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 February 2025

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, J Kennedy, Z L Leventhal, A J G Marsh, 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.183 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

FGS.184 APOLOGIES

Cllrs P Jones, A Milton, A Randall and A Summers

FGS.185 MINUTES

Members NOTED the Minutes of the Finance and General Services Committee held on 19 December 2024. These were received and approved by the Town Council (KTC) on 16 January 2025.

MATTERS ARISING

FGS.186 BLUE PLAQUES

Cllr D Bailey provided a verbal update. The group intended to create one plaque as part of a pilot scheme in order for a process to be developed. The next step was for the group to meet again and report back to the next Finance & General Services Meeting in May 2025.

Members NOTED this update.

FGS.187 COMMUNICATIONS TASK & FINISH GROUP

Cllr D Bailey provided a verbal update and advised that all Members were now using their new accounts. It was noted that the use of Teams facilities was low. Cllr Bailey advised he would prepare guidance notes for those that needed additional support and would save these items in the Teams folders.

Some Members reported some minor issues which Cllr Bailey offered to assist with individually.

The Chair confirmed that this item would now be removed from forthcoming agendas.

Members NOTED this update.

FGS. 188 VE DAY 80th ANNIVERSARY

Cllr A Chalmers advised that an event at the Castle was being planned which will involve similar arrangements to D-Day 80. This will include school choirs, a piper, shared memories and the lighting of a beacon in line with the National celebrations.

The group will present a budget request later in this meeting.

Members NOTED this update.

STANDING MATTERS

FGS.189 REVIEW OF GRANTS AWARDED 2023-2024

The Chair reported that grant reports had been received from;

- Kenilworth Arts Festival
- Kenilworth Chamber of Trade

These documents were shared amongst Members.

Cllr K Dickson reported that the Chamber of Trade, despite having some challenges at the moment, remained committed to supporting small businesses.

Members NOTED this update.

FGS.190 INTERNAL AUDIT – REPORTS AND ACTION

The Chair reported that the auditor was due to visit on 11 February 2025 and review Quarter 3 accounts.

Members NOTED this update.

FGS.191 TWINNING ASSOCIATION

Cllr A Chalmers provided a verbal update. He advised that Bourg La Reine were planning a visit in May 2025 along with another French town that was twinned with Eppstein. Volunteers were still being sought to host guests. Cllr Kennedy advised a visit to Roccalumera was planned for later this year which he may attend.

Cllr Chalmers advised that the next AGM of the association would be taking place on 12 March 2025.

Cllr Payne asked whether Kenilworth School were involved in any liaison work. Cllr Leventhal advised this had been raised at the last Community Network Event, where safeguarding was named as a reason the previous exchange programme could not continue.

Members NOTED this update.

FGS. 192 UYOGO FRIENDSHIP GROUP

Cllr A Chalmers provided a verbal update. He said that the water project had been successful and explorations were underway to determine how to capture additional water from the roof through increasing the tank reservoirs. He advised the Maternity hospital development was also underway and proceeding.

Cllr Chalmers advised that Kenilworth School were holding their annual fundraising event in February for which tickets had been provided.

Members NOTED this update.

FGS. 193 CEMETERY REPORT

Members NOTED the report from Cllr A Insley with nothing further to add.

FGS. 194 SHOP WINDOW COMPETITIONS

Cllr K Dickson presented the published report. She explained this wasn't intended to be a formal Council policy, however, it was necessary to set out the process to follow for the forthcoming year of competitions.

Cllr K Dickson confirmed that this Council will be asking entrants to email in their confirmed entry before the judging takes place to avoid any confusion.

Cllr Insley enquired on the date the 450th Celebration competition would take place. This will be sometime towards the start of the celebration period at the beginning of July, to be confirmed in due course.

Members NOTED this update.

FGS. 195 REVIEW OF WEBSITE & ONLINE CONNECT PLATFORMS

The Chair presented the published report. The Deputy Clerk advised the statistics were looking positive and engagement was increasing.

Cllr A Chalmers enquired as to why the name of this report had changed. The Chair advised this was upon his request on the basis the term 'social media' didn't lend itself to Members being held accountable to residents. Cllr Chalmers asked if this Council had stopped using X (Twitter) as a platform. The Deputy Clerk advised a resolution had been made by this Council over a year ago to stop using X.

Members NOTED this update.

FGS. 196 9 MONTH REVIEW OF BUDGET

The Town Clerk presented the published documents and provided a brief review of the position regarding spending and budget following nine months of the financial year. She advised that this Council awaited the past year's invoices from English Heritage which were still to be deducted; Members should also be aware that any interest received from our CCLA account would drop following some of these funds being transferred to our current account for expenditure. The current election expense budget will need to be moved to the relevant EMR at the end of this financial year and there remained a small fund within the Working Groups Initiatives budget. The Clerk advised that any proposal for a spend from this budget will need to be presented to the next Town Council meeting on 27 February.

Members NOTED this update.

FGS. 197 REVIEW OF INVESTMENT STRATEGY

The Chair presented the published Strategy which required an annual review.

Cllr N Eaton suggested one amendment to section 1.06 to read that the Town Council will not engage in the borrowing of monies purely to invest, or to lend and make a return as this is not considered to be prudent financial management.

Members were in agreement with this amendment.

It was therefore duly proposed, seconded and:

RESOLVED to adopt the published Investment Strategy with the amendment to section 1.06 to read - *The Town Council will not engage in the borrowing of monies purely to invest, or to lend and make a return. This is not considered to be prudent financial management*.

