

KENILWORTH TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of the Finance and General Services Committee

Commencing at 7.00 pm on Thursday 3 October 2024

PRESENT: Councillor R G Dickson (in the Chair)

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

Town Clerk: Miss M S Field.

Deputy Town Clerk: Miss G Honey

1 Members of the Public was present.

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

FGS.128 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

FGS. 143	<u>APPLICATION FOR GRANT FUNDING – KENILWORTH LIONS (CAROLS)</u>	Cllr M Stevens	Member of Kenilworth Lions
FGS. 144	<u>APPLICATION FOR GRANT FUNDING – KENILWORTH LIONS (PANTOMIME)</u>	Cllr M Stevens	Member of Kenilworth Lions

Councillors K S Dickson, R G Dickson, 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.129 APOLOGIES

Councillor A Randall.

FGS.130 MINUTES

Members NOTED the Minutes of the Finance and General Services Committee held on 23 May 2024. These were received and approved by the Town Council (KTC) on 13 June 2024.

MATTERS ARISING

FGS.131 BLUE PLAQUES

Cllr D Bailey presented the written report. Cllr A Milton asked if a Kenilworth scheme would be pursued alongside a new trail leaflet and it was confirmed this was still being considered. The next step was for the group to meet again.

The Town Clerk advised that costings would be required for budget purposes within the next two months. The Chair thanked Mr B Robbins for his input into this topic to date.

Members NOTED this update.

FGS.132 COMMUNICATIONS TASK & FINISH GROUP

Cllr A Marsh presented the published report. Cllr J Kennedy enquired about the timing of training for Members and commented it would be useful to know this as soon as possible for scheduling purposes. The Deputy Clerk said many platforms for training had been offered by the Council's IT provider and it was understood they could be flexible around our needs but these will be communicated as soon as possible. The office data will need to be transferred initially which will take some days. It is therefore likely that training would not be arranged until the week commencing 14 October 2024 at the earliest.

Cllr Kennedy asked if it would be possible to check the security of each device used by Members. Cllr Marsh explained that Microsoft Teams has robust security measures in place but each member would need to ensure their device has suitable security as standard.

Cllr Marsh advised that there will be a forwarding process from existing email addresses.

The Chair asked for an agreed data protection clause to be included in Members email signatures as standard.

Members NOTED this update.

STANDING MATTERS

FGS.133 REVIEW OF FINANCIAL POSITION AND CURRENT BUDGET

The Town Clerk advised that the published documents showed months April to August (Months 1-5) demonstrating the budget was largely on target. There had been a drop in Castle Pass income compared to the same period last year. Interest has continued to increase and the second half of the precept has been received but this would not show in the accounts until month 6.

The Clerk advised that staff salaries will be overspent this year due to the recent evaluation exercise. Furthermore, the service charge to be paid on Jubilee House is higher than had been budgeted for. Civic hospitality, travel and tickets would be off set against each other for the year. The Clerk advised there was still capacity in the Working Group Initiatives budget and Members should bear this in mind when considering any projects or expenses moving forward.

Members NOTED this update.

FGS. 134 KTC FINANCIAL RESERVES FORECAST

The Chair presented the published reserves and budget forecast. Members/Working Groups can use these documents when considering budget proposals. Cllr J Kennedy questioned the formula used to calculate the precept over the coming years. Cllr A Milton explained this could be amended and had been based on a 5% increase.

Members NOTED this update.

FGS. 135 REVIEW OF GRANTS AWARDED 2023-2024

The Chair reported that ten grant reports had been received from;

- Citizen's Advice
- Kenilworth Wardens
- New Hope Counselling
- Old Town Festival
- Spring Playgroup
- 12th Kenilworth Brownies
- Will we impress good Queen Bess / English Heritage
- Arts Festival
- Warwickshire Pride
- The Shakespeares Hospice

Members noted that Warwickshire Pride have not yet spent their funding, and have requested an extension, to spend the grant by the end of December 2024, with the training taking place during November 2024. Members agreed to this arrangement.

