

Minutes of the Meeting of the FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE held at the Town Council Offices, Bradbourne Vale Road, Sevenoaks on Monday 30th November 2015 at 7:00 pm.

PRESENT

Cllr R L Piper (Chairman)

Cllr S L Arnold *[ex officio]*

Cllr N J L Busvine OBE

Cllr M Chakowa

Cllr A S Clayton

Cllr A Eyre *[arrived 7:24pm – no voting rights]*

Cllr R M C Hogarth

Cllr R J Parry (Vice Chairman)

Cllr S G Raikes

Cllr O Schneider *[substitute for Cllr Eyre]*

Cllr Mrs P C Walshe

Cllr E T Waite *[substitute for Cllr J M Canet]*

(12)

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE

Chief Executive/Town Clerk

Responsible Finance Officer

Committee Clerk

Prior to the commence of the meeting the Chairman requested that congratulations be recorded to the Town clerk and Council Staff for successful Christmas Lights Switch On Events.

APOLOGIES

Cllrs Cllr J M Canet and E Parson

PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

No members of the public were present for the duration of the meeting.

291 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr S G Raikes declared a non-pecuniary interest in Agenda Item 10 *[Minute No 300]* in relation to the Street Lighting and did not partake in the discussions.

292 DISPENSATION

No requests had been received or approved.

293 MINUTES OF THE FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 2ND NOVEMBER 2015

RESOLVED: the minutes be received, noted and signed as a true record.

294 SUB COMMITTEES

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meetings of the:

a) Youth Council

Youth Council held on 4th November 2015 be received and noted as a true record.

b) Youth Services Sub Committee

Youth Services Sub Committee held 4th November 2015 be received and adopted as a true record.

295 FINANCE REPORTS

The Finance reports were received and considered

a) Statement of Accounts

RESOLVED: the statement of accounts to 31st October 2015 had been distributed at the meeting and were noted and would be considered at the next meeting.

b) Suppliers Accounts

RESOLVED: to authorise the accounts listed in the schedules to 31st October 2015 (£83,446.57), having been inspected and compared with the schedules, for payment.

- c) Payroll Account
RESOLVED: to confirm the payments from the account having been compared with the schedules:
 i. 1st to 31st October 2015 (£59,155.63).
 ii. 1st August to 30th September 2015 (£52,786.56 in August and £52,554.60 September) *[Minute 254 iii refers]*.
- d) Petty Cash Account
RESOLVED: to confirm the payments from the petty cash account listed and having been inspected and compared with the schedules:
 i. 1st to 31st October 2015 (£461.61)
 ii. 1st August to 30th September 2015 (£361.36 in August and £632.21 in September) *[Minute 254 iv refers]*.
- e) Investment Strategy 2016/2017
It was NOTED that the Responsible Finance Officer's Investment Strategy for 2016/2017 together with consideration of investments with Financial Institutions would be provided at the next meeting on Monday 11th January 2016.
- f) National Association of Local Councils [NALC] – Procurement of Audit for smaller Authorities
RESOLVED: to remain as a participant of the new Sector Led Body Audit. **It was AGREED** that the Town Clerk write to NALC to express good will and to express that it was anticipated that costs for the audit would be lower.
- g) Hospitality and Gifts Register
RESOLVED: to note the Hospitality or Gifts received by the employees by Members of Sevenoaks Town Council for the period ending 31st October 2015.

296 DRAFT REVENUE ESTIMATES UPDATE

- a) The update on the draft Revenue Estimates from the Responsible Finance Officer was received and considered.

RESOLVED to recommend to Council that the Town Council accept Draft 1 for the 2016/2017 precept of £973,618 currently equating to a Band D equivalent household rate of £105.99 per annum (subject to amendment once the District Council confirms the total number of households within Sevenoaks in Band D) noting the following:

Key priorities are the development of services in Northern Ward, particularly contributing to the Bat & Ball Station regeneration and the refurbishment of the exterior of the iconic Vine Pavilion.

STC continues to work towards implementing its Community Investment Plan, beginning with the realisation of initial property disposals to generate funds to provide new facilities for Sennockians.

Key points

- One-off provision £112,500 towards revenue costs including the potential refurbishment of Bat & Ball station building, robust maintenance of the Vine Pavilion and costs associated with the Community Investment Plan
- Vine café (included within Cost Centre 28) budgeted to make £12k profit in first full year
- No 8 bus included in budget at no net cost to STC
- Financial adjustment of £40,663 due to reduction in rental income following disposal of Raleys properties/Cemetery Lodge - equivalent to a 5% increase in precept

- Other increased net revenue costs £32,853, including an allowance of 2% for increased salaries
- Based on estimates for the number of Band D equivalent households (actual numbers available in December/January)
- Capital costs relating to the Community Investment Plan have not been reflected in the precept, and will need to be addressed at a later date as part of the Council's capital budget (meeting expected to be arranged in January 2016)

A draft document was prepared to explain the 2016/17 precept to the press and general public [*Appendix A attached*].