NEW MATTERS

FGS. 198 APPLICATION FOR GRANT FUNDING – THE OMEGA COURSE

Members considered an Application for Funding support in the sum of up to £3000 from THE OMEGA COURSE.

Members were keen to support the charity to reach a wider audience with a video course. There was therefore support for the application and it was proposed, seconded and:

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

FGS. 199 APPLICATION FOR GRANT FUNDING - THE PARENTING PROJECT

Members considered an Application for Funding support in the sum of up to £9600 from THE PARENTING PROJECT.

Members noted this organisations expansion and what they have achieved with previous support. Members were impressed with the application and there was support for the bid. It was therefore proposed, seconded and:

> RECOMMENDED that the sum of £9600 be granted to THE PARENTING PROJECT from the Unspecified Allocation Budget for 2024/2025.

FGS.200 APPLICATION FOR GRANT FUNDING – OLD TOWN STREET FESTIVAL

Members considered an Application for Funding support in the sum of £2500 from OLD TOWN STREET FESTIVAL.

After a lengthy discussion, the main concerns related to deciphering the community benefit of this application. Whilst Members applauded the introduction of re-usable glasses and the reduction of single use plastic, it was felt that the purchase of re-usable glasses would have a more commercial benefit for the local businesses involved in the festival, something which wasn't appropriate for community grant expenditure.

Members considered whether these glasses could be used for other events across the town, however, the application appeared limited to events in the Old Town, not all of which are not for profit. Members wished to invite the applicants to review their application to consider and include a community value element. It was therefore proposed, seconded and:

> RESOLVED that the Application in the sum of £2500 from OLD TOWN STREET FESTIVAL be refused.

FGS. 201 APPLICATION FOR GRANT FUNDING – A BAND OF BROTHERS

Members considered an Application for Funding support in the sum of up to £1000 for A BAND OF BROTHERS.

There was unanimous support for the bid and Members were pleased to support an important and effective service within the town.

It was duly proposed, seconded and:

> RESOLVED that the sum of £1000 be granted to A BAND OF BROTHERS from the Unspecified Allocation Grants Budget for 2024/2025.

FGS. 202 APPLICATION FOR GRANT FUNDING – CELST (CENTRAL ENGLAND LIPREADING SUPPORT TRUST)

Members considered an Application for Funding support in the sum of up to £3465 for CELST (CENTRAL ENGLAND LIPREADING SUPPORT TRUST).

Members recognised this grant would support fewer residents, however, it was agreed and noted that the impact on those residents could be profound. It was therefore duly proposed, seconded and:

RESOLVED that the sum of £3465 be granted to CELST (CENTRAL ENGLAND LIPREADING SUPPORT TRUST) from the Unspecified Allocation Grants Budget for 2024/2025.

FGS. 203 APPLICATION FOR GRANT FUNDING – ENGLISH HERITAGE

Members considered an Application for Funding support in the sum of up to £1400 for ENGLISH HERITAGE.

This application was raised in connection with the upcoming 450th anniversary celebrations and Members were keen to support this application for transport costs to assist those residents who may otherwise not be able to attend various events. It was duly proposed, seconded and:

RESOLVED that the sum of £1400 be granted to ENGLISH HERITAGE from the Town Events Support Budget for 2024/2025.

FGS. 204 KTC EVENTS PROJECT BUDGET

(i) Members considered renaming and repurposing the Brays Bungalow EMR and the balance of £6,948 held within that fund, to a KTC Events Project Budget EMR.

On the basis this EMR could now not be utilised for the purpose of Brays Bungalow, Members were happy to propose, second and:

RECOMMEND renaming and repurposing the Brays Bungalow EMR and the balance of £6,948 held within that fund, to a KTC Events Project Budget EMR.

(ii) Members considered moving the unspent funds in 2024-2025 budget code 108/4923 (Town Events) into the KTC Events Projects EMR. After the award of Grants agreed earlier in this meeting, the remaining budget amounted to the sum of £6,083.

It was proposed that the sum of £3,050 of the unspent funds in 2024-2025 budget code 108/4923 be moved into the KTC Events Project EMR. The remaining sum of £3,033 will naturally move into the General Reserves of this Council to account for any overspend on other budget lines.

It was duly proposed, seconded and:

RESOLVED that the sum of £3,050 be moved from the unspent funds in 2024-2025 budget code 108/4923 (Town Events) into the KTC Events Projects EMR.

(iii) Members considered a proposal to approve funding of £3,000 for the Town's VE Day 80 celebrations event, details of which were discussed earlier in this meeting.

There was support for this event and it was duly proposed, seconded and:

RESOLVED to APPROVE the sum of £3,000 funding for the VE Day 80 celebration event.

(iv) Members considered a proposal to approve funding of £7,000 for the 450th celebrations within the town.

There was support for this event and it was duly proposed, seconded and:

RESOLVED to RECOMMEND the sum of £7,000 be awarded for the 450th celebrations within the town.

FGS. 205 CHRISTMAS ARRANGEMENTS

(i) Members NOTED and confirmed the Light Switch On dates for Christmas 2025 as being 28 November 2025 for the High Street and 30 November 2025 for Warwick Road.

(ii) Members discussed holding a market/fayre at Abbey End on Small Business Saturday, 6 December 2025. This was a successful event last year and Members were keen to approve this again.

FGS.206 NEXT MEETING

Members NOTED that the date for the next meeting of the Finance and General Services Committee will take place on Thursday 22 May 2025 at 7pm.

The meeting concluded at 8:36pm.

Signed …….…….

Dated.…….....