

EVESHAM TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of the **FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE** held at 6.30pm on **MONDAY 21 SEPTEMBER 2015** at Evesham Town Hall, Market Place, Evesham

Those present:

Chairman: Cllr C D Homer
Vice-Chairman Cllr J H Smith OBE

Councillors: Cllr A P Booth (Deputy Mayor), Cllr J Bulman,
Cllr M D Elliman, Cllr M S Goodge,
Cllr F Kaler (Town Mayor), Cllr R W Raphael,
Cllr Mrs F S Smith,

Officer: Mr S D Carter (Town Clerk)

Also present were Cllrs Mrs M Sale and Mrs J Johnson, and one member of the Wychavon Festival of Brass organising committee, Mr S Dowdeswell.

11. Apologies for Absence

Apologies had been received from Cllr Mrs R Whiting.

12. Declarations of pecuniary or other interest (if any)

Cllrs J H Smith OBE, Mrs F S Smith, Mrs D R Raphael, R W Raphael and A P Booth declared a non pecuniary interest in minute 15(n), the application of for a grant from the Twinning Association as they are members.

Cllrs J Bulman and R W Raphael declared a non-pecuniary interest in Minute 15(i), the grant application for the Vale Volunteers, since they both sit on its management committee.

Cllr Mrs F S Smith declared a non-pecuniary interest in minute 15(g), the grant application for the Smith Memorial Trust, since she serves on the Trust.

Cllr A P Booth declared a non-pecuniary interest in minute 15(e) the grant application from the Royal British Legion, since he is the Chairman of the local branch.

Cllr J H Smith OBE declared a non-pecuniary interest in minute 15(j) the grant application from the Evesham Sea Cadets, since he is its President.

Cllrs Mrs F S Smith and M S Goodge declared a non-pecuniary interest in minute 19 since they are on the advisory panel which administers New Homes Bonus at Wychavon District Council.

13. Minutes of the last meeting including questions as to the progress of any item

The minutes of the meeting held on 15 June 2015 were circulated with the agenda. It was noted that they had been adopted by the Council. It was **RESOLVED** to accept these as a true and accurate record.

14. To consider and note the Budget Balances as at 15 September 2015

Circulated with the agenda were a covering report and a summary of the budget balances as at 15 September 2015.

The Clerk explained that in general the budget was running as expected. Allotments maintenance had a significant spend because of the recently undertaken clearance work on the Common Road site. There was an overspend on Cemetery Lodge maintenance though this had been previously agreed by the Council. The Clerk also stated that the Town Hall maintenance budget was likely to be overspent because of the painting restoration work and the heating installation work that was to be carried out.

NOTED

15. Grants for organisations

The Town Clerk had circulated a report to all Committee Members with the agenda which included a list of applicants requesting a grant from the Council in the current financial year. Also detailed were their projects, accounts and, where applicable, amount of grant given in 2014. Each application form was also attached.

It was confirmed that the total grant budget was £16,170 for the current financial year and that 14 applications had been received.

- (a) **Organisation:** Wallace House
Project: Refurbish Wallace House

It was **RESOLVED** that Wallace House be awarded a grant of £1,470 for this project in accordance with the Local Government (Misc Prov) Act 1976, s 19(3)(a) provision of recreational facilities.

- (b) **Organisation:** South Worcestershire CAB
Project: On-going support of Evesham CAB which provides impartial advice to residents of Evesham

It was **RESOLVED** that South Worcestershire CAB be awarded a grant of £4,500 for this project in accordance with the Local Government Act 1972, s142, the provision of information and advice.

- (c) **Organisation:** Avonbank (Evesham) Brass Band
Project: On-going running costs of Avonbank Brass Band

It was **RESOLVED** that the Avonbank Brass Band be awarded a grant of £500 for this project in accordance with Local Government Act 1972, s 145 (c), Provision of entertainments – the maintenance of a band or orchestra.

- (d) **Organisation:** Evesham Riverside Shopmobility

Project: To provide wheelchairs, scooters and power chairs for all people with a mobility problem whether it is long or short term and to enable them to shop and enjoy Evesham town.

It was **RESOLVED** that Evesham Riverside Shopmobility be awarded a grant of £2,500 for this project in accordance with the Local Government Act 1972, s137, which in the opinion of the committee is in the interests of, and will bring direct benefit to, Evesham and some or all some of its inhabitants that is commensurate with the expenditure to be incurred.