These documents were shared amongst Members.

Members NOTED this update.

FGS.136 INTERNAL AUDIT – REPORTS AND ACTION

The Chair reported that the Quarter 1 audit had taken place on 25 September 2024 and the report had been shared with himself and the Vice Chair. No issues had been reported.

Members NOTED this update.

FGS.137 CEMETERY

The Chair presented the published report. WDC have confirmed there remained ten years worth of cemetery space available if current trends continue.

Cllr J Kennedy queried whether the greenspaces management of the cemetery had changed following the WDC biodiversity action programme. The Chair advised that he was unaware of any changes but would make some enquiries.

Cllr A Insley volunteered to prepare the cemetery reports going forwards with a report being presented twice per year.

Members NOTED this update.

FGS.138 CIL WORKING GROUP UPDATE

Cllr K Dickson advised the group had met and welcomed three new internal CIL applications. These had been reviewed and had met the criteria to bring to this meeting and will be reviewed later on in this agenda.

Cllr K Dickson advised the next payment of CIL was due to be received at the end of October 2024.

Members NOTED this update.

FGS.139 TWINNING ASSOCIATION

Cllr A Chalmers provided a verbal update. He said that Eppstein had completed a successful visit in August 2024 where the Mayor had hosted the visitors in the Council Chamber. The Scouts had returned from a visit to Bourg La Reine where they competed in a mini Olympics. The event was a success and they have been invited back next year.

Bourg la Reine and Roccalumera were both hoping to arrange a visit to Kenilworth for 2025.

Members NOTED this update.

FGS. 140 UYOGO FRIENDSHIP GROUP

Cllr A Chalmers provided a verbal update. He said the work in Tanzania was complete and water was now being supplied to the school. Solar panels were also due to be installed. The maternity unit was being progressed but at a slower pace.

It was noted that KUFL will be participating in the Kenilworth Community Network taking place on 28 October 2024.

Members NOTED this update.

NEW MATTERS

FGS. 141 REMEMBRANCE ARRANGEMENTS

Members NOTED that the Town Clerk is working alongside Warwick District Council and the Royal British Legion to bring forward the arrangements for Remembrance for the town on Sunday 10 November 2024.

The annual memorial event is also being planned for 2pm on Thursday November 21 for a wreath to be laid at Abbey End, to mark the explosion which killed 26 people in 1940.

The Chair advised that we had received a communication from the Scouts to request extra traffic marshals on Station Road during the parade. Cllrs K Dickson, R Dickson, P Jones and our Administration and Facilities Officer were pleased to assist.

FGS. 142 UPDATED FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

The Chair presented the updated Financial Regulations which have been drafted by NALC for adoption by Member Councils. Members attention was drawn to section 2.6 which requested a volunteer councillor to review the bank reconciliations. Cllr A Milton volunteered his time.

It was proposed, seconded and:

RECOMMENDED that this council adopt the updated Financial Regulations.

FGS. 143 APPLICATION FOR GRANT FUNDING – KENILWORTH LIONS (CAROLS)

Members considered an Application for Funding support in the sum of up to £750 from KENILWORTH LIONS for their CAROLS event.

Members discussed awarding an amount which fell between last year's award and the 'up to' request this year. Overall, there was support for the application and it was therefore proposed, seconded and, with one abstention and one vote against:

RESOLVED that the sum of £625 be granted to KENILWORTH LIONS (CAROLS) from the Towns Events Support Budget for 2024/2025.

FGS. 144 APPLICATION FOR GRANT FUNDING – KENILWORTH LIONS (PANTOMIME)

Members considered an Application for Funding support in the sum of up to £1000 from KENILWORTH LIONS for their PANTOMIME event.

There was support for the bid and a similar approach taken when determining the amount to award. It was therefore proposed, seconded and, with one abstention and one vote against:

RESOLVED that the sum of £750 be granted to KENILWORTH LIONS (PANTOMIME) from the Town Events Support Budget for 2024/2025.

