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 19 December 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

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

ABSENT: Cllr A Randall

FGS.164 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

FGS. 178	APPLICATION FOR GRANT FUNDING – THE KENILWORTH CENTRE	Cllr Z Leventhal	Family Member attends tKc youth club
FGS. 181	CIL APPLICATIONS FOR CONSIDERATION AND RECOMMENDATIO N	Cllr Z Leventhal	Family Member attends Kenilworth School
FGS. 179	APPLICATION FOR GRANT FUNDING – WAVERLEY - CARING IN KENILWORTH	Cllr A Chalmers	Mayoral Charity link

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.165 APOLOGIES

None.

FGS.166 MINUTES

INITIALS.....

Members NOTED the Minutes of the Finance and General Services Committee held on 03 October 2024. These were received and approved by the Town Council (KTC) on 24 October 2024.

MATTERS ARISING

FGS.167 BLUE PLAQUES

Cllr D Bailey provided a verbal update and advised the group had met with local representatives to compile an initial list of local names which could form the basis for a Kenilworth Scheme. The next step was for the group to meet again.

The Town Clerk advised that costings would be required for budget purposes, however, the group had not reached the stage of discussing budgetary requirements.

Members NOTED this update.

FGS.168 COMMUNICATIONS TASK & FINISH GROUP

(i) Cllr D Bailey provided a verbal update and advised all Members had now been offered and/or had received training from our IT providers, the relevant Teams accounts had been set up and the office migration had also now taken place.

Some Members reported some minor issues with compiling and accessing all emails. Cllr Bailey advised to report these to the office or Task & Finish group members whereby the IT suppliers can be consulted.

The Chair suggested this item remain on the forthcoming agenda for the next meeting to resolve any issues identified.

(ii) Members discussed the quotation for Cloud back-up for the new 365 accounts for Councillors and kentc account at a cost of £57 per month (with a minimum contract period of 12 months), through our current IT Suppliers.

It was duly proposed, seconded and:

RESOLVED to APPROVE the purchase of Cloud back-up for the new 365 accounts for Councillors and kentc account at a cost of £57 per month (with a minimum contract period of 12 months), through our current IT Suppliers.

Members NOTED these updates.

FGS. 169 REVIEW OF CHRISTMAS EVENTS 2024

(i) Cllr P Jones provided a verbal update on the recent Christmas Illumination Events on the High St and Warwick Road. Both were very well attended and the lights were switched on by community representatives alongside the Mayor and MP.

INITIALS.....

Cllr Jones reported that feedback had been received concerning making both events more community focussed. This feedback will be reviewed ahead of next year's events and taken on board wherever possible.

Cllr K Dickson provided a verbal report on the Christmas Market in Abbey End. This was an excellent event, only slightly affected by the change of date due to the poor weather. Cllr Dickson thanked all Councillors who were involved and the office staff for their efforts in creating the Christmas games and help on the day. Both Santas and the Christmas Elf were a great success. Cllr Chalmers added his thanks to the mayoral cadets for their attendance.

(ii) Cllr K Dickson advised of the results of the recent Shop Window Competition. This was won by Karen Delahunty, with Steve Crowe & Sons, Whitemoors Café and Castle Home Luxuries as runners up. Cllr Dickson thanked those involved in the judging and Cllr A Insley for all of her work encouraging and visiting the entrants.

Members NOTED these updates.

FGS. 170 VE DAY 80th ANNIVERSARY

Cllr A Chalmers advised that planning was in the early stages and ideas were still being considered. A picnic in Abbey Fields was one option, however, the Town Council understood Castle Hill Fest was taking place on the same day. The group will therefore discuss a way forward with the organisers. Cllr Chalmers said an event at the Castle could take place on the day itself with a beacon being lit in line with the National celebrations.

The group will bring a formal plan and budget to the next meeting.

Members NOTED this update.

FGS. 171 DIGITAL NOTICEBOARD

Cllr A Dearing provided a verbal update and advised the group had met and engaged with local community organisations who were enthusiastic about contributing to the board. The group were on track to provide the information requested by the CIL Group to complete their application for funding.

Cllr Dearing and Cllr Summers recently visited Oadby in Leicestershire to view their digital board and to discuss its operation. This was a positive visit and information was shared concerning time spent, cost, advertising space and content.

Members questioned who would be responsible for updating the board as officer time was already stretched and why a static board would not do the same job. A brief debate ensued. Cllr K Dickson said that when this matter was brought back before the CIL group for funding consideration, a request was made for many of these questions to be answered as part of the application.

Members NOTED this update.

INITIALS.....

STANDING MATTERS

FGS.172 REVIEW OF GRANTS AWARDED 2023-2024

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

- Warwickshire Pride
- The Kenilworth Centre
- Parenting Project
- Myton Hospices
- Carnival

These documents were shared amongst Members.

Cllr A Marsh reported that, despite the Town Council raising concerns with Citizens Advice following the granting of a recent application, face to face contact with still not available in Kenilworth. Members agreed to report their concerns again to the Chief Executive of Citizens Advice and to ask for an update on when these sessions will resume.

Members NOTED this update.

FGS.173 INTERNAL AUDIT – REPORTS AND ACTION

The Chair reported that the Quarter 2 audit had taken place and the report had been shared with himself and the Vice Chair. No issues had been reported.

Members NOTED this update.

FGS.174 TWINNING ASSOCIATION

Cllr A Chalmers provided a verbal update. He said that both Bourg La Reine and Roccalumera were planning a visit in 2025. Eppstein would be visiting again in 2026. If anyone wishes to volunteer to host guests then contact should be made with the Twinning Association directly.

Cllr Chalmers advised that the next AGM of the association would be taking place in March 2025.

Members NOTED this update.