297 **COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY (CIL)**

RESOLVED: to accept the Town Clerk's recommendation to use funds for the following purposes:

- i) The Town Council currently has funds of £86,600 towards the provision of the new £100,000 Buckhurst Lane Play Area. An application of funding has been made to the Round Table. The shortfall needed to reach the £100,000 be taken from the CIL payment.
- ii) The balance of CIL funding to contribute towards previously agreed funds up front to Stag prior to receiving Capital income from the sale of Raleys thereby using less from Town Council's reserves.

298 **REVIEW OF SEVENOAKS TOWN COUNCIL STRATEGY**

RESOLVED: to accept the reviewed strategy and take forward for the period 2015 to 2019 [*Appendix B attached*].

299 **REVIEW OF SEVENOAKS TOWN COUNCIL CORPORATE PLAN**

RESOLVED: to accept the reviewed Sevenoaks Town Council's Corporate Plan.

300 **STREET LIGHTING**

RESOLVED: to accept the Responsible Finance Officer's report and recommendations and that a working party be set up comprising Cllrs R Piper, A S Clayton, A Eyre, O Schneider and the Responsible Finance Officer. **It was AGREED** that the Responsible Finance Officer write to all residents in non-contributing roads depicting the history of the Town Council's Street Lighting investigation as a non lighting authority, recounting the length the debate has taken to date and communicating that the Town Council will remove street lighting in the non-contributing private roads unless residents wish the lights to remain under their care, cost and control.

301 **SEVENOAKS TOWN PARTNERSHIP**

To receive and note that the minutes of the Sevenoaks Town Partnership meeting held on 18th November 2015 reflect a true record of the proceedings.

302 **CURRENT MATTERS & PRIORITIES**

RESOLVED: to receive and note the list of current matters and priorities.

303 **PRESS RELEASE**

RESOLVED: no item be considered worth of a press release

There being no further business the Chairman closed the meeting at 9:36pm

Signed by the Chairman **Dated**

Sevenoaks Town Council's Strategy 2015 - 2019

1. The aim of the Council *is* to offer community leadership to ensure Sevenoaks develops into the best market town in Kent, the objective will be realised in two ways. First, by engagement in local initiatives and forming relationships with other stakeholders. Secondly, by promoting the well-being of residents of the town through support for leisure, sporting and cultural activities, by improving the environment and infrastructure of the town and by fostering its commercial prosperity.
2. To achieve these objectives the Council will each year give priority to:
 - i) New leisure and sporting facilities or the expansion of existing facilities including the Stag Community Arts Centre and those items identified in its Community Investment Plan.
 - ii) Acquiring additional green spaces
 - iii) Increasing tourism, supporting live cultural events and initiatives to promote commercial activity including the Sevenoaks Town Partnership's initiative to have a monthly calendar of events in the town.
 - iv) Grant aiding voluntary organisations undertaking community activities especially those targeted at marginalised groups
 - v) Actively promoting environmental friendly procedures for all town council facilities and functions, subject to available resources and quality.
 - vi) Conserve and enhance the aesthetics of the town.
 - vii) Encourage and promote economic growth including the regeneration of the Bat & Ball area, the development of the Bat & Ball Centre and refurbishment of the Bat & Ball Station building.
 - viii) Provide facilities for marginalised groups.
 - ix) Working with Sevenoaks District Council and Kent County Council and neighbouring parishes for assessing impact and coordinating of town facilities.

- x) Localising local budgets – (Highways etc). investigating new opportunities and initiatives for undertaking operational matters under service level agreements locally to provide enhanced delivery.

3. Achieving our strategic aims

- i) Leisure and sporting activities – The Council will provide additional or improved facilities for its existing sports and recreation grounds and continue its long term commitment to the provision of the Stag Community Arts Centre. It will also consider assuming responsibility for existing grounds from the District and County Councils.
- ii) Open Spaces – The Council will endeavour to purchase land within the town boundary or land adjacent or near to the boundary which might be used to promote its objectives, including the prevention of unwanted development and to improve public accessibility to Council owned land, creating partnership as appropriate.
- iii) Commercial Development, Tourism and Cultural events – the Council will continue its support for cultural events and other initiatives which promote community and commercial activities enhancing the image of the town *in* particular with the Stag Community Arts Centre.
- iv) Voluntary Activities – the Council where appropriate will continue to support and provide grants for voluntary organisations which meet its strategic objectives.
- v) Neighbourhood Plan – the creation of the Neighbourhood Plan will enable the strategies priorities to be met.
- vi) Community – making Sevenoaks a clean and safe community to live and visit, addressing social cohesion and anti-social behaviour. The Council will also support measures which combat anti-social behaviour.

4. Resources

To achieve these ambitious aims the Council requires a financial strategy to raise additional income and capital. This strategy would combine the following elements, rather than treat the precept as a first recourse to funding:-

- i) Ensuring rents, fees and charges within the limits set by the market in line with trends, and to meet core objectives.
- ii) Using grants, and other resources in most cases for pump priming
- iii) Contracting out facilities and services where appropriate
- iv) Consider disposing of assets where appropriate which are not relevant to strategic objectives.
- v) Borrowing for major capital projects or purchases.
- vi) Applying where appropriate for external funding to underwrite town projects.
- vii) Consider entering into agency agreements to carry out contracts on behalf of other organisations for the benefit of the town – either through new initiatives, an improved service and, or cost saving.

