KENILWORTH TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of the Finance and General Services Committee

Commencing at 7.01 pm on Thursday 23 May 2024

PRESENT: Councillor R G Dickson (Chair from FGS.102)

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

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.101 ELECTION OF CHAIR

Councillor Alan Chalmers proposed, seconded by Councillor Neil Eaton 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.102 ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIR

Councillor Alan Chalmers proposed, seconded by Councillor Neil Eaton that Councillor A Milton be Vice-Chairman for the ensuing year.

After consideration it was:

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

FGS.103 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

FGS. 125	APPLICATION FOR FUNDING - Old Town Street Festival - Sunday 25th August 2024	Cllrs A Insley	Volunteer with Warwickshire Hearts
FGS. 119	UYOGO FRIENDSHIP GROUP	Cllrs R Dickson	Member

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

FGS.104 APOLOGIES

Councillor J Kennedy.

FGS.105 MINUTES

Members NOTED the Minutes of the Finance and General Services Committee held on 1 February 2024. These were received and approved by the Town Council (KTC) on 29 February 2024.

MATTERS ARISING

FGS.106 CHRISTMAS ILLUMINATIONS

The Chair presented the confidential report and advised Members the intention was to go out to tender on a like for like basis over a four year period. The only suggested change was the inclusion of a poppy light. Cllr A Dearing said consideration would need to be given as to whether this was a red or white poppy or whether both would be included.

Cllr A Milton asked whether any budget was set aside for replacing the lights in four years. The Town Clerk confirmed this would need to be considered at the next budget setting process. The Clerk further suggested the Task & Finish Group remain in post to discuss and bring together ideas for what lights this Council may wish to replace/purchase at that time. A costing can then be obtained to assist the budget setting process.

Cllr K Dickson enquired of the whereabouts of the swag lights which used to be placed across Warwick Road. The Town Clerk confirmed these were held by our current contractors and there was a possibility these could be reinstated depending on the development of the Wetherspoons building.

It was proposed, seconded and:

RESOLVED that:

1) The Warwick Road and secondary retail lights are maintained as they are.
2) The possibility of a poppy light to be displayed either near the war memorial or by Warwick Road will be investigated by the T&F Group.
3) The Town Clerk to make arrangements to put out the tenders for installation and removal of the lights before 30th June with bids considered 31st July so that final decisions on the contractors can be made at the August Town Council meeting.
4) The Town Clerk to make arrangements to negotiate a new contract for maintenance and storage of the Warwick Road and secondary retail site lights for agreement at the September Town Council meeting.
5) KTC to confirm these next steps with WDC Events Team.
6) The contracts to be for a four year term so that the Council administration elected in 2027 does not have an immediate priority to agree new terms.

7) The T&F Group to consider specific replacement of lights in order that costings can be obtained in advance of the next budget setting process.
8) The T&F Group to investigate whether the swag can be reinstated.

FGS.107 COMMUNICATIONS TASK & FINISH GROUP

Cllr Akira Summers presented the published report and highlighted that the priority at this stage was to approve arrangements for moving forward on the gov.uk domain. Members discussed a suitable domain name and agreed a preference of Kenilworth.gov.uk. If this was not possible Members were happy to approve kenilworthtc.gov.uk.

It was proposed, seconded and:

RESOLVED:

(i) To give approval for Officers to make an application for a gov.uk domain name (including selection of the approved registrar)
(ii) To agree the new domain name of Kenilworth.gov.uk or Kenilworthtc.gov.uk
(iii) To delegate the process to the RFO including delegated authority spending within EMR 330 Equipment Upgrades.
(iv) To bring to the June Town Council meeting, proposals in relation to the migration of Microsoft 365 accounts, creation of additional Councillor accounts and the detailed costs associated with these.

FGS.108 EVENTS TO MARK DDAY 80 (FGS.73)

Cllr A Chalmers provided a verbal update and gave a brief overview of events. This would start with a short memorial service and a shop window competition. The evening event at the Castle will include church bells, school choirs, a piper and the lighting of the beacon within the grounds of Kenilworth Castle.

Should there be bad weather, Cllr Chalmers advised gazebos could be provided. The Chair confirmed this event was being advertised on our platforms and the Deputy Clerk confirmed we had set up a facebook event, social media posts and new items on our website.

