K E N I L W O R T H   T O W N   C O U N C I L

Minutes of the Meeting of the Finance and General Services Committee

Commencing at 7.08 pm on Thursday 1 February 2024

PRESENT: Councillor R G Dickson.

Councillors: D A T Bailey, A Chalmers, A M Dearing, K S Dickson, N A Eaton, A Insley, P J Jones, A J Kennedy, Z L Leventhal, A W Milton, J Payne and M L Stevens.

Town Clerk: Miss M S Field.
Deputy Town Clerk: Miss G Honey

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

FGS.76 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

FGS. 79	Allotments – update on current position	Cllrs A Chalmers, A Dearing, R Dickson & P Jones	Allotment Holders or KATA Member
FGS. 85	Twinning	Cllrs R Dickson, K Dickson, A Chalmers, A Dearing & J Kennedy	Kenilworth Twinning Association Members
FGS. 90	Applications for Grant Funding – Kenilworth Wardens	Cllr P Jones	Member of rival sports club
FGS. 98	Request for Funding – Kenilworth Community Speedwatch	Cllr P Jones	Member

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

FGS.77 APOLOGIES

Councillors A J G Marsh, R J S Minto, A Randall and A Summers.

FGS.78 MINUTES

Members NOTED the Minutes of the Finance and General Services Committee held on 14 December 2023. These were received and approved by the Town Council (KTC) on 11 January 2024.

MATTERS ARISING

FGS.79 ALLOTMENTS – UPDATE ON CURRENT POSITION (FGS.130, 140, 248, 58)

(i) Members NOTED that the deed of surrender and transfer documentation regarding the Allotment Land at Beehive Hill has been signed, dispatched and confirmation received from solicitors that the transfer had completed with WDC's solicitor.

(ii) Members NOTED that the new draft lease to cover all KATA managed sites has been passed to KATA for agreement and confirmation of insurance and trustees. After a meeting between the Chair of KATA and Town Clerk, the last few amendments have been made and will be sent to solicitors for approval. Once a final draft has been received this will be shared with Members and then be brought to Full Council for signing.

The Chair thanked the office team for all of their work in finalising the transfer.

FGS.80 EVENTS TO MARK DDAY 80 (FGS.73)

(i) Cllr A Chalmers provided a verbal update. The group had met and had made initial plans for the D-day celebrations to include church bells, school choirs, a piper and the lighting of the beacon within the grounds of Kenilworth Castle. It may also be possible to run a shop window competition for this occasion.

(ii) Cllr A Chalmers requested approval of a budget of £1000 to be taken from the Town Events Support budget for financial year 2024/2025 to assist in funding the piper and beacon. Cllr J Kennedy asked if there was a low carbon option for the beacon. Cllr Chalmers said this will be investigated and the Castle consulted on the most suitable option.

After consideration it was proposed, seconded and:

RESOLVED TO APPROVE a budget of £1000 to be taken from the Town Events Support budget for financial year 2024/2025.

FGS. 81 BLUE PLAQUES (FGS.48)

Cllr D Bailey provided a verbal update and advised that the group were awaiting clarity on the official process of extending the national scheme. However, in the meantime they were creating a short list of Kenilworth residents who may be suitable. The Council had received information on Edward Fardon, who had developed innovations relating to the bicycle. Thanks were given to the residents involved in assisting the Group's research. Cllr A Milton offered the services of the Cycling Working Group to assist in research relating to Edward Fardon, having prominently featured his efforts in their group.

Cllr Z Leventhal asked if any women featured on the list for which it was confirmed there was. Cllr Chalmers advised each plaque had to be on an original building.

Members NOTED these updates.

FGS. 82 APPLICATION FOR CORE FUNDING – theKenilworthCentre (FGS.64)

Members were required to nominate a Councillor to attend theKenilworthCentre Trustee meetings as an Observer, the first being on 14 May 2024 at 7.30pm. Cllr M Stevens volunteered with Cllr K Dickson advising, in his absence, that Cllr A Marsh was also keen to be involved in this capacity.

