

HUNGERFORD TOWN COUNCIL

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MINUTES of the **Finance & General Purposes Committee** held on Tuesday 11th July 2017 at 7.00pm in the Town Council Office, The Library, Church St, Hungerford

Present: Cllrs Bumbieris, Knight, Benneyworth, Small, Brookman and Simpson
Also present: Town Clerk, RFO and Nigel Pateman

1. **Apologies for absence** – Cllrs Farrell and Crane
2. **Declarations of interest** – Cllr Knight and Small (Triangle Field)
3. **Minutes – Propose minutes of F&GP meeting on 9th May 2017 and Extra F&GP Meeting on 16th May** - Cllr Bumbieris proposed acceptance of the minutes of 9th May, seconded by Cllr Knight, one abstention (Cllr Simpson) rest in favour. Cllr Brookman proposed acceptance of the minutes of 16th May, seconded by Cllr Simpson, two abstentions (Cllrs Knight and Bumbieris) rest in favour.
Outcome of any actions – **Action:** Cllr Small to hand the Floodlights agreement to the office. Cllr Knight has spoken to the Adviser and no more than 8 ‘Hungerford Matters’ will be printed in a year. The Clerk advised the Tennis Courts lease terms were accepted and the signed lease has been received back from WBC.
4. **Finance**
 - **Consider and propose renewal of investment with Close Brothers** – The interest rate at the moment is 0.9%. The renewal offer is 1.1%. No other improvements on this can be found. The Newbury Building Society investment of £85K is at a rate of 1.25%. We purposefully have the money invested separately due to the deposit protection limit of £85K. Cllr Bumbieris proposed we renew our investment of £85K with Close Brothers for a further year, seconded by Cllr Knight, all in favour. **Action:** RFO
Explanation of rise in BALC subscription fees and decision on acceptance – NALC has added a surcharge. The charge is to be set at 20.5 pence per elector (a rise of 2 pence on 16/17) up to an electorate number of 5,000, reducing to 3.08 pence per elector thereafter. BALC provide good training and advice. Cllr Bumbieris proposed renewal and payment of the increased subscription fees, seconded by Cllr Knight, all in favour. **Action:** RFO
 - **Propose purchase of new office chair, keyboard and mouse** – A new chair is needed that suits both Alison and Jeff as they desk share. The existing chair is falling apart. Cllr Bumbieris proposed up to £350 is spent on a new chair with a sliding base, and this sum will include purchase of an ergonomic keyboard and mouse. The budget to be utilised is ‘Office Costs’ for the chair and ‘Stationery’ for the other items. This was seconded by Cllr Knight with all in favour. **Action:** Office to order,

5. Internal Audit

- **Review effectiveness** – The RFO read out the checklist.
- **Approve report** – The report was circulated. Only 2 items are mentioned on the audit.
- **Confirm engagement of Internal auditor for 2017-2018** – Cllr Bumbieris proposed acceptance of the Review of Effectiveness, approval of the report and engagement of the Internal Auditor for 2017-18, seconded by Cllr Knight, all in favour. **Action:** RFO

6. Croft Field

- **Garden Room – Consider funding available for project from grants and reserves** – The Clerk advised that the current timescale for completing the project is 30th August. The cost is approx. £23K. What do we need raised before the project can go ahead and are we able to apply any of our own funding? Tesco application is live and we will be successful in obtaining either £1k, £2K or £4K and are still trying to pursue matched funding. We need to agree if the project is to proceed and if so which contractor we appoint. Initially Tesco was offering larger grants and the project was estimated at a lower cost. - **Propose next steps following receipt of tenders** - After discussion of other financial commitments Cllr Small proposed proceeding with the project to build a garden room, allocating £12,200 from EMR, and pursuing with grant funding. Any outstanding shortfall to be met from general reserves, seconded by Cllr Brookman, all in favour. (Ratification at Full Council required). **Action:** Add to FC agenda. Cllr Knight proposed instructing PCF, who provided the most competitive tender of £23,400 (it was noted their terms of payment need agreeing as grant funding is involved) seconded by Cllr Small, all in favour. **Action:** Clerk to contact contractors, process TGE application and pursue grants.
- **Internal Restructuring – Consider funding available for project from reserves** – It was decided to leave this project until next financial year.