FGS.145 APPLICATION FOR GRANT FUNDING – COMPASSIONATE KENILWORTH

Members considered an Application for Funding support in the sum of £2000 from COMPASSIONATE KENILWORTH.

There was support for the bid and it was therefore proposed, seconded and:

RESOLVED that the sum of £2000 be granted to COMPASSIONATE KENILWORTH from the Unspecified Allocation Grants Budget for 2024/2025.

FGS. 146 APPLICATION FOR GRANT FUNDING – CITIZENS ADVICE

Members considered an Application for Funding support in the sum of £3000 for CITIZENS ADVICE.

There was overwhelming support for the organisation and their work within the town. However, members were concerned about the absence of any further face to face appointments taking place since February 2024. It was noted this had been a condition of the previous year's grant. Members were pleased to award a grant, however, also requested feedback from Citizens Advice on the provision of face to face support in the town on the basis residents have raised this lack of opportunity.

Overall, there was support for the bid and it was therefore proposed, seconded and:

RESOLVED that the sum of £3000 be granted to CITIZENS ADVICE from the Unspecified Allocation Grants Budget for 2024/2025. Members request feedback from Citizens Advice on the provision of face to face support in the town on the basis residents have raised this lack of opportunity.

FGS. 147 APPLICATION FOR GRANT FUNDING – NEW HOPE COUNSELLING

Members considered an Application for Funding support in the sum of £5000 for NEW HOPE COUNSELLING.

Members wished to encourage further fundraising efforts by New Hope and were happy to support the bid. It was therefore proposed, seconded and:

RESOLVED that the sum of £5000 be granted to NEW HOPE COUNSELLING from the Unspecified Allocation Grant Budget for 2024/2025.

FGS. 148 TIMETABLE FOR BUDGET AND PRECEPT SETTING

Members NOTED and AGREED the key dates for the following actions:

- The Chair and RFO to produce a technical budget for use by Group Leaders by 31 October 2024.
- Any meeting required with Group Leaders, Chair of Finance and RFO during November 2024.
- Final proposals to be put forward by groups by 9 December 2024 to be published on 13 December 2024.
- Recommendations of F& GS will then be considered and ratified by Full Council on 16 January 2025.

FGS. 149 CONFIRMATION OF CONCESSIONARY PARKING DAYS

Members considered the allocation of two days offered by Warwick District Council as concessionary parking days in the WDC Car Parks in Kenilworth. After a brief discussion it was AGREED for these to be on Sunday 1 December 2024 and Saturday 7 December 2024 to support the Warwick Road Light Switch On event and Small Business Saturday.

FGS. 150 BUSINESS EXPO

Cllr M Stevens advised that he would be contacting the Chamber of Trade to discuss a stall at this year's event and noted there was a budget available for this from the Working Groups Initiatives. Both WCC and WDC would be approached to have/share a stall with KTC. Volunteers from the previous Town Council meeting would be contacted shortly with further details.

Cllr Leventhal added that CJs Events had been approached regarding having a stall in order to assist their engagement with local businesses and this would be followed up.

Members NOTED these updates.

FGS. 151 WALC AGM – NOMINATION OF VOTING REPRESENTATIVE

The Chair advised that a representative (and reserve) was required to vote at the WALC AGM to be held on 6 November 2024 at Warwick University, Wellesbourne Campus. Members were also welcome to attend in a general capacity.

Cllr Kennedy asked if information concerning the AGM could be circulated so Members could decide whether to attend. The Town Clerk will send this and would need to book Members onto the event directly.

It was proposed, seconded and:

RESOLVED that Cllr A Marsh would attend the event and vote at the AGM on behalf of KTC. Cllr M Stevens also indicated that he wished to attend the event.

