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WISBECH TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Finance & General Purposes Committee (F&GP) held on Monday 25 January 2010 at 6.30 pm

Public Participation: The Meeting opened for public participation at 6.30 pm. As there were no members of the public wishing to speak, the meeting commenced at 6.30 pm.

PRESENT: The Mayor Cllr Mrs Lawrence; Cllr Green in the Chair; and Cllrs Mrs Cox; O'Dell; Oliver; Farmer; Meekins; Wegg, and Wright.

In attendance: Erbie Murat Town Clerk, and Clerk to the meeting; Cllr Fulcher and Cllr Frusher.

31. Apologies

There were apologies from the Deputy Mayor Cllr Sims, due to work commitments.

On a proposal from Cllr O'Dell and seconded by Cllr Oliver the above absence was APPROVED.

32. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest

33. Minutes

Members NOTED the minutes of the F&GP meeting held on Monday 19 October 2009 (previously circulated), as AGREED by Full Council on Monday 16 November 2009.

34. Jody Cundy Scroll

Members NOTED that we have not yet had delivery of the illuminated scroll, which is expected soon. A presentation box has been purchased in readiness. Members also NOTED that there has been no response from Jody's agent about a date for the formal presentation, and that we are seeking to link this with some events being organised by Fenland District Council. This is being organised by John Smith (who is a member of the Friends of the Park). I was not able to establish what his involvement in this matter is. We will work with him if we are able to do so.

35. Wisbech Youth Council Grant Application to Fenland District Council (FDC)

Members NOTED that Wisbech Youth Council has been successful in part with its grant application to FDC towards two festivals in the summer. WYC applied for £5,000 and was awarded £2,000. The Wisbech Neighbourhood Management Board has, however, imposed conditions on £1,000 of the grant (letter circulated). The Clerk is still awaiting clarification, and an explanation for the exclusion of members of Wisbech Town Council. Members noted that the festivals are pencilled in for Saturday 12 June 2010 (Rock Festival); and Saturday 31 July 2010 (Multi-cultural Festival). Members also noted that we have not yet received a response to our several requests for free use of the town park from FDC.

36. Tariffs for Weddings

On a proposal from Cllr Wright and seconded by Cllr Farmer members AGREED to set charges for the hire of the Council Chamber and the Mayor's Parlour for weddings as follows: Monday to Friday excluding refreshments or catering: £225 for morning (9 am to 12 noon); £275 for afternoon 1pm to 4pm); or £350 for Saturdays either 9 am – 12 noon, or 1 pm to 4 pm.

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37. Grants

Members APPROVED the recommendations of Grant Sub-committee, further to the decision of Town Council on 19 October 2009 to integrate the Joint Projects, Special Projects and Grants budgets under two budget heads, members of Grants Sub-committee met on Thursday 5 November.

Members NOTED that Special Projects funding, and other grants will be payable in April 2010, and are included in the agreed budget for 2010/2011, with a total budget for Grants and Special Projects of £26,000. **Members APPROVED the recommendations of the grants sub-committee as follows:**

To make the following additions to the Special Projects budget for organisations with whom the Council has a special relationship: St Johns Ambulance £250; WisARD £250; Arles Twinning (held in abeyance); WOPWA (Wisbech Old Peoples Welfare Assoc) £250.

This increases the Special Projects budget for 2010/2011 to £21,750, and the grants budget would be reduced to £4,250.

On a proposal from Cllr Green and seconded by Cllr O'Dell, members AGREED to the above proposal, and they further AGREED that in future the grants budget should be known as the small grants budget with a lower limit of £100 and an upper limit of £1,000. Members re-iterated and AGREED that grants could not be awarded from the grants budget unless the organisation had actually made an application. Members AGREED to limit grant support from the small grants budget to organisations whose headquarters are in or who operate substantially within the Parish boundaries of Wisbech Town Council.