Members NOTED this update.

FGS.109 REPORT ON theKenilworthCentre

Cllr M Stevens provided a verbal report following attendance at a recent Trustees meeting. Strategy activities, the lease on the building and finances were discussed. Cllr Stevens noted the core funding granted by this Council was being used as approved.

Cllr Stevens reported an increase in receipt of funds from fundraising activities, however, some grants cannot be obtained until the lease issues have been resolved. A recent meeting with WCC went well and discussions are continuing.

The Chair highlighted the recent impact report produced by theKenilworthCentre.

Members NOTED this update.

FGS.110 CLEAN AIR DAY EVENT

Cllr A Insley provided a verbal update and confirmed the sum of £2,500 had been raised in sponsorship and stalls to date. Arrangements were being finalised, however, good progress was being made. The day will include smoothie bikes, bike hire for all ages, local food stalls, live music and the active travel loop which was now on our website as a googlemap and a video is also now available to be added.

Cllr Z Leventhal added that all Members were encouraged to attend and spread the word. One point to resolve was the provision of waste bins. Cllr Leventhal asked if our District Councillors could raise this with the relevant officers to establish a way forward.

Members NOTED this update.

FGS.111 BLUE PLAQUES (FGS.48)

Cllr D Bailey provided a verbal update and advised that the group were still awaiting clarity on the official process of extending the national scheme which was expected over the summer. In the meantime a short list of Kenilworth residents had been created and the group were due to meet again next week and seek assistance from local historians and experts. Cllr Chalmers confirmed each plaque had to be on an original building.

Members noted the permission granted for inclusion of a blue plaque on the Forge in Stoneleigh following a planning application. This was not a plaque that was part of the National scheme. Cllr A Dearing suggested developing our own scheme should it take some time for the National scheme to be rolled out. This will be monitored going forward.

Members NOTED this update.

STANDING MATTERS

FGS.112 REVIEW OF FINANCIAL POSITION AND CURRENT BUDGET

The Chair reported that the previous financial year accounts have now been closed by Rialtas and our General Reserves held a closing balance of £162,614. This was well above the minimum reserves level.

The Town Clerk advised that the end of year accounts were available for anyone to view should they wish, however, these would be presented to the next Town Council meeting in June.

Members NOTED this update.

FGS. 113 REVIEW OF GRANTS AWARDED 2023-2024

The Chair reported that three grant reports had been received from thekenilworthcentre, Compassionate Kenilworth and the Chamber of Trade.

These documents were shared amongst Members.

Members NOTED this update.

FGS.114 INTERNAL AUDIT – REPORTS AND ACTION

The Chair reported that the Quarter 4 audit had taken place on 14 May 2024 and no issues had been reported. The Internal Auditor's reports for Quarters 3 and 4 were circulated amongst Members, and there were no concerns to be addressed.

The Town Clerk confirmed that the Quarter 4 review could not be undertaken until the year end accounts had been finalised and closed down by Rialtas.

Members NOTED this update.

FGS.115 CEMETERY

The Chair presented the published report with nothing further to add.

Members NOTED this update.

FGS.116 CIL WORKING GROUP UPDATE

Cllr K Dickson advised the group were due to meet soon and had been approached about a further grant application from Warwickshire Wildlife Trust with an offer for a briefing for Members. Cllr K Dickson suggested this would be useful as the last grant application had been approved by the former administration. Members welcomed this.

Members NOTED this update.

FGS.117 REVIEW OF WEBSITE AND SOCIAL MEDIA

The Chair presented the published report and thanked the Deputy Clerk for the information therein. The Deputy Clerk advised that much remained on track and our figures were increasing.

Cllr A Dearing asked if any changes could be made to the Visit Kenilworth website to include other businesses. This could also tie in with the ongoing Business & Visitor Economy Forum. Cllr A Milton added that this was something the group would be keen to pursue and intended to liaise with the Deputy Clerk in the near future. The Deputy Clerk advised the website had stayed in its current format since its launch three years ago. Changes can be made as agreed.

Cllr N Eaton queried the difference in statistics between local Town Councils, particularly between platforms. The Deputy Clerk said there didn't seem to be any obvious explanations for this but this Council were doing well against neighbouring towns and our engagement and followers continued to increase.

