

KENILWORTH TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of the Finance and General Services Committee

Commencing at 7.00 pm on Thursday 29 September 2022

PRESENT: Councillor R J Barry (Chair).

Councillors: P Austin, A G Chalmers, M F Coker, S A Cooke, A M Dearing, J A Dearing, K S Dickson, R G Dickson, G D Hyde, A J Kennedy, A W Milton, R J Spencer.

Town Clerk: Miss M S Field.

Deputy Town Clerk: Mr N Eaton.

Communications Assistant: Mrs G Hollingsworth

One member of the Public was present. One Member of the press was present.

The fire and safety brief was displayed on the screens prior to the commencement of the meeting.

FGS.317 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

FGS.335	Further request for CIL funding – Talisman Theatre project	Cllr Richard Dickson	Talisman Theatre Patron
FGS.335	Further request for CIL funding – Talisman Theatre project	Cllr Kate Dickson	Talisman Theatre Patron
FGS.335	Further request for CIL funding – Talisman Theatre project	Cllr John Dearing	Talisman Theatre Patron
FGS.335	Further request for CIL funding – Talisman Theatre project	Cllr Alix Dearing	Talisman Theatre Patron
FGS.320	Allotments – update on current position	Cllr John Dearing	Allotment Holder
FGS.320	Allotments – update on current position	Cllr Alix Dearing	Allotment Holder
FGS.320	Allotments – update on current position	Cllr Robert Barry	Allotment Holder
FGS.330	Application for Grant Funding – Kenilworth Lions	Cllr R Dickson	Personal-Customer of the event

Councillors A M Dearing, J A Dearing, K S Dickson, R G Dickson, A J Kennedy and A W Milton made a general declaration of personal interest in relation to any items regarding Warwick District Council.

Councillor R J Spencer made a general declaration of personal interest in relation to any items regarding Warwickshire County Council.

FGS.318 APOLOGIES

Councillors: J A Cooke, A J Firth, P J Jones.

FGS.319 MINUTES

Members NOTED the Minutes of the Finance and General Services Committee held on 19 May 2022. These were received and approved by the Town Council (KTC) on 09 June 2022.

The Chair made a request that the Town Clerk make enquiries into the Investment Options previously discussed under FGS.304 relating to the CCLA Investment Management products. The Town Clerk confirmed she would make the relevant contact.

MATTERS ARISING

FGS.320 (1) ALLOTMENTS – UPDATE ON CURRENT POSITION (FGS.130, 140, 248, 297)

The Chair reported that no further progress had been made on this matter since our last meeting. The Town Clerk added that the WDC Legal Team were taking instructions from senior officers and that remained the position. Cllr M Coker asked if any Members could take the matter up with senior officials at the District. Cllr A Milton offered to pursue this and keep the Town Clerk informed.

Members NOTED this update and offered their thanks.

FGS. 321 (2) UPDATE ON CASTLE PASSES FOLLOWING DIGITALISATION

The Chair reported that the number of Castle Passes processed under the new digitalised system was 600, with a largely flawless transition.

Cllr R Dickson offered to write to all estate agents within the town to confirm that new residents do receive this benefit and it was something that should be shared with home buyers. He will include mention of the annual Boxing Day event held.

Members NOTED this update.

FGS. 322 (3) APPROVAL OF REVISED QUOTATION FOR NOTICEBOARD (FGS.270)

The Chair presented the increase in cost for the Noticeboard for the Allotment area – originally £1279.14 and now £1505.72 (all exclusive of vat) This was due to increases to delivery costs and the type of fixings required.

After consideration, it was proposed, seconded and:

RESOLVED that the revised quotation for the Noticeboard for the Allotment area be approved by an increased sum of £226.58.

STANDING MATTERS

FGS. 323 (1) 5 MONTH REVIEW OF BUDGET

- (i) The Responsible Finance Officer (RFO) presented the published reports, explaining specific issues in detail. The budget is mostly on target with some areas showing a slight underspend. An increase in income on interest has been received, however, there has been an additional cost of the external audit (again due to CIL income affecting the pricing structure). Additional spend in postage costs have been due to the increase in castle pass uptake. Photocopying costs have also increased and Members were asked to be mindful of costs when requesting any colour copying from the office.

A further additional spend has been a re-print of the Order of Service for Remembrance Day following the passing of Her Majesty The Queen.

The main body of the budget is likely to be an underspend with some small overspends as above. Finally, the RFO reminded Members that a rent review of Kenilworth allotments, Brays Bungalow and the Castle Pass Scheme were due.