Members agreed that both Cllrs M Stevens and A Marsh would act as Observers, dividing the meeting dates between them.

Members NOTED this update.

STANDING MATTERS

FGS.83 REVIEW OF GRANTS AWARDED 2022-2023

The Chair reported that five grant reports had been received; The Omega Course, Sync Education, The Over 30s Swimming Club and the Kenilworth Lions in relation to the Carol Service and the trip to the Panto for the year 2023/2024. These documents were shared amongst Members.

Members NOTED this update.

FGS. 84 INTERNAL AUDIT – REPORTS AND ACTION

The Chair reported that the Quarter 3 audit is due to take place on 13 February 2024 and the report will be brought to the next meeting.

Members NOTED this update.

FGS. 85 TWINNING ASSOCIATION

Cllr A Chalmers reported that a recent meeting had taken place where plans were being put in place for an outgoing Bourg La Reine visit in May, along with a visit from and trip to Eppstein later in the year. There remained difficulties with Roccalumera following the change of Government. Cllr Chalmers reported that Bourg La Reine were trying to organise an Olympic Games between the twinned towns with further details to come shortly. It was also noted that the recent penpal initiative had received great support from local schools.

Members NOTED this update.

FGS. 86 CIL WORKING GROUP UPDATE

(i) Cllr K Dickson presented her written report together with the CIL Balance sheet and draft CIL Grant Agreement. It was proposed, seconded and Members:

RESOLVED to APPROVE the documents and wording of the draft CIL Grant Agreement.

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(ii) The Chair presented an update on the Kenilworth School payments. After significant correspondence between the School and the Clerk, the Council had now received notification of a quote and the technical installation proposal. Once relevant invoices are received Grant payments will be made to the School.

(iii) Members NOTED the recent report received from Warwickshire Wildlife Trust regarding the flood management project. Members were grateful for the detail in the report and noted there was potential for the group to submit a second application for further funding. Members had invited a second application as the project progressed and this will be considered in line with our CIL policy on receipt.

Members NOTED these updates.

FGS. 87 SHOP WINDOW COMPETITIONS

Members discussed the formation of a Working Group to organise shop window competitions in the town. There was enthusiasm for these to continue and it was noted that the recent Christmas competition had been the most popular to date.

Cllr A Insley volunteered alongside Cllr K Dickson. It was noted how useful it has been in the past to have the Mayor (in an ex-officio capacity) as part of the group.

It was therefore proposed, seconded and:

> RESOLVED to form a Working Group to include Cllrs A Insley, K Dickson and A Dearing to discuss and arrange a programme of future competitions for the forthcoming year.

FGS. 88 REVIEW OF WEBSITE & SOCIAL MEDIA

The Chair presented the published report and thanked the Deputy Clerk for the information therein. The Deputy Clerk advised that Google Analytics had recently changed format and it was hoped the next report will contained some additional information on the Council's websites.

Cllr Z Leventhal said she had received good feedback on the Council's use of the Instagram platform and the nature and level of posts.

Members NOTED this update.

FGS. 89 9 MONTH REVIEW OF BUDGET

The Chair presented an overview of the Council's budget lines at Month 9. The Council had recently received invoices for the elections in 2023 and for the service charge of Jubilee House. Various legal bills were also due in relation to work on Brayes Bungalow and the Allotment transfer and lease.

Cllr J Kennedy enquired whether it was correct to hold CIL money within an EMR. The Clerk confirmed this was appropriate otherwise it would fall into general reserves. Cllr N Eaton asked whether we still needed use of the Coronation EMR.

The Clerk advised we were still awaiting one invoice from English Heritage for this event and the EMR could then be closed.

Members NOTED these updates.

NEW MATTERS

FGS. 90 APPLICATION FOR GRANT FUNDING – KENILWORTH WARDENS CRICKET CLUB

Members considered an Application for Funding support in the sum of £948.88 (RUCIS Application) from KENILWORTH WARDENS CRICKET CLUB.

