ENCLOSURE 1

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 7.00 pm on Thursday 6 July 2023

PRESENT: Councillor R G Dickson (Chair from FGS.02).

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 J G Marsh, A W Milton, M L Stevens and A M Summers.

Town Clerk: Miss M S Field.
Deputy Town Clerk: Miss G Honey
Administration and Facilities Assistant: Mr M Wyatt-Smith

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

FGS.01 ELECTION OF CHAIR

Councillor J Kennedy proposed, seconded by Councillor A Milton that Councillor R Dickson be Chairman for the ensuing year. It was:

> RESOLVED unanimously that Councillor R Dickson be Chairman of the Finance & General Services Committee for the ensuing year.

FGS.02 ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIR

Councillor K Dickson proposed, seconded by Councillor A Dearing that Councillor M Stevens be Vice-Chairman for the ensuing year.

After consideration it was:

> RESOLVED that Councillor M Stevens be Vice- Chairman of the Finance & General Services Committee for the ensuing year.

FGS.03 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

FGS.06	Allotments – update on current position	Cllrs A Dearing, R Dickson & P Jones	Allotment Holders or KATA Member

Councillors 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.

FGS.04 APOLOGIES

Councillors: R J S Minto, J Payne and A Randall.

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FGS.05 MINUTES

Members NOTED the Minutes of the Finance and General Services Committee held on 2 February 2023. These were received and approved by the Town Council (KTC) on 23 February 2023.

MATTERS ARISING

FGS.06 ALLOTMENTS – UPDATE ON CURRENT POSITION

The Clerk provided a verbal update on the current allotment position. The Council's appointed solicitor continues to chase WDC with regard to the Transfer of Beehive Hill. This Council's contention is that this is a statutory allotment site and it should be dealt with as such. A response has been awaited from WDC on this point since 16 January 2023. It was suggested this matter be brought to the attention of the new WDC Portfolio holder for Assets. The Clerk will make contact.

Despite the above, the Clerk reported options for putting a new lease in place with Kenilworth Allotment Tenants Association (KATA) being progressed. Written advice is being sought on this point.

Cllr J Kennedy confirmed a smooth way should be paved for any future allotment sites that the Council obtains within the new housing developments around the town. The Clerk reported that the WDC Site Delivery Officer is aware of this.

Members NOTED this update.

STANDING MATTERS

FGS.07 REVIEW OF FINANCIAL POSITION AND CURRENT BUDGET

The Town Clerk provided an overview of the position following closedown of accounts for year 2022-23 and the first quarter of the new financial year. Income has exceeded that budgeted for in relation to investment interest, castle passes and Brayes bungalow (now achieving market rent). Expenditure is on track. Various invoices are still awaited. Funds will also be spent from Civic hospitality shortly due to the Mayor's upcoming reception. No grant applications have been received this quarter.

The Clerk reported that the CIL income/balance reported in month 2 were slightly skewed as income had been received in one lump sum from WDC alongside the precept. This has now been separated into the relevant earmarked reserves in month 3. There is approximately £9,000 remaining in CIL funds. All other CIL funds have been committed but not yet paid out. Cllr N Eaton stressed the point this Council had to be careful not to commit funds to a CIL project that we did not yet have.

Cllr A Milton commented that the general reserves looked healthy and previously it had been considered an option to reduce these. The Clerk advised the figure was inflated for month 2 due to the CIL money sitting in that account and less is in general reserves. Cllr J Kennedy said the previous Chair of Finance had produced

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some very helpful papers on the general reserves and he hoped this could be available again going forward. Cllr Z Leventhal added that it would be useful to have a briefing session on the Council's finances from existing members and the Clerk confirmed this was on the agenda for later on in this meeting.

Members NOTED this update.

FGS.08 REVIEW OF GRANTS AWARDED 2022-2023

The Chair reported that we had received four grant reports from Helping Hands, St John's Toddler Group and two from Kenilworth Lions. These were shared amongst Members. Other reports are being monitored but not yet due.

The Chair provided new Members with a brief overview of the grant process including application and interview processes.

Members NOTED this update.

FGS. 09 INTERNAL AUDIT – REPORTS AND ACTION

The Chair reported that the Quarter 4 audit had taken place on 10 May 2023 and there were no issues to report. The report was circulated amongst members for their information.

