Leader of the Council, would draft a suitable response, for agreement with the other Group Leaders.

ACTION: JD

FGS.74 EVENTS FOR INCLUSION IN WDC EVENTS GUIDES 2020

The Chair requested Members to suggest any events taking place in the Town between March and September 2020 to be included in the WDC Events Guide.

Any suggestions to include:

Name and Location of Event.

Date and Times.

Brief description of the event.

Cost for entry.

Contact email and phone number for public to contact.

A Photo/logo

Any events should be submitted to the Town Clerk by 19 December.

Members NOTED this update.

ACTION: ALL

FGS.75 BUDGET AND PRECEPT FOR FINANCIAL YEAR 2020-2021

Members considered 3 budget options submitted by the different Parties and published as an enclosure to this Agenda.

The main budget figures for the Financial Year 2020-21 were reviewed along with the outline future planning requirements beyond that point.

In general, options presented had many similarities, particularly the anticipated total level of expenditure. However, differences needed discussion and amendment line by line. Members felt that, for future reference, this meeting may not be the best forum for that sort of detailed analysis.

Councillor James Kennedy felt that one major matter that could be decided was the level of Precept to be set. This tied in directly to the level of General Reserves to be maintained. He pointed out that whereas the level of General Reserves is carefully considered, they were being depleted and subject to spending, may even run out within the lifetime of this administration. An inflationary increase in the Precept would be prudent and help offset this. Taxpayers would surely accept that an increase in spending justified an incremental increase in the level of Precept.

Councillor Cooke noted the importance of maintaining General Reserves and that they have depleted. However, this was a question of timing and he did not see the need for a rise in Precept at this stage.

Councillor K Dickson felt that current levels of reserves may still be considered reasonable. Other Authorities in the District may well be raising their Precepts. Taxpayers saw the whole as an increase in Council Tax and would not differentiate.

After further debate it was Proposed by Councillor James Kennedy, Seconded by Councillor John Dearing and:

RECOMMENDED by majority, that Kenilworth Town Council sets an increase to the Precept for the financial year 2020-2021, at £18.83 per household (Band D). The balance of funding for any adopted budget, beyond that provided by the precept, and other identified income, will be drawn from the earmarked and General reserves.

Members further AGREED that Group Leaders would now meet to analyse and amend each budget line as appropriate, having full regard to the options already published.

ACTION: JD, JC & KD

FGS.76 NEXT MEETING

Members NOTED that the next scheduled meeting of the Finance and General Services Committee will take place on 06 February 2020 at 7.00 pm.

The meeting concluded at 8.36 pm.

Signed

Dated.....