The Chair presented the submitted documentation and thanked Members for their input in the lead up to the interview with the applicant. There was support for the application and it was therefore proposed, seconded and (with one abstention):

> RESOLVED that the sum of £948.88 be granted to KENILWORTH WARDENS CRICKET CLUB from the Unspecified Allocation Grants Budget for 2023/2024. This was on the condition that the applicant also received approval of the RUCIS Grant.

FGS. 91 APPLICATION FOR GRANT FUNDING – WARWICKSHIRE PRIDE

Members considered an Application for Funding support in the sum of £500.00 from WARWICKSHIRE PRIDE.

Whilst no conflict of interest was foreseen, it was NOTED that this applicant is also a WDC Councillor.

After discussion, Members took the view that the benefits of this application would be far reaching and thus there was support for the bid. It was therefore proposed, seconded and:

> RESOLVED that the sum of £500.00 be granted to WARWICKSHIRE PRIDE from the Unspecified Allocation Grants Budget for 2023/2024.

FGS. 92 APPLICATION FOR GRANT FUNDING – ALEXANDER KANIEWSKI IN ASSOCIATION WITH THE ENGLISH HERITAGE TRUST

Members considered an Application for Funding support in the sum of £500 for ALEXANDER KANIEWSKI IN ASSOCIATION WITH THE ENGLISH HERITAGE TRUST.

Members were encouraged by how the production may lead into celebrations for the 450th anniversary of Queen's Elizabeth's visit to Kenilworth Castle in 2025 and thus there was support for the bid. Alternative options for funding were considered. After consideration, it was proposed, seconded and:

> RESOLVED that the sum of £500 be granted to ALEXANDER KANIEWSKI IN ASSOCIATION WITH THE ENGLISH HERITAGE TRUST from the Town Events Grant Support Budget.

INITIALS..........................

FGS. 93 APPLICATION FOR GRANT FUNDING – KENILWORTH CARNIVAL COMMITTEE

Members considered an Application for Funding support in the sum of £15,000 from the KENILWORTH CARNIVAL COMMITTEE.

The Chair presented the submitted documentation and provided a summary from the interview held with the current representative of the Committee. It was advised that WDC would not permit the use of Abbey Fields for the funfair this year and alternative sites were being sought. It was accepted that floats had decreased and there was an effort to encourage more cycling as part of the procession itself. The Chair advised that the Town Council had previously supported the Carnival, however, this was usually in relation to health and safety matters and not on the scale currently being sought which was, in effect, to fund a significant share of the event.

A lengthy discussion ensued with Members being mindful that a climate emergency had been declared, and hence, it would not be appropriate to support an event which encouraged the use of diesel lorries. However, Members appreciated the value of the event for the town, and focus shifted to discussing possible alterations that could be made to the event to reduce its carbon impact. These included the use of cycles, walking and electric vehicles, however, Members did not wish to dictate how the event should be organised.

After consideration, Cllr A Milton proposed an award of £3,000 with a condition that this be used solely for health and safety purposes and that a commitment from the Committee is requested in that there is tangible action taken to reduce the associated carbon emissions and carbon impact of the procession. The proposal was seconded by Cllr N Eaton. Cllr A Insley asked for an amendment to include examples of walking and cycling which was accepted by both the proposer and seconder.

Cllr Z Leventhal asked for a further amendment that the Committee submits a plan to this Council on how they will demonstrate that tangible action in reducing carbon emissions. The funding will be dependant on a plan being provided. This amendment was accepted by both the proposer and seconder.

It was therefore proposed, seconded and by a unanimous vote with one abstention, this Council duly:

> RESOLVED that the sum of £3,000 be granted to the KENILWORTH CARNIVAL COMMITTEE, from the Town Events Support Budget for 2024/2025. This Grant should be used solely for supporting the health and safety aspects of the event. The Council further require a written plan to be submitted prior to the event taking place and funds being provided. This plan should demonstrate what tangible action the Committee are taking to reduce the carbon emissions and carbon impact of the procession for example a focus on walking, cycling and electric vehicles.