Members REFUSED the following applicants due to location: Roy's Buffet Club – Walton Highway - £750; Kit Club (Keep in Touch – Walpole Highway - £500; March Brass 2000 – March - £3,000; Chatterbox – running club – Chatteris - £500; Priory Disability Golf Academy – March - £1150; Elm Friendship Club – Elm - £800; Victim Support – Huntingdon - £500.

Members AGREED that unsuccessful applicants are informed of the reasons for refusal.

Members APPROVED the following:

Wisbech & District Tourism Development Group ..	£100
(not to be used to duplicate the work of Wisbech Town Council)	
Wisbech Rugby Union Football Club	£200
Wisbech & District Indoor Bowls Club	£200
Wisbech Swimming Club	£200
Wisbech Lawn Tennis Club	£200
Angles Theatre	£1,000
Wisbech Music Society	£200
The Wisbech Players	£200
Wisbech Amateur Operatic & Dramatic Society	£200
272 (Wisbech) Squadron Air Training Corps	£200
Volunteer Centre Fenland	£200
Wisbech & District Talking Newspaper	£100
St Augustine's Day Centre	£100

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St Raphael Club	£100
Friends of St Peter & St Paul Church (membership)	£100
Wisbech Physically & Able Bodied Club PHAB	£100
FENVISION Isle of Ely Soc for the Blind (Wisbech)	£100
Oasis Day Centre	£100
Wisbech Riding for the Disabled	£100

Members AGREED that the total to be paid out of the small grants budget to be £3,700.

38. Budget for 2010/2011 - Precept

Members NOTED that the budget was agreed at the Town Council meeting on Monday 19 October 2009, and that the Clerk has submitted a Precept upon Fenland District Council of £184,400 for 2010/2011 – being an increase of £4,700, which will yield a percentage increase of 2.66% if all else remains equal.

39. Christmas

Members NOTED that the Central Plinth work was completed on time to take the Christmas tree – by a whisker. Members congratulated the Clerk on an excellent event. The lighting went up in good time, and was effectively managed. A meeting of Civic Amenities has been called for 10.30 am on Tuesday 2 February. ALL MEMBERS ARE INVITED. This meeting will be a dedicated de-briefing, and opportunity to decide what the Town Council proposes to do for next Christmas.

40. Allotments

Members noted that there will be a meeting on Thursday 21 January 2010. WTC representatives will be: Cllr Mrs Lawrence; Cllr Meekins; Cllr Hill; and Mr Murat. FDC representatives will be: Cllr Melton; Cllr Cotterell; Mr Hooper; and Mr Garford. The notes of the meeting will be taken by the Deputy Clerk, Susanah Farmer.

The Town Council has been assured by Gary Garford that his 'Members have and continue to be fully briefed in preparation for reaching a mutually acceptable solution.' – And that he has 'reserved 2 rooms to enable us to break if necessary in order for the respective teams to consider and discuss proposals.'

41. Quarterly Accounts

On a proposal from Cllr Wright and seconded by Cllr Wegg members APPROVED the quarterly accounts (as circulated), and NOTED the following:

Allotments expenditure continues to be very high as we have not yet been able to resolve the issues with FDC;

With our current level of income against expenditure there will be a surplus of £18040.46, which may be used to defray unforeseen expenditure, or to add to the Council's general reserve. Members were reminded that itemised income and expenditure records are available for members' scrutiny at any time, which incorporates a detailed schedule of cheques issued.

Members commended the Clerk for his excellent financial management.

On a proposal by Cllr green and seconded by Cllr Meekins it was AGREED to timetable F&GP meetings in the next financial year to meet quarterly, following preparation of each quarters' financial report, on a separate evening to Full Council meetings.

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42. Review of Financial Regulations

The Clerk was commended for having done a 'very thorough job'. On a proposal from Cllr Wright and seconded by Cllr Meekins members APPROVED the draft Financial Regulations as circulated, with one variation - at 3.3 the Clerk is to INCLUDE: 'The Clerk/RFO will present a quarterly financial report to Finance & General Purposes Committee, adopting proper financial practices, for consideration, and subsequent approval by Full Council.'



The meeting closed at 7.15 pm

Signed

Dated