FGS. 175 UYOGO FRIENDSHIP GROUP

Cllr D Bailey provided a verbal update. He said the committee had recently discussed the provision of IT equipment, skills and education for schools. A discussion was underway with their contact and the teachers in Uyogo to assess the feasibility and priority of these items.

Cllr Bailey said that the committee was looking for further volunteers to take up the role of Treasurer and Fundraiser and to contact them directly if interested.

Members NOTED this update.

NEW MATTERS

FGS. 176 APPLICATION FOR GRANT FUNDING – AIR TRAINING CORP 496 SQUADRON

Members considered an Application for Funding support in the sum of up to £750 from AIR TRAINING CORP 496 SQUADRON. This was for the provision of a gazebo, banners and an events table cover.

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

RESOLVED that the sum of £750 be granted to AIR TRAINING CORP 496 SQUADRON from the Unspecified Allocation Budget for 2024/2025.

FGS. 177 APPLICATION FOR GRANT FUNDING - THE SHAKESPEARE HOSPICE

Members considered an Application for Funding support in the sum of up to £3000 from THE SHAKESPEARE HOSPICE. This was for the provision of a 'Hospice at Home' service for Kenilworth residents.

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

RESOLVED that the sum of £3000 be granted to THE SHAKESPEARE HOSPICE from the Unspecified Allocation Budget for 2024/2025.

FGS.178 APPLICATION FOR GRANT FUNDING – THE KENILWORTH CENTRE

Members considered an Application for Funding support in the sum of £4000 from THE KENILWORTH CENTRE. This was for the provision of two youth workers.

Members discussed this application in light of the core funding currently being provided to the Kenilworth Centre. Members were keen for all youth group activities to join together in the town.

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

RESOLVED that the sum of £4000 be granted to THE KENILWORTH CENTRE from the Unspecified Allocation Grants Budget for 2024/2025.

FGS. 179 APPLICATION FOR GRANT FUNDING – WAVERLEY -CARING IN KENILWORTH

Members considered an Application for Funding support in the sum of £1000 for WAVERLEY - CARING IN KENILWORTH. This was to improve their garden facilities.

INITIALS.....

There was unanimous support for the bid. Members were keen to highlight the availability of BBV and Persimmon who have previously offered to participate in local community projects by offering hands on assistance.

It was duly proposed, seconded and:

> RESOLVED that the sum of £1000 be granted to WAVERLEY - CARING IN KENILWORTH from the Unspecified Allocation Grants Budget for 2024/2025.

FGS. 180 BUDGET AND PRECEPT FOR FINANCIAL YEAR 2025-2026

Cllr J Kennedy outlined the published budget proposals and financial forecast and thanked the Chair and the Clerk for their work on this matter. The priority was to make Kenilworth a better place to live and work, and to deliver value for money for residents.

Cllr Kennedy explained that the majority of the Town Council's income comes from the precept, yet this is only 2% of the total precept paid by Kenilworth residents. Cllr Kennedy explained that there has been an increase in staff costs due to a recent pay review and the Government's decision to increase Employer contributions. Cllr K Dickson added that ongoing cost recovery would be a factor for future discussions for these points.

Cllr Kennedy advised there would need to be an annual increase of £2.17 per average household in the town. This brought the precept contribution up to £26.90 per annum which was still well below the National average. The Kenilworth precept is the lowest of all towns within Warwick District.

As the Town Council must maintain general reserves of at least £75,000, Cllr Kennedy asked the Clerk to prepare a report on the impact of this budget on future reserves to bring to the Town Council meeting on 16 January 2025, prior to this budget being approved.

Members discussed the use of our reserves and those budgeted for. Whilst this Council budgeted the use of £20,000 from general reserves last year, this was unlikely to be needed due to an increase in income from other sources throughout the year. The Clerk confirmed the reserves had not altered significantly in the previous three years. Members were keen to see this benefit returned to our residents.

Members proposed, seconded and:

> RECOMMENDED the precept be set at £26.90 per household (Band D) for the financial year 2025-2026. The balance of funding for any adopted budget, beyond that provided by the precept, and other identified income, will be drawn from the earmarked and General reserves.

FGS. 181 CIL APPLICATIONS FOR CONSIDERATION AND RECOMMENDATION

INITIALS.....

Members considered an Application for CIL Funding Support in the sum of £4,000 from the Pedestrian Safety and Traffic Issues Task & Finish Group. This was to obtain an Active Travel Access Appraisal for Kenilworth School.

Cllr Leventhal explained this application had been reviewed by the CIL Group and had been approved as a suitable use of funds. Cllr Leventhal explained this Appraisal was required in order to offer tangible solutions and support to both the school and WCC and to avoid anymore of an impasse or block on progress.

Cllr K Dickson acknowledged that this was something that should be funded by WCC, however, Members were in agreement that, as this had been refused by WCC, it was appropriate that something was done to improve the situation at the school.

Members discussed how this situation had arisen and whether WCC approval would be needed for any remedial work. Overall, it was not the role of this Council to identify whether mistakes had been made, and all possible mitigation had been taken to avoid the risk of WCC failing to approve further works as may be identified in the appraisal.

Members were keen to support this project in its progress and it was duly proposed, seconded and:

> RESOLVED that the sum of £4,000 be granted to the Pedestrian Safety and Traffic Issues Task & Finish Group from the Community Infrastructure Levy Fund. This grant is to fund an Active Travel Access Appraisal for Kenilworth School.

FGS.182 NEXT MEETING

Members NOTED that the date for the next meeting of the Finance and General Services Committee will take place on Thursday 6 February 2025 at 7pm.

The meeting concluded at 8:47pm.

Signed …….…….

Dated.…….....

INITIALS.....