FGS. 94 CHRISTMAS ILLUMINATIONS

INITIALS...........................

The Town Clerk advised that a review of the Warwick Road Christmas Lights was required as the Council needs to enter into a new contract for maintenance and storage of the Lights, alongside a contract for installation. It is therefore an ideal time to also consider any changes that need to be made to the lights.

Cllr P Jones and Cllr R Dickson volunteered to be a part of the Task & Finish Group. Cllr J Kennedy nominated Cllr R Minto in his absence with agreement.

Members NOTED this update.

FGS. 95 INSTRUCTION OF COUNSEL REGARDING BRAYES BUNGALOW

Cllr J Kennedy advised that the Task & Finish Group set up to consider this matter agreed that specialist legal advice was required due to the inclusion of ancient legislation, and that approval of the sum of up to £5,000 (excluding VAT) was required for this purpose. Cllr Z Leventhal added that a lawyer was required to instruct Counsel under the Licensed Access scheme hence her involvement in the instructions which were prepared alongside the Clerk.

The Chair advised that the Brayes EMR currently sat above £10,000 which these funds could be taken from.

It was therefore proposed, seconded and Members:

> RESOLVED to APPROVE a spend of up to £5,000 excluding VAT and DELEGATE to Councillor Z Leventhal and the Town Clerk, the authority to instruct appropriate Counsel to provide specialist advice to the Council under the Licensed Access scheme.

FGS. 96 MAY 2023 ELECTION COSTS

The Chair reported that Cllr A Marsh had recently attended the WDC Audit & Standards Committee as the nominated Town/Parish representative. A letter had been prepared to send to WDC and Cllr Marsh was pursuing a bench marking exercise with other Districts in the County to assess their basis of charging.

It was expected that a report and further update will be presented to the next Full Council Meeting on 29 February 2024, where approval can be considered for payment of the invoice.

Cllr J Kennedy passed thanks onto Cllr Marsh for his time on this matter.

Members NOTED this update.

FGS. 97 THERMAL IMAGING CAMERA

Members NOTED the report produced by Facilities and Administration Officer Miles Wyatt-Smith on the loan of Thermal Imaging Cameras. Members wished to convey their thanks to Miles for his commitment to the scheme and work in ensuring its success.

Cllr A Insley enquired how results were being treated and whether the Council had received any feedback on further action taken by residents. It was confirmed that the Council do request feedback and specific detailed responses had been passed to the Climate Emergency Group where appropriate.

FGS. 98 REQUEST FOR FUNDING – KENILWORTH COMMUNITY SPEEDWATCH

The Chair presented a proposal from the Kenilworth Community Speedwatch Group for the funding of up to £250 for the purchase of a new device. It was noted that the Town Council had funded devices in the past.

Cllr J Payne asked if a condition could be attached to share the devices with neighbouring Parish's similar to an arrangement with Burton Green in the past. Cllr K Dickson explained that this had been due to the funding for that device coming from the Community Forum of which Burton Green were a part. They also had their own trained team in place.

After consideration it was proposed, seconded and:

> RESOLVED that the sum of up to £250 would be spent on the purchase of a new device for the Kenilworth Community Speedwatch Group.

FGS. 99 REVIEW OF INVESTMENT STRATEGY

The Chair presented the draft published Investment Strategy which had been reviewed by the Deputy Clerk and the Policies and Standing Orders Working Group.

Cllr J Kennedy said that CCLA were the winners of the sustainable investment fund of the year showing Council funds were well invested.

After consideration it was proposed, seconded and:

> RESOLVED that the Finance & General Services Committee approve the published Investment Strategy.

FGS.100 NEXT MEETING

Members NOTED that the date for the next meeting of the Finance and General Services Committee will take place on Thursday 23 May 2024, at 7pm pending approval of the 2024/2025 Calendar of Events.

The meeting concluded at 9:20pm.

Signed ………………….……………….

Dated.…….…………………….............

INITIALS..........................