

Sevenoaks Town Council
Minutes of the FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE held
at the Town Council Offices, Bradbourne Vale Road, Sevenoaks
on Monday 28th November 2016

Meeting Commenced: 7.02 p.m.

Meeting Concluded: 8.54 p.m.

Cllr S G Raikes	Apologies	Cllr R L Piper, Chairman	Present
Cllr O Schneider substituted	Present		
Cllr N J L Busvine	Present	Cllr R M C Hogarth [left 8:31pm]	Present
Cllr J M Canet	Apologies	Cllr R J Parry	Present
Cllr M Chakowa	Apologies	Cllr E Parson	Present
Cllr A S Clayton	Present	Cllr P E Towell	Apologies
Cllr A Eyre, Mayor (ex officio)	Present	Cllr Mrs P C Walshe	Present

In the absence of the Chairman the Vice Chairman, Cllr R L Piper chaired the meeting.

339. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

RESOLVED: to agree and accept apologies for absence received from Cllr J M Canet, Cllr M A Chakowa and Cllr Raikes (noted that Cllr Schneider had been nominated as substitute).

340. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr Eyre stated that he had a pecuniary interest in matters relating to agenda items 12(c) Grants and would not participate in the discussion or voting.

341. REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS

There had been no requests for dispensations.

342. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 31ST OCTOBER 2016

RESOLVED: to receive, adopt and sign the minutes including amended Financial Regulations.

343. SUB COMMITTEES

RESOLVED:

a) Youth Council

To receive and note the tabled minutes of the Meeting of Sevenoaks Youth Council held on 15th November 2016 [copy attached to the minutes] noting that Cllr Mrs Parry has also given her apologies.

It was **agreed** that Sevenoaks Town Council congratulate the past Youth Councillor Tamanna Miah for her recent Certificate of Recognition "Young Upstander Award for outstanding contribution to tackling hatred, intolerance and prejudice at the National Hate Crime Awards 2016" and "Re-think Mental illness Janey Antoniou Award" on behalf of Sevenoaks Youth Council.

b) Youth Services Sub-Committee

To receive and note the minutes of the Meeting of the Youth Services Sub Committee held on 15th November 2016.

c) Sevenoaks Community Centre

To receive and note that the meeting due to have been held on 9th November 2016 had been cancelled.

344. FINANCE REPORTS

RESOLVED: It was unanimously agreed to accept the following financial reports

- a) Statement of Accounts
to 31st October 2016 and the Responsible Financial Officer's report relating to Variance Analysis. It was **agreed** to
 - i. Note that Capital Investment should read Capital Infrastructure Levy [page 38 of the agenda]
 - ii. bring a full report of the Vine Café to the next meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee on 9th January 2017.
 - iii. review the rates on public WCs [St John's]
 - iv. thank the Sevenoaks Community Centre Administrator for all her hard work over the last 18 months to make the Sevenoaks Community Centre as successful as it currently is.
- b) Suppliers Accounts
to 1st to 31st October 2016 – £113,475.49
- c) Payroll Account
Payments listed in the schedule 1st to 31st October 2016 – totalling £61,654.95
- d) Petty Cash Account
Payments from the account listed in the schedule 1st to 31st October 2016 – totalling £689.34
- e) Hospitality and Gifts Register
Hospitality or gifts received by employees during the period 1st to 31st October 2016.

345. ENVIRONMENTAL PARK

The Environmental Park in Sevenoaks is owned by Knole Trustees. For some time the park was managed by Sevenoaks District Council on a lease.

In 2015 Sevenoaks Town Council agreed a 10 year lease with Knole Trustees for part of the Environmental Park at £500 per year rent. The area was used for the installation of the Buckhurst Lane Play Area which has proved to be very popular.

Sevenoaks Town Council receives regular requests from the public to take over the management of the rest of the Environmental Park as it is considered to be not maintained to an appropriate level and some features have fallen into disrepair.

The Council's Open Spaces & Leisure Committee considered this matter and the Chief Executive / Town Clerk was instructed to negotiate with Knole Trustees as to whether it was possible for the Town Council to take the rest of the Environmental Park on a lease.

The Knole Trustees have offered in principle a 10 year lease on a £1 peppercorn rent.

Subject to Capital Funding being obtained, improvements would include

- Replacement of shelter
- Improvements to paths, steps and signage
- Construction of a natural amphitheatre.
- Creation of a natural 'crazy golf'

The Open Spaces Manager has calculated that it would add an additional £15,000 per year to the Town Council's revenue budget to manage the Environmental Park. The decision relating to this project is therefore a financial one, having been agreed in principle by the Open Spaces & Leisure Committee.

RESOLVED: that the Town Council agrees to maintain the complete Environmental Park on a 10 year peppercorn lease at an annual cost of £15,000 per annum and consideration be given to change the name of the park.

346 KCC GRASS CUTTING TO GRASS VERGES

The Committee reviewed the report circulated with the agenda:

The Open Spaces & Leisure Committee considered the following at its meeting on 17th October 2016.