Members NOTED this update.

FGS.118 TWINNING ASSOCIATION

Cllr A Chalmers reported on a recent visit to Bourg La Reine this month, along with a planned trip from Eppstein later in the year. There remained difficulties with Roccalumera following the change of Government. Cllr Chalmers advised the association was hoping to increase its members and had arranged various activities including a BBQ to which all were invited. The Twinning Association would also be attending the D-Day celebrations and the upcoming Community Forum on 3 June 2024.

Members NOTED this update.

FGS. 119 UYOGO FRIENDSHIP GROUP

Cllr A Chalmers provided a verbal update and confirmed the recent AGM and Africa week at Kenilworth bookshop were a great success for the group. The work in Tanzania was proceeding well and the local MP had now placed her support behind the maternity unit and this was gaining momentum.

Members NOTED this update.

NEW MATTERS

FGS. 120 REVIEW OF SIGNATORIES

The Chair proposed six signatories to the Town Council accounts and for approving payment schedules. These were as follows:

Cllrs K Dickson and J Kennedy as Group Leaders. Cllrs A Dearing and A Chalmers as the Mayor and Former Mayor. Finally, himself as Chair and Cllr A Milton as Vice Chair of Finance & General Services.

After consideration it was proposed, seconded and:

> RESOLVED that Cllrs K Dickson, J Kennedy, A Dearing, A Chalmers, R Dickson and A Milton be confirmed as signatories to the Town Council accounts and for approving payment schedules for the current financial year.

FGS. 121 APPLICATION FOR GRANT FUNDING – MYTON HOSPICE

Members considered an Application for Funding support in the sum of £220.30 from MYTON HOSPICE.

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

> RESOLVED that the sum of £220.30 be granted to MYTON HOSPICE from the Unspecified Allocation Grants Budget for 2024/2025.

FGS. 122 APPLICATION FOR GRANT FUNDING – KENILWORTH HELPING HANDS

Members considered an Application for Funding support in the sum of £500 from KENILWORTH HELPING HANDS.

There was some discussion on the level of cash assets held by the organisation and why funding had been applied for. However, Members were also keen to note the tremendous work done and the modest amount being requested. Overall, 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 be granted to KENILWORTH HELPING HANDS from the Unspecified Allocation Grants Budget for 2024/2025.

FGS. 123 APPLICATION FOR GRANT FUNDING – 12TH KENILWORTH BROWNIES

Members considered an Application for Funding support in the sum of £225 for 12TH KENILWORTH BROWNIES.

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

> RESOLVED that the sum of £225 be granted to 12TH KENILWORTH BROWNIES from the Unspecified Allocation Grants Budget for 2024/2025.

FGS. 124 ETHICAL BANK – SWITCH

Cllr D Bailey provided a verbal update. He said careful consideration had been given for a suitable switching option, however, given the requirements of our own policies, it was not viable to continue. Cllr Bailey proposed dissolving the group and no further action be taken in relation to this Council's banking arrangements.

It was therefore proposed, seconded and:

> RESOLVED to disband the current ethical banking task and finish group.

FGS. 125 APPLICATION FOR FUNDING - Old Town Street Festival - Sunday 25th August 2024

Members considered an Application for Funding support in the sum of £750 for the Old Town Street Festival. The Chair highlighted that it was not a standard grant application as the group are not yet constitutionally established. However, Cllr Chalmers commented this Council had assisted groups with such events in the past and it was a popular and longstanding event.

It was therefore proposed, seconded and:

> RESOLVED that the sum of £750 be granted for the Old Town Street Festival to be taken from the Town Events Budget for 2024/2025.

FGS. 126 INVESTMENT AND ASSET POLICY

The Chair presented the published Investment & Asset Policy commenting that from an ethical perspective we did not hold investments with HSBC.

After consideration it was proposed seconded and:

RESOLVED that Kenilworth Town Council approve the published Investment & Asset Policy.

FGS.127 NEXT MEETING

Members NOTED that the date for the next meeting of the Finance and General Services Committee will take place on Thursday 3 October 2024 at 7pm.

The meeting concluded at 8:27pm.

Signed ………………….……………….

Dated.……….……………………..............