7. Christmas

- **VIP Arrangements** – 2 names were suggested. **Action:** Cllr Simpson and Clerk will make contact.
- **Printing of Cards** – Cllrs were keen for Tony Bartlett to take a photo to be used on Christmas cards sent by the Mayor. The suggestions were a group shot of councillors wearing Christmas attire or decorating Xmas trees. **Action:** Office to organise.

8. Standing Orders- Propose update to minute names of Councillors that abstain and object

Cllr Bumbieris proposed the update, as it is seen as good practise, seconded by Cllr Benneyworth, all in favour. **Action:** Clerk to update SO.

9. Review further grant applications (given under the General Power of Competence)

- **Sport in Mind – Application received through The Good Exchange and presentation made to full council** – Cllr Bumbieris proposed a donation of £300, all were in favour
- **Citizens Advice – Letter received and application already made through the good exchange** – CAB are asking for HTC to fund their outreach service to Hungerford otherwise the service will cease. Thatcham TC funds their town's outreach. HTC has already donated £400 to CAB in the first round of funding. Appointments take place in the surgery at present. The Fire station community room is offered FOC to some and this may help. Local solicitors may also offer free help. Cllr Bumbieris proposed an

additional £600 is donated to CAB bringing the total to £1000 which if match funded should provide the required amount. **Action:** Clerk to speak to CAB regards the donation and other help available.

- **Theatre Company – Written application** – Cllr Bumbieris proposed £900 is donated to the Community of Hungerford Theatre Company, seconded by Cllr Simpson, all in favour.
- **Wessex Rangers – Written application** – A new group are starting up and help is required with their room hire fees. Cllr Brookman proposed a grant of £403.20, seconded by Cllr Benneyworth, all in favour.
- **Parkinson’s – Consider reallocation of funds to more local project ‘chair exercise classes at Herongate Leisure** – Cllr Bumbieris proposed the funds are reallocated as required, seconded by Cllr Knight, all in favour.
- **Christmas Extravaganza – Application expected** – Cllr Small advised Nigel Perrin will be writing to HTC.

Action: RFO to process grants.

Propose the total amount of donations granted to date. (Note the General Power of Competence is used for this purpose) – This will be ratified at Full Council

10. **Pigeons – Funding gap** – Letters have been sent to 4 businesses in the town that have been identified as have pest problems to see if they are willing to donate towards the cost of a cull. The funding is £600 short. HTC and T&M has donated and WBC will not help until the town has taken some action. Cllr Knight proposed if the funds are not forthcoming that £600 is raised as an overspend on the budget, in order to instruct the contractors to proceed with the cull, seconded by Cllr Simpson, one abstention (Cllr Bumbieris) rest in favour. **Action:** Office to instruct contractor and chase funding.
11. **Triangle Field - Consider request for financial support from Management Committee** – TFMC is asking for £1500 funding. Nigel Pateman (TFMC) advised he has produced accounts and RFC is paying its way whilst TFMC pays for other expenditure. The gas bill was queried as it has increased significantly since 2016. NP advised it is estimated and he has allowed for extra in case. TFMC has £150 in the bank and has 2 grass cutting bills for the whole field to pay, a bill for ridding of weeds on the bund and a monthly water bill to pay. Cllr Simpson thinks the decision on giving any funding can wait and the whole set up needs to be looked at. NP stressed the need for money now so the bank doesn’t reject payments. Cllr Simpson wishes to see the full accounts. It was commented that HTC do not want to be bothered with micro management of the Triangle Field. NP said there is always football going on at the Triangle Field and that he has all the statements and bills to support the accounts if we wish to see them. Cllr Small noted this as a formal request to view the accounts. **Action:** TFMC to submit full accounts to HTC. Cllr Simpson commented that there is a conflict of interest and exclusivity of use which needs properly addressing. Cllr Simpson proposed £750 in the interim. Cllrs Small and Knight abstained due to their interest. One in favour, rest against. It was confirmed that the budget for Triangle Field falls under the R&A committee. Cllr Benneyworth proposed £1500 is given to the TFMC, seconded by Cllr Brookman, subject to receipt of their full accounts each year. 3 in favour, one against, 2 abstained. **Action:** RFO to issue payment of £1500.
12. **Hungerford & Camburn – New members required** – Cllrs Knight and Small volunteered to join if needed.

Meeting closed 9.00pm