- (e) **Organisation:** Evesham Royal British Legion
Project: Supporting ex-service members in Evesham, specifically the Bengeworth Remembrance parade, which attracts over 200 participants.

It was **RESOLVED** that Evesham Royal British Legion be awarded a grant of £500 for this project in accordance with the Local Government Act 1972, s137, which in the opinion of the committee is in the interests of, and will bring direct benefit to, Evesham and some or all some of its inhabitants that is commensurate with the expenditure to be incurred.

- (f) **Organisation:** Garage Art Group
Project: To improve the health and wellbeing of vulnerable adults in Evesham. Run daily art/craft classes, creative writing groups, more recently a singing group, and a sewing class.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Garage Art Group be awarded a grant of £500 for this project in accordance with the Local Government Act 1972, s 145 (d), Provision of entertainments – the development and improvement of the knowledge, understanding and practise of the arts.

- (g) **Organisation:** The Smith Memorial Trust
Project: To provide reference books with local connections and microfilming of local newspapers for public use at Evesham Library.

It was commented that Microfilming was an outdated technology and whilst this application was supported, this should be fed back to the Smith Memorial Trust.

It was **RESOLVED** to award a grant of £250 to the Smith Memorial Trust for this project in accordance with the Local Government Act 1972, s137, which in the opinion of the committee is in the interests of, and will bring direct benefit to, Evesham and some or all some of its inhabitants that is commensurate with the expenditure to be incurred.

- (h) **Organisation:** Evesham and District Music Club
Project: A season of concerts at Evesham Arts Centre and a summer concert at Fladbury

It was **RESOLVED** that the Evesham and District Music Club be awarded a grant of £200 for this project in accordance with the Local Government Act 1972, s 145 (d), Provision of entertainments – the development and improvement of the knowledge,

understanding and practise of the arts.

(i) **Organisation:** Evesham Volunteer Centre

Project: On going support of Evesham Volunteer Centre which provides assistance to the residents and rural communities of the Vale of Evesham through direct services and volunteering support; identifying gaps in provision and being instrumental in setting up services giving support and alleviating hardship within the Centre's remit.

It was **RESOLVED** that Evesham Volunteer Centre be awarded a grant of £4,500 for this project in accordance with the Local Government Act 1972, s137, which in the opinion of the committee is in the interests of, and will bring direct benefit to, Evesham and some or all some of its inhabitants that is commensurate with the expenditure to be incurred.

(j) **Organisation:** Evesham Sea Cadets

Project: Looking through glass to grow success, encouraging young people to get involved in the cultivation of food

It was **RESOLVED** that Evesham Sea Cadets be awarded a grant of £300 for this project in accordance with the Local Government Act 1972, s137, which in the opinion of the committee is in the interests of, and will bring direct benefit to, Evesham and some or all some of its inhabitants that is commensurate with the expenditure to be incurred.

(k) **Organisation:** Burford Gardens Residents Association

Project: To minimize later impacts of flooding, its frequency and severity, in the river Isbourne catchment area.

It was commented that there was alternative specialist funding for flooding prevention, available through WDC and that there was also specialist advise available from WCC. It was therefore **RESOLVED** to decline this application for £150; however, they were encouraged to contract their local WDC and WCC members for further assistance.

(l) **Organisation:** River Isbourne Catchment Group

Project: To find a solution to the flooding problems in Burford Gardens.

Similarly to above it was commented that there was assistance available from WDC and WCC. It was also commented that this project was mostly beneficial to residents outside Evesham. It was therefore **RESOLVED** to decline this application for £500, but to offer the assistance of local WDC and WCC members.

(m) **Organisation:** Evesham Arts Association

Project: Provision of a sound desk and lighting loom for the Arts Centre theatre and replacement LED lighting in the theatre.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Arts Association be awarded a grant of £500 for this

project in accordance with the Local Government Act 1972, s 145 (d), Provision of entertainments – the development and improvement of the knowledge, understanding and practise of the arts.

(n) **Organisation:** Evesham Twinning Association

Project: Promote friendship and understanding between the people of Evesham and District and the people of its twin towns.

It was **RESOLVED** that Evesham Twinning Association be awarded a grant of £450 for this project in accordance with the Local Government Act 1972, s137, which in the opinion of the committee is in the interests of, and will bring direct benefit to, Evesham and some or all some of its inhabitants that is commensurate with the expenditure to be incurred.