FGS. 152 VE DAY 80th ANNIVERSARY

Cllr A Chalmers presented an opportunity for the town to celebrate VE Day 80 in May 2025. A National Initiative was taking place which encouraged the lighting of a beacon and street parties. A big event had been planned by KTC for the 75th anniversary, however, this had been cancelled due to Covid.

It was proposed, seconded and:

RESOLVED that a Task & Finish Group consisting of Cllrs A Chalmers, K Dickson & A Marsh be formed to formulate costings and suggestions.

FGS. 153 TREE PLANTING 2024-25

Members NOTED that the Council has received the following grants and contributions towards planting street trees in the Town:

Warwickshire County Councillor Grant - £2000 Cllr Tracey Drew
Warwickshire County Councillor Grant - £2000 Cllr John Cooke
Warwickshire County Council Delegated Budget - £2000 Cllr Tracey Drew

Cllr M Stevens explained this would cover the costs of purchasing 70 trees for the town and planting will take place in January/February 2025 with assistance from the WDC Tree Wardens and WCC. All utilities will be checked. Cllr K Dickson enquired about maintenance for the trees. Cllr Stevens explained this was something each resident took on when requesting a tree outside of their property.

FGS. 154 EXTERNAL AUDIT REPORT 2023-24 NOTICE OF CONCLUSION OF AUDIT

Members NOTED the following:

- i. That in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 and the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 the Annual Governance & Accountability Return for the year ended 31 March 2024 was certified without qualification or opinion by the External Auditor Moore.
- ii. The Notice of Conclusion of Audit together with the certified AGAR (Sections 1, 2 & 3) have been published on the Noticeboard at Jubilee House and the Town Council website since 20 September 2024.

Members thanked the Town Clerk for her tremendous work on this.

FGS. 155 CIL APPLICATIONS FOR CONSIDERATION AND RECOMMENDATION

- (i) Members considered an Application for CIL Funding support in the sum of up to £10,000 from the Abbey Fields Augmented Reality Task and Finish Group.

Cllr K Dickson presented the application and advised this was an exciting project which had already received an approval of grant money from BLEF. This approval was on the basis that the project received an award of CIL funds.

There was support for the application and it was therefore proposed, seconded and:

RECOMMENDED to Full Council that the sum of £10,000 be granted to the Abbey Fields Augmented Reality Task and Finish Group from the Community Infrastructure Levy Funds.

- (ii) Members considered an Application for CIL Funding support in the sum of up to £25,000 from the Castles & Crossings Task & Finish Group.

Cllr K Dickson presented the application and advised this was a project that was long overdue to link the town and Abbey Fields directly with the Castle. This project would require WCC involvement and was solely for a consultation at this stage.

A discussion ensued on the correct process to follow and the involvement of WCC. Members were keen to approach WCC with supportive information, however, were mindful that WCC approval and their early involvement was crucial to the project. The Group will lobby the early support of WCC and their involvement in the consultation exercise.

There was support for the application and it was therefore proposed, seconded and:

RECOMMENDED to Full Council that the sum of up to £25,000 be granted to the Castles & Crossing Task & Finish Group from the Community Infrastructure Levy Funds.

- (iii) Members considered an Application for CIL Funding support in the sum of up to £20,000 from the Business & Visitor Economy Group regarding an Outdoor Digital Information Board in the Town Centre.

Cllr K Dickson presented the application and advised this was not as detailed and costings were yet to be fully established. There was a proposal to establish a Task & Finish Group to consider this project and the practicalities of hosting the noticeboard would need to be considered in depth.

Cllr A Dearing added that there was a need for this noticeboard and she would welcome a group to consider this and also involve WDC Officers as appropriate. Cllrs A Dearing, A Marsh, D Bailey, J Kennedy and A Summers volunteered.

It was proposed, seconded and:

RECOMMENDED to Full Council that the sum of up to £20,000 be granted to the Business & Visitor Economy Group for a Digital Information Board from the Community Infrastructure Levy Fund subject to full costings and plans being submitted.