The RFO answered a number of cost of living questions from Members, including any proposed increase in service charge and energy bills. The RFO will write to landlords WDC to request any information they may hold to give us an indication of our future liability.

- (ii) Members confirmed the timescale and arrangements for submitting next years budget proposals. The Chair and RFO will produce a “technical budget” for use by Group Leaders, by 31 October. Any meeting required with Group Leaders, Chair of Finance and RFO to take place in November. Final proposals put forward by Groups will then be published on 09 December, prior to consideration by the FGS Committee on 15 December 2022. The recommendations will then be considered by the Town Council on 12 January 2023.

Members NOTED these updates.

FGS. 324 (2) REVIEW OF GRANTS AWARDED 2021-2022

The Chair advised that reports had been received from Time4Hope and New Hope with an update report from Citizens Advice contained within their new application.

Members NOTED these updates

FGS.325 (3) INTERNAL AUDIT – REPORTS AND ACTION

The Chair reported all is in good order with no problems or concerns. A minor software VAT issue was identified and resolved. He thanked Officers for their work.

Members NOTED this update.

FGS. 326 (4) GRIT BINS

The Chair reported that any requests for additional Grit Bins should be received as early as possible, and preferably by 28 October 2022. If financial approval is needed this will be taken to the Town Council Meeting on 1 December 2022.

Members were reminded that we have a supply of rock salt available for residents again this year and it was agreed a further order of 15kg bags would be made to ensure a sufficient supply.

Cllr K Dickson requested that a grit bin be considered for the new bridge at Clarke's Avenue. The Town Clerk will contact our new locality officer at WCC concerning this.

Members NOTED these updates.

FGS. 327 (5) REVIEW OF WEBSITE & SOCIAL MEDIA

The Chair presented the published report detailing statistics and engagement information for our website and social media platforms. The Communications Officer clarified this data was for 2022 and that access to the analytical data for the websites was only available from the end of February this year. The engagement rates quoted were also variable depending on posts published on any particular day. Members acknowledged the request to share information on local events and overall thanked the Communications Officer for the information and report.

Members NOTED this update.

NEW MATTERS

FGS. 328 (1) APPLICATION FOR GRANT FUNDING – CITIZENS ADVICE

Members considered an Application for Funding support in the sum of £2600.00 from CITIZENS ADVICE.

All submitted documentation and budgets were taken into account. The Chair confirmed that the applicant had been interviewed, and there was support for the bid, and it was:

RESOLVED that the sum of £2600.00 be granted to CITIZENS ADVICE, from the Grants (Unspecified Allocation) budget.

FGS.329 (2) APPLICATION FOR GRANT FUNDING – NEW HOPE

Members considered an Application for Funding support in the sum of £2500.00 from NEW HOPE.

All submitted documentation and budgets were taken into account. There was support for the bid, and it was:

RESOLVED that the sum of £2500.00 be granted to NEW HOPE, from the Grants (Unspecified Allocation) budget.

FGS.330 (3) APPLICATION FOR GRANT FUNDING – KENILWORTH LIONS

Members considered an Application for Funding support in the sum of £1000.00 from KENILWORTH LIONS for their Carols at the Castle Event.

All submitted documentation and budgets were taken into account. There was support for the bid, and it was:

RESOLVED that the sum of £1000.00 be granted to KENILWORTH LIONS, from the Town Events Support budget.

FGS. 331 (4) APPLICATION FOR GRANT FUNDING – KENILWORTH LIONS

Members considered an Application for Funding support in the sum of £500.00 from KENILWORTH LIONS for their annual charity theatre trip.

All submitted documentation and budgets were taken into account. There was support for the bid, and it was:

RESOLVED that the sum of £500.00 be granted to KENILWORTH LIONS, from the Grants (Unspecified Allocation) budget.

FGS. 332 (5) CHRISTMAS ARRANGEMENTS 2022

- (i) The Chair presented the published report on the latest details regarding the Light Switch On Events, proposed Christmas Market and any other available information.

Members NOTED this update

- (ii) Cllr M Coker confirmed arrangements were underway for the Christmas Market to be held in Talisman Square pending approval from the owners. If permission was withheld it was confirmed the market would take place in Abbey End with a similar format. It was confirmed we had three stalls reserved for Council nominations and a budget of £500 was required for market appendages.

After consideration it was proposed, seconded and:

RESOLVED to spend up to £500.00 on incidental expenses relating to the Christmas Market and gifts from Father Christmas.

- (iii) The Chair reported that we were currently awaiting confirmation from WDC that they had been responsible for payment of the bill for Christmas Lights in previous years, and that this arrangement was to continue in light of the current energy crisis. If not, it should be considered what arrangements can be made. It was further reported that approximate costs from last year equated to £450.