Sevenoaks Town Council Talking Money!



What does the Town Council need the budget for?

Sevenoaks Town Council has made public its ambitious £4m Community Investment Plan to provide new community facilities including a Bat & Ball Centre, new sports and play facilities, continued investment in the Stag, Bat & Ball Station building and the exterior of the iconic Vine Pavilion .

The Town Council is in the process of disposing of assets to pay for this plan. This is a lengthy process and capital receipts have not been received to date.

Sevenoaks Town Council is also committed to ensuring that current community facilities are refurbished and maintained for future generations in particular the Vine Pavilion and ensure that community funding for voluntary groups who do so much for Sevenoaks is not reduced.

In setting the 2016/17 Budget and Precept the Town Council is mindful of the financial resources required to meet the ambitions of the Community Investment Plan. For this reason a larger than normal contingency figure has been included in the annual budget. The Town Council also needs to make a financial adjustment to address the loss of rental from properties that have been sold.

Where does Sevenoaks Town Council get its money from?

The Town Council's income is generated from:-

1. The Precept paid for by Sevenoaks local ratepayers
2. Income generating activities e.g. community halls, sports pitches, markets, cemetery, Café on the Vine.
3. Service Level Agreements – providing services for other organisations.
4. Rents and leases
5. Obtaining external grants – for Capital Investment
6. Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) – for Capital Investment.
7. Disposal of Assets – for Capital Investment

Sevenoaks Town Council does not receive any portion of the Business Rates and no longer receives a portion of the Government Support Grant (previously £36,000).

With the exception of public open spaces that do not generate income Sevenoaks Town Council aims to provide facilities that are at least cost neutral and is moving more towards operating income generating facilities e.g. Café on the Vine and the markets.

Sevenoaks Town Council's budget for the Financial Year 2016 – 2017 is proposed to be £1,391,000. The Town Council generates income and grants which total to approximately 30% and the remainder is charged to the Precept which is paid by local council tax payers. The average Band D house in Sevenoaks will pay almost £106 per year or approximately £2 per week.

How will the budget be spent?

The Town Council's budget is spent under the following main categories:-

Function	Expenditure	Income	Net cost	%
Council Admin	382	0	382	39
Public Open Space	263	34	229	24
Planning	31	0	31	3
Community Centre	55	63	-8 (profit)	-1
Council Offices	40	14	26	3
Community Events	43	19	24	2
Youth Café / services	51	44	7	1
IT	22	0	22	2
Democracy costs	19	0	19	2
Professional Fees	16	0	16	2
Grants to Local organisations	73	0	73	7
Cemetery	89	70	19	2
Neighbourhood Dev. Plan	6	6	0	0
Vine Gardens / Café	107	99	8	1
Insurance	25	0	25	3
Markets	56	61	-5 (profit)	-1
Contingency	113	0	113	12
Interest	0	8	-8 (profit)	-1
	1391	418	973	100

Please forward any queries or comments you have on this information to Linda Larter, Town Clerk via townclerk@sevenoakstown.gov.uk or write to Sevenoaks Town Council at the address below.

Sevenoaks Town Council, Council Offices, Bradbourne Vale Road, Sevenoaks, Kent TN13 3QG

Functions and Facilities provided by Sevenoaks Town Council

Allotments	Neighbourhood Development Plan
Bandstand concerts	No. 8 Bus
Bat & Ball Station building (2016)	Planters
Bethal Road Burial Ground	Pontoise Close Open Space & Playground
Brittains Common	Public Seats
Brittains Lane Wood	Public Toilets
Buckhurst Lane Play Area (2016)	Raleys Car Park
Bus Shelters	Raleys & Knole Paddock
Christmas Lights	Rheinbach Gardens
Civic Functions	Sevenoaks Common
Community Events	Sevenoaks Community Centre
Consultees (Planning, Highways etc)	Sevenoaks Town Partnership
Grants to Local Organisations	Stag Community Arts Centre
Greatness Park Cemetery	Street lights in unadopted road
Greatness Park Recreation Ground & Play Area	The Pound
Hanging Baskets	Town Council Offices / Chamber
Hillingdon Rise Play Area	Twinning with Rheinbach & Pontoise
Horse Troughs	Upper High St Gardens
HitB – House in the Basement Youth Café	Vine Gardens (including public toilets)
The Green, Hillingdon Rise	Vine Cricket Ground & Pavilion
Jubilee Clock (Old Market House)	Café on the Vine
Judd's Piece	Vine Waste
Julian's Meadow & Playground	Vintage Bus
Kippington Meadow	War Memorial
Land at • Letter Box Lane • Littlewood • Tonbridge Road	White Hart Beeches
Litter Bins	Woodside Road Open Space
Sports Pitches	Youth Council
Markets	
Middlings Wood	
Millpond Wood	
Mount Close Open Space	