Sevenoaks Town Council had previously stated in principle that it wanted to tender for the KCC Grass Cutting Contracts within the town.

When the tender became available some time ago, Sevenoaks Town Council tried to submit a bid, however at the time this was not possible as contractors had to prove that they had previously carried out contracts above £150k and there were also various criteria that would have required considerable resources to obtain.

Sevenoaks Town Council raised this matter both with KCC and KALC. KALC followed up the matter with KCC and negotiations around the topic have been taking place.

The current proposal is that KCC would like parishes to cut the KCC Grass.

KCC would initially reimburse a Parish or Town Council that does this, but only at the level of KCC's bulk-buy rate of 2 pence per square metre, and only for the number of cuts that they would be doing themselves and for 'Urban Grass'. KCC frequency of cuts is falling in 2017/18 to 5 or 6 per year instead of 8.

This could also include grass on verges of highways.

There is no guarantee that KCC would continue to reimburse at this rate or frequency in the future.

The recommendations from KALC bearing in mind the budget setting process is as follows:-

Minute 287 RESOLVED: it was agreed to defer the matter to be considered at the next Committee meeting when revenue costs and income have been researched. The Committee would review the costs against what it wanted to achieve for the appearance of the town.

The revenue costs and income have now been identified (shown on following page) and could have a significant bearing on the Revenue Estimates for 2017 / 18 and are therefore also being presented to the Finance & General Purposes Committee.

Analysis of Mowing costs on roadside verges within Sevenoaks parish

STC received from KHS the Bill of Quantities but without plans, this lists over 80 roads in the town which have single or multiple Verges and Shrub beds

STC have identified 11 prominent sites along the main distribution roads within the Town.

Blackhall lane Bradbourne Vale rd. Brittains Lane Chatham Hill rd. Hillingdon Avenue Hospital Road	Littlewood London rd. Otford rd. Seal rd. Seal Hollow rd. Tonbridge rd.
---	--

The total area of grass	18,261 m2	Kent specification of 6 X cuts pa
Total of Shrub bed	3586.63m2	Kent specification of 1 trim and weed pa
Urban Hedge	211.5 m2	Kent Specification of 1 trim pa

Staffing If STC were to take on this part of the work and increase the cutting to a more realistic 12 cuts pa estimate of staff time would be: 1 New member of staff trained and skilled and able to work alone some of the time needed for 10 months a year with a need to redeploy or find other work for the remaining 2 months. Estimated cost to include some consumables such as PPE. Running costs Fuel, breakdowns etc		£20,000 <u>£5,000</u> £25,000
Capital costs of equipment Additional van, small s/h ride on mower with trailer, small mower, strimmer, blower, hedge cutter, hand tools Build in reserves to replace every 5 years.		£40,000
Year 1		£65,000
Minus Income from KHS		<u>£5,502</u>
Total		<u>£59,498</u>
Year 2 & 3		£27,498
Year 4 with no guarantee of continued payment from KCC		£33,000

Notes:

- No allowance has been made for inflation.
- It must be remembered that STC will be expected to work to the same contract specification that others do, and so STC will have to be Proficient and well equipped to avoid Default reductions.
- Presently STC set its own specification so if the council's priorities are towards a special event we can move resources to reflect this, in a contract situation this will not be possible.

Additional action / information relating to this topic is required

Finance	X	Personnel	X	IT
H&S	X	Risk Assessment	X	Financial Risk Assessment
Marketing		Insurance	X	News Release
STC Priority				

RESOLVED: that the Town Council declines to take on this additional work.

**347. 2017/2018 DRAFT REVENUE ESTIMATES AND ROLLING CAPITAL PROGRAMME
RESOLVED**

- a) Draft Revenue Estimates 2017/2018
that the Town Council adopt Draft 1 for the 2017/2018 precept of £1,021,925 currently equating to a Band D equivalent household rate of £111 per annum (subject to amendment once the District Council confirms the total number of households within Sevenoaks in Band D).

The Revenue Estimates for 2017/2018 contained the following projects:

1	Bat & Ball Centre	Subject to successful planning application. Move the project forward to tender stage and appointment of contractor. Include access form community centre to enable persons with mobility problems to use the station.
2	Bat & Ball Station Building	Subject to successful Heritage Lottery Fund application develop the project to provide a new community facility.
3	Sevenoaks Common	Carry out extensive tree work required to maintain the trees in Sevenoaks common (£10,000).
4	Skateboard Park	Refurbish the remaining 70% of the skateboard park. The skateboard park was installed in 2008 and has proven very popular (£11,500).
5	Environmental Park	Operate the Environmental Park on a 10 year peppercorn lease from Knole Trustees (£15,000)
6	Greatness Park Public Toilets	Extension of current pavilion to incorporate public toilets.