After some discussion, Members indicated their strong preference for the usual Christmas Lights arrangements for residents and agreed that the event

should not be cancelled even if the cost fell to this Council. Cllr R Dickson was conscious of the cost of living crisis and felt there was no evidence to support that residents would favour a spend on Christmas Lights simply to encourage festive cheer, however, he acknowledged he was in the minority.

The Chair further advised Members that WDC had offered two free parking days in the town which the Town Clerk understood should be utilised by the end of the financial year. After discussion, Members agreed a day to be allocated for the Christmas Market on 10 December 2022, along with a further day to encourage residents to support local the following Saturday on 17 December 2022. The Town Clerk will report back to WDC to confirm this.

FGS. 333 (6) GRANT SUBMITTED TO WARWICKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCILLORS GRANT FUND

The Chair thanked Councillor's R Spencer and J Cooke following receipt of a Grant of £4,800 for the planting of further Roadside Trees in Kenilworth. Cllr R Spencer added that for those residents who had opted for a tree to be planted outside of their home, the locations were currently being considered by WCC for their suitability. Members NOTED this update.

FGS. 334 (7) MARKET TOWN MEMBERSHIP

The Chair presented the invitation to join the Rural Market Towns Group on a free basis until the end of October. The Town Clerk explained this had originally been a slightly longer period when the invite was initially received. After discussion, Members asked the Town Clerk to request a longer trial period until the end of December 2022, at which stage the decision to continue can be delegated to the Town Clerk depending on the benefits received to the Council.

FGS. 335 (8) FURTHER REQUEST FOR CIL FUNDING – TALISMAN THEATRE PROJECT

The Chair presented the published report from the Talisman Theatre which explained their need for further funding to complete their ongoing project. Cllr M Coker wished to record his support for their application on the basis the works were required and the original idea was to benefit the community which this additional funding would go towards.

Cllr J Dearing clarified the total amount being requested was £44,000 which the Chair confirmed as correct.

After consideration, it was proposed, seconded and:

RECOMMENDED that Town Council approve the application from the Talisman Theatre for further funding of £35,000, together with the triggering of the Contingency sum, at their next meeting.

FGS. 336 (9) REVIEW OF RISK REGISTER.

The Chair advised that the Risk Register is currently reviewed annually and a recommendation was put forward this be amended to a review taking place twice a year. The first review to take place in April/May prior to the signing off of the Annual Governance documentation, and the second review to take place in September at an appropriate Finance & General Services Meeting.

After consideration, it was agreed and:

RESOLVED that the Risk Register be reviewed twice annually in April/May and again in September.

FGS. 337 (10) CASTLE GREEN CAR PARK – REQUEST RE PERMIT PARKING

The Chair advised we had received a request from a resident for the Town Council to consider making the Castle Green car park a permit holders only car park.

The Chair reported that the Castle Green car park is part of the legally designated Village Green of the Town and it would be unlawful to restrict the use of the facility for certain residents. There is a complicated history, and technically the car park facilitates the residents enjoyment of using the Village Green. Further, it should be for the use of residents rather than visitors to the town.

After discussion, it was agreed by Members we cannot facilitate the residents request for the reasons given above, however, Members requested a report from Officers on the history of the Village Green, preferably to be brought to the next F&GS Meeting.

Members NOTED these updates.

FGS. 338 (11) OFFICIAL EVENTS – SIGN LANGUAGE INTERPRETER

The Chair reported that a request had been made prior to the proclamation of King Charles III that a sign language interpreter be booked to improve accessibility of the event. If this was a service that the council wishes to provide, Officers can be asked to research and look to engage a supplier that can be called upon and a price agreed.

Cllr R Dickson commented that he felt the sign language interpreter at the Leamington Spa proclamation was well received and this could be something to consider for Remembrance Sunday.

A discussion ensued concerning the practicalities of having a sign language interpreter for Remembrance Sunday due to the set up and constraints of the event. It was also noted that we are re-printing 3000 copies of our Order of Service which contains details of the whole service and will be available for attendees.

After a discussion, rather than focussing on one event, Members agreed to delegate further research to Officers to determine the practicalities of bringing an interpreter to our local events, the costs of this and where this could be deemed beneficial. If possible Officers shall report to the next Town Council Meeting on 20 October 2022.

FGS.339 NEXT MEETING

Members NOTED that the next scheduled meeting of the Finance and General Services Committee will take place on Thursday 15 December 2022, at 7pm.

The meeting concluded at 8.59 pm.

Signed

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