RESOLVED that a Task & Finish Group consisting of Cllrs A Dearing, A Marsh, D Bailey, J Kennedy & A Summers be formed to take the project forward.

FGS. 156 AUTHORISATION TO APPLY FOR A GRANT

Members **CONSIDERED AND AUTHORISED** the Clerk to apply to Warwick District Council for a Cultural Marketing and Promotion Capital Grant in the sum of £6500, to use towards the Outdoor Digital Information Board (above).

FGS. 157 SERVICE CHARGE 2023-2024

Members NOTED that WDC had been in correspondence with the Clerk regarding the Service Charge for the period 1/4/23 to 31/3/24, and an offer was made to pay future charges quarterly in advance (estimates).

Members discussed this as an option, however, it was agreed there would be no benefit to KTC to pay in advance and this Council will continue to make provision in the budget and pay the correct figure when the annual invoice is produced. Members noted that estimates and statements would be received from WDC going forwards.

A discussion took place on the nature of the KTC tenancy within Jubilee House, including how the apportionments were calculated and how much involvement KTC had in the use of the buildings energy and its impending improvements. Members asked that a meeting be arranged with WDC to discuss these points.

FGS. 158 BLEF AWARD

Members NOTED that a conditional BLEF grant award has been notified, and APPROVED the formal Acceptance of the Award, once other conditions have been confirmed.

Cllr A Chalmers advised that the sum of £98,500 had been awarded to the Abbey Fields Augmented Reality project and that other local and national funding sources were still being pursued.

FGS. 159 WARWICK DISTRICT COUNCIL PARKING CONSULTATION

Members NOTED that following a recent informal meeting of Members, the published comments were submitted by the Clerk to the Parking Services Manager ahead of the District Council's determination of the charges for the next financial year. It was understood that the local medical centres had also had the opportunity to comment.

FGS. 160 COMMUNITY FORUM

Members NOTED that the date of the next Community Forum has been moved from Monday 7 October to Monday 28 October 2024. Following the outcome of various informal discussions and meetings of Members regarding the format and content of future meetings, this has now been changed to become the Kenilworth Community Network.

Posters were distributed amongst Members for sharing amongst their contacts.

FGS. 161 CHRISTMAS ARRANGEMENTS

Members discussed the opportunity for Christmas arrangements within the town and were keen to host a Shop Window Competition and Christmas Event in Abbey End to support Small Business Saturday on 7 December 2024.

Cllrs K Dickson and A Insley volunteered to coordinate arrangements.

The Chair confirmed that the Mayor will host Boxing Day at the Castle between 10am -12 noon on 26 December 2024.

Members NOTED these updates.

FGS. 162 STREET NAMING – DEVELOPMENT AT WOODSIDE CONFERENCE CENTRE

Members NOTED recent correspondence from WDC for Street Naming & Numbering for the development at Woodside Conference Centre, Glasshouse Lane.

As the site was previously occupied by Albert and Annie Cay, it has been suggested that the streets proposed are named after them. (Unfortunately, it is not possible to name any streets after Albert as this has been used within the district in other formats.) It is therefore proposed to name one road **Cay Place** and the flats **Woodside Court**.

Access to seven of the dwellings will be from Glasshouse Lane. It is not possible to name this road separately so it will form a continuation of Glasshouse Lane. A dwelling (Woodside Lodge, Glasshouse Lane) already exists on this drive, which would mean having to amend their address and cause expense to the Council and upset for the owners. Therefore, it is proposed to incorporate the name Jaffray (Annie's maiden name) into the seven dwellings as follows: **Jaffray Park**, Glasshouse Lane, Kenilworth.

Members confirmed agreement with the above proposals by WDC.

FGS.163 NEXT MEETING

Members NOTED that the date for the next meeting of the Finance and General Services Committee will take place on Thursday 19 December 2024 at 7pm.

The meeting concluded at 9:42pm.

Signed

Dated.....