- b) Draft Rolling Capital Programme for 2017/2018
that the Draft Rolling Capital Programme, taking into account the Annual Maintenance Survey be adopted
- c) Property Maintenance Programme
that the future Property Maintenance Programme be adopted.
- d) Charges
to adopt an increase of 3% for 2017/2018 as follows:
- i. Council Chamber hire from January 2017
 - ii. Community Centre hire from April 2017
 - iii. Open Spaces and Leisure General Charges, Sports Fees and Cemetery charges. It was noted that these had been resolved at the Open Spaces & Leisure Committee on 19th September 2016.

348. CHRISTMAS LIGHTS SWITCH ON 2016

The Town Clerk provided tabled a report [see below].

Donations

The Finance & General Purposes Committee has previously noted the generous donations received for 2016 Christmas Lights which will be recorded in the Minutes. The total of donations for 2016 = £16,590.

Lantern Workshops

The Town Council has previously provided youth outreach art events via Magic Beans.

This year the following three Lantern Workshops were arranged by the Town Council:

Date	Venue	Attendance
Saturday 29 th October 2016	Alice's Tea Shop	28 (20 lanterns made)
Saturday 12 th November 2016	Stag Plaza	60 (29 lanterns made)
Saturday 19 th November 2016	Sevenoaks Community Centre	90 (42 lanterns made)

Hollybush Retailers

This year for the first time a separate event was held on 24th November 2016 for the Hollybush retailers. This was well supported by approximately 200 people within the small road closure area.

Websites

Another first for 2016 was the creation of two websites, linked to the Town Council and Town Partnerships website. One for the Hollybush event and one for the main event in the Town Centre on the Friday evening.

Stats for our Christmas Lights website:

Monday	251 views	108 visitors
Tuesday	216 views	96 visitors
Wednesday	356 views	182 visitors
Thursday	724 view	379 visitors
Friday:	1,566 views	792 visitors

View is pages viewed
 Visitor is individual person
 Most looking at Road Closure information

Friday Evening Christmas Lights Switch On in Town Centre

The evening was dry and attracted the largest crowd to date. Based on previous numbers provided by police and St John's ambulance it was clear that the crowd was substantially higher and officers estimated it to be 10,000+.

Overall the event went well, it is always a bit of a strain at the beginning on staff resources and officers are grateful to those members of the community who volunteer to assist at this event.

Security

Due to the large number of people attending the Christmas Lights Switch On and that the Town Council no longer receives police support for events external security people are brought in addition to the Town Council staff.

The large events in town have also attracted large number of young people and unfortunately a small percentage of them collect on the Vine and cause anti-social problems. For the first time we have allocated two security people to be permanently based at the Vine during the event, to hopefully prevent this being a problem.

The allocation of the additional security officers did assist in stopping crowds from collecting. Unfortunately there was one arrest and some 'egg throwing' by a small group of young people. In percentage terms the incidents were low bearing in mind the large crowd however still needed to be managed.

Feedback from people attending the event stated that it had a good family feel with appreciation that it appealed to multi generations.

Reindeer

Due to the popularity of the reindeer at the 2015 event they were rebooked for 2016 and once again proved popular. These were sponsored by Deliveroo.

Sevenoaks Town Partnership has received a complaint from Deborah Tessier regarding the hiring of the reindeer for this event. She states that the RSCPA indicates that there are many welfare issues relating to having reindeer at events.

Sevenoaks Town Council sourced its reindeer from a company which breeds in this country and is therefore acclimatised addressing many of the RSPCA issues.

RESOLVED: that the Town Clerk write to the Hollybush Retailers requesting donations now that the lights had gone up with a successful Christmas Lights Switch on Event.

349. BAT & BALL STATION BUILDING

RESOLVED: to accept the Heads of Terms New Lease subject to clarification of point 24 relating to Café provision and delegate authority to the Town Clerk and Chairman of the Finance & General Purposes Committee to progress the lease..

Cllr R M C Hogarth left the meeting at 8:31 pm.

350. GRANTS

RESOLVED:

- a) to review the Grant Policy at the next meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee meeting on 9th January 2017.
- b) to grant the Sevenoaks Summer Festival 2017 a £5,000 grant conditional that the Mayor of Sevenoaks opens the event.
- c) to grant the Kent Youth Jazz Orchestra a £500 grant.

351. STREET LIGHTS

It was noted that Linden Chase (not including Pine Needle and Lyle Park), had been recognised as a Public Right of Way.

RESOLVED: to endorse the previous decision to

- a) permit residents of Farnaby Drive two weeks to consider whether they wish to contribute towards a lighting scheme in their private road
- b) delegate decision making to the Town Clerk and Chairman
- c) endorse the recommendation proposed as a final outcome if required to remove the seven lamp posts as the cost of bollards will be at a cost greater than that attached to the Council's original decision and residents are unwilling to pay for it.
- d) formally apply to UK Power Networks who will issue a disconnection date and exact costs.

352. CURRENT MATTERS AND PRIORITIES

RESOLVED: To note the report relating to updates of current matters and priorities as distributed with the agenda and to accept the latest offer for the Cemetery Lodge, which was agreed to accept.

353. PRESS RELEASE

No item was considered worthy of a press release.

There being no further business the Chairman closed the meeting.

Signed (Chairman) Dated