Members NOTED this update.

FGS. 10 CEMETERY

The Chair presented the published report. He reported that the cemetery is not in a good state with overgrown grass and trees affecting the area. Cllr N Eaton supported the Chair's comments and said the cemetery must be seen as a special case by WDC. It is an important biodiverse habitat and the No Mow May initiative should have taken this into consideration.

Cllr A Milton recognised the Chair had already written to WDC concerning the state of the cemetery but suggested the Council as a collective should also provide feedback to WDC and express our concern. Members were in favour of this with Cllr J Kennedy confirming WDC were keen to hear all feedback on the No Mow May initiative.

Members NOTED this update.

FGS. 11 CIL WORKING GROUP UPDATE

Cllr K Dickson advised the Group were currently making arrangements to hold their first meeting. In the meantime, after an enquiry from Kenilworth School on further funding, the group had liaised and sent a response in line with our CIL policy that we cannot commit funds we do not yet have.

Cllr A Milton advised that the final designs had been prepared for the skatepark and had come in at a cost of approximately £360,000. This was in line with parks in other areas. He advised this was no longer a CIL project as the design element had been completed, however, the park users may approach the Council in the

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future for further assistance if required. Otherwise, they will be fundraising for the project themselves.

Cllr J Kennedy enquired about progress on the plaques for Kenilworth School and Talisman Theatre. The Deputy Clerk advised this had not moved further forward as the School had requested they obtain their own plaque to ensure consistency with design. This was currently with the CIL group for consideration. Cllr Kennedy said he would certainly like to see the Town Council's crest on the plaque. The Chair confirmed no planned opening date for the school had been advised.

Members NOTED this update.

FGS. 12 REVIEW OF KTC WEBSITES AND SOCIAL MEDIA

The Chair presented the published report. Cllr A Dearing said it was encouraging to see an increase on our engagement and figures and would like to see the events calendar include more of what is going on around the town. The Deputy Clerk advised that the office is not currently resourced to seek out events, however, there is a facility on the website which allows event organisers to submit details of their event for publishing. This should be encouraged to increase our publication in this respect.

Cllr A Summers indicated that there were various points she wished to raise and better understand concerning the current websites. These related to studying the website analytics, offering discounts for local attractions and increasing our spend. The Chair advised these should be brought as a proposal/motion and it would be inappropriate to consider any suggestions for improvements without this.

Cllr Z Leventhal asked if working group reports and updates on local development could be shared on our social media channels and the website. The Town Clerk confirmed this was already done on our website. The Deputy Clerk said these could also be added to our social media and this was something that could be highlighted in a Town Council meeting going forward when it was considered appropriate.

The Chair reminded members of the digital and social media policy.

Members NOTED this update.

FGS. 13 TWINNING ASSOCIATION

Cllr A Chalmers reported on a recent successful visit from Bourg La Reine over the period of the King's Coronation in May. A visit from Eppstein is planned for September. Cllr Chalmers advised there was a new Mayor for Roccalumera who they were building communication with.

Cllr A Marsh asked how success was measured. Cllr Chalmers advised it was for the TA to measure their own success by membership, visitor numbers etc. The Chair confirmed that the Council will do everything possible to encourage their success. It was agreed to advertise their newsletters on the KTC website and advise KTA of the facility to submit their events to encourage more members and community engagement.

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Members NOTED this update.

FGS. 14 UYOGO FRIENDSHIP GROUP

Cllr A Chalmers reported that a meeting had taken place last night and the focus at the present time was on delivering water to the village. The primary school construction was underway, however, further funds were needed to complete this project. Sadly the maternity unit that had been planned had not advanced and the local MP there was being pushed for progress.

Cllr Chalmers reported that the group would like to share some stall space at a future KTC event and asked if details could be included on our website to aid awareness of the group. The Deputy Clerk will look into this.

Members NOTED this update.

NEW MATTERS

FGS. 15 REVIEW OF SIGNATORIES

Members considered the signatories for Bank Investment accounts and Electronic Payment Approval Schedules for the current Mayoral year as agreed at the Town Council meeting on 15 June 2023, and NOTED these as:

Councillors: A G Chalmers, A M Dearing, K S Dickson, R G Dickson, A J Kennedy, M L Stevens.