16. Event Grant Application – Wychavon Festival of Brass

A completed grant application form, annual report, programme of events and accounts had been circulated along with the Town Clerk's covering report regarding the 2015 Wychavon Festival of Brass. It was noted that a representative from the Festival of Brass Committee was on hand to answer any questions.

It was explained that the Festival of Brass were applying for a grant of £1,800. Last year the Town Council had given a grant of £3,900.

Members supported the festival and it was noted that the grant had reduced from last year in line with the Council's comments previously that these events should look to be come less reliant on Council funding.

It was **RESOLVED** that a grant of £1,800 be awarded, in accordance with the Local Government Act 1972 s145, the development and improvement of the knowledge and understanding of the arts, to the Wychavon Festival of Brass.

17. Evesham Bands in the Park

A report by the Town Clerk and a request from the organisers of Evesham Bands in the Park had been circulated to Members with the agenda. The report explained that the Town Council had supported the Bands in the Park for many years, the programme had been organised by the Town Council at the start and then taken over by a local group.

Bands in the Park put on free concerts every Sunday in the summer months from May to September and that they were seeking £2,000 to support it. It was noted that this was the same amount as they received last year.

The Clerk had asked Members to consider funding it every year as the organisers had taken on the responsibility from the Council; however it was decided that funding should still be applied for annually.

It was noted that Bands in the Park cost £4,245 to put on and that public collections and other sponsorship left a shortfall of just over £2,000.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Town Council give the Bands in the Park initiative £2,000 in accordance with the Local Government Act 1972, s145 (a) the provision of an entertainment of any nature.

18. Investment Update

The Town Clerk had circulated a report with the agenda advising members of the current value of its investment with the CCLA in their property fund. The Council had invested £100,000 on 31 March 2015, which was now worth £97,638 (up from £95,907 when last reported to the committee). It was explained that the reduction in value of the investment was because there was a bid/offer charge deducted when the investment is first made. This would be recovered over time if the investment performed well, as it was at present.

Interest earned from the investment (not including management fees) was 4.86% in June, 4.82% in July and 4.79% in August. The first dividend paid at the end of July had been for £1,112.

Members continued to be pleased with the performance of the investment and the Clerk was thanked for his work in finding it. The Clerk did reiterate that this investment was considered 'high risk' and long term as it was in property, and that the Council had an investment policy that stated it would not invest more than £100,000 in long term investments.

NOTED

19. New Homes Bonus (NHB) Update

Circulated with the agenda was an update on NHB funding. It explained that the Council had approximately £132,000 left; a further £58,000 was allocated to the Almonry Project. Future allocations totalled £666,000 however, these were not guaranteed and there was much speculation that NHB funding would be removed by the government.

The Chairman explained that he had asked this to go on the agenda to get Members thinking about future projects.

Previously Evesham Town Council had allocated the following from NHB:

- Evesham community project £39,869
- Acquired Brain Injury Education Services community garden £5,000
- Evesham Street Pastors £5,000
- Evesham Crisis Pregnancy Centre £5,000
- War Memorial Improvements £10,000
- Wallace House Refurbishment £24,245
- Attracting Retail Investment to Evesham £2,500
- Conservation of the Evesham Bell Tower £50,000
- No Limits Crown Meadow Play Area project £5,000
- Great Big Almonry project £58,664*

*Not yet drawn down.

It was commented that the Council should look to do a big project rather than a number of small ones.

Other ideas to consider included a refurbishment of the Town Hall, a defibrillator and whether it could go towards reopening the Public Hall.

The Chairman was glad to hear suggestions and asked that this go on the main Council agenda for further discussion.

NOTED

20. Budget 16/17

The Town Clerk circulated a report informing Members that they would soon need to prepare the budget for the forthcoming financial year, and would need to start considering what priorities they had regarding projects and expenditure, how much they were willing to consider increasing the precept if at all, etcetera.

It was explained that a meeting of this committee was scheduled for the 12 October 2015 should Members wish to have it, where it was planned that initial work would be done to prepare the budget. It was planned that the budget would be formally recommended by the committee at its meeting on the 14 December and adopted by the Council on 11 January. It was agreed that a meeting in October to go through the budget was a good idea, however a number of members were away. It was therefore **RESOLVED** to move the meeting to the 19 October 2015 at the conclusion of the Personnel Committee meeting..

21. Matters of urgency raised for information only, at the discretion of the Chairman

There were no matters raised under this agenda item.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 8.00 pm.

COUNCILLOR C D HOMER
CHAIRMAN