FGS.16 APPLICATIONS FOR GRANT FUNDING

Members NOTED that no applications had been received.

FGS. 17 CHRISTMAS 2023 ARRANGEMENTS

Cllr P Jones confirmed the dates WDC had agreed for the Christmas light switch on this year. Lights will be switched on in the High St on Friday 24 November 2023 and in Warwick Road on Sunday 26 November 2023.

The Chair reported that CJs had announced that applications to trade at the Warwick Road lights were now open and this Council needs to consider whether we wanted to proceed with a Christmas Market and Shop Window competition this year. The Council's budget for the Christmas lights sat at £14,000.

Cllr A Milton said the new Business Forum Task & Finish group could explore whether businesses in the town would welcome this. Cllr D Bailey said Stratford Upon Avon have an initiative where they offer residents the chance to donate to the cost of the lights via QR code on the night.

After discussion, it was agreed the Town Clerk will explore whether Talisman Square would be available to us should a market go ahead. An enquiry will also be raised with WDC and WCC on whether any free parking days will be on offer this year (to include on street parking).

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FGS.18 GRIT BINS AND ADVERSE WEATHER

The Administration and Facilities Assistant presented the published report. There are some bins missing and some areas which require maintenance. Many of these bins appear to have had minimal use. Cllr A Milton asked if contact could be made with WCC to put notices on the bins alerting residents that they were for public use and any associated publicity.

Cllr A Chalmers enquired about the grit bins delivered to each school. Cllr N Eaton said each school was responsible for their own bin and to collect their own grit.

FGS. 19 ETHICAL BANK - SWITCH

Cllr D Bailey requested a review of whether our current banking provider is appropriate and the best choice at this time. He further suggested an updating of Council policy to add a brief statement that there will be a consideration of the ethical standing of who we do business with.

Cllr J Kennedy suggested that a Task & Finish group is formed to consider this point going forwards. Volunteers included Cllrs D Bailey, M Stevens and A Marsh.

Cllr A Milton felt a balance was found on this point. He said we needed to consider the practicalities for the Clerk on the level of service we offer and how we can operate effectively. It was agreed the T&F group would report back to the next Finance & General Services meeting in September 2023.

FGS. 20 FINANCIAL TRAINING FOR MEMBERS

The Chair advised that there is a training budget and it may be beneficial for members to have some financial training prior to budget setting later in the year. There was currently an option for an SLCC Course – Budgeting Basics on Friday 8 September or a WALC Course – Finance for Councillors.

Members expressed interest in learning more about the accountancy software used in addition to having a general training session that was tailored to our methods. The Clerk will explore the options in relation to WALC and Rialtas training.

FGS.21 OAKS PRECINCT FUN DAY

The Chair presented the application received from a group of businesses at Oaks Precinct for a request for funding of up to £1,200 to support their fun day.

Members engaged in a lengthy debate on where this application sat within existing Council policy and procedure. Overall Members wanted to support the business community in organising an event. However, there was concern that this was not an approved association, nor did the application comply with requirements for a community grant.

Cllr A Milton proposed we award a grant of £500 conditional on the group obtaining the relevant permissions from WDC for their event. This was seconded by Cllr P Jones.

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Cllr J Kennedy suggested an amendment to include a requisite that the RFO and Chair were satisfied this application fitted in with the Council's regulations and procedures, that the group are a properly constituted association with relevant insurances, that any relevant permissions are obtained from WDC and that there is some form of metric put in place by the organisers to measure the short and long term impact of the event. This is to include a written report back to Council within one year.

Cllr A Milton and Cllr P Jones were happy to accept this amendment.

After discussion, it was proposed, seconded and:

> RESOLVED by majority that an award of £500 be granted to the Oaks Precinct Residents and Shopkeepers Association, payable when the RFO and Chair are satisfied this application complies with the Council's regulations and procedures for awarding event grants, the group are a properly constituted association with relevant insurances, any relevant permissions are obtained from WDC and that there is some form of metric put in place by the organisers to measure the short and long term impact of the event. This is to include a written report back to Council within one year.

FGS.22 <u>NEXT MEETING</u>

Members NOTED that the date for the next meeting of the Finance and General Services Committee will take place on Thursday 28 September 2023, at 7pm.

The meeting concluded at 9:01 pm.

Signed ……………….……………….

Dated.…….…………………..............

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