

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE FINANCE AND POLICY COMMITTEE OF TRING TOWN COUNCIL HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, THE MARKET HOUSE, TRING ON MONDAY 7th MARCH 2011 AT 7.45 p.m.

Present: Councillors: J.S. Allan (in the chair)
W.D. Berdinner
Mrs M. V. Booth (non committee member)
L.J. Harris (arrived at 8.08pm)
Mrs P.J. Hearn
N.A. Hollinghurst (non committee member)
C.F. Townsend

Ex-Officio: Mrs R.L. Ransley Town Mayor

Also present: Mr C.R. Westwood, Acting Town Clerk
Mr Keith Gray, Clerk in waiting

15882. **APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Mrs D.M. Rance. Councillor Harris apologised for his late arrival.

15883. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor Allan declared a personal interest in item 15807 as a Director of Tring Together, and due to his involvement with Tring Summer Festival.

Councillor Hearn declared a prejudicial interest in item 6 as Tring Market Auctions was a family business.

15884. **MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 17th January 2011 were confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

15885. **MATTERS OF REPORT FROM THE MINUTES**

Vide item 15811, Councillor Hollinghurst congratulated the Staffing Panel on their hard work in successfully recruiting a new Town Clerk.

CHAIRMAN'S COMMUNICATIONS

A letter had been received from IAC Internal Audit & Compliance offering a new internal audit service for Town and Parish Councils. It was agreed to retain the services of the existing internal auditor

The Audit Briefing for winter 2011 had been received from BDO, the Town Council's external auditor.

Notification had been received from Dacorum Borough Council of an increase in rent charged for the Town Council's garage at 53 Kingsley Walk to £8.40 per week with effect from the 4th April 2011. The increase was accepted.

15886. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

There were no members of the public or press present.

15887. **GRANTS**

- a. Application from Tring Together
The Chairman said that the Grants requested by Tring Together of £500 for the Christmas Festival and £500 for the Christmas Lights competition had already been approved in the budget. It was noted that a further Grant request may be submitted for the Tring Carnival and Summer Festival.
Action Town Clerk
- b. Application from Hastoe Village Hall Trust
Following discussion it was agreed to defer any discussion on this application to the next meeting of the Finance & Policy Committee to be held on the 20th June 2011.
Action Town Clerk

15888 **ANNUAL ACCOUNTS 2009/10**

The report circulated with the agenda was noted.

15889 **ANNUAL REVIEW OF THE WORK OF THE INTERNAL AUDITOR**

The Chairman reported that the Working Party (Councillors Allan, Harris and Townsend) had completed the review of the work of the internal auditor and were satisfied that the following statements reflected an accurate summary:

- (i) Independent Yes – Auditing Solutions Ltd is an autonomous company. It's staff have no connection with councillors or staff in Tring TC, and it is not used by this Council to provide goods, or services of a direct nature.
- (ii) Competent Yes – its staff are qualified accountants and experienced auditors. There is no evidence that the work has not been carried out ethically and with integrity and objectivity.
- (iii) Appointed by Council Yes – Minute 14725 of the Council Meeting held on 27th October 2008.
- (iv) Work planned Yes – ASL follows Audit Commission guidance. The Council has had sight of its tests and copies of its reports.
- (v) Plan discussed with RFO Yes – the Responsible Financial Officer is aware of what will be undertaken and what is required by way of documents
- (vi) Reporting to Council Yes – the Auditor's report is shown to and acknowledged by the Council each year. Its findings are either acted upon or an explanation of why not given.
- (vii) Challenging Yes – the Auditor encourages ownership of the control environment; and the production of risk registers and associated action plans.
- (viii) Forward looking Yes – maintains awareness of new developments and gives advice on changes thought beneficial.
- (ix) Value for money Yes

Thus the parameters of the Review process are satisfied. This Council's systems are robust, as are our Internal Auditor's examination of them. It was agreed that their services should be retained.

15890 **ANNUAL REVIEW OF RISK ASSESSMENTS AND HEALTH & SAFETY POLICY 2010/11**

Following discussion it was

RESOLVED

That the Risk Assessments and Health & Safety Policies circulated with the agenda had been reviewed and were fit for purpose, subject to the inclusion of a reference to the need for staff working with computers to have regular breaks.

Action Town Clerk

15891 **ANNUAL REVIEW OF THE COUNCIL'S FINANCIAL STANDING ORDERS 2010/11**

Following discussion it was

RESOLVED

That the Financial Standing Orders circulated with the agenda had been reviewed and were fit for purpose, subject to the reserves policy agreed at minute 15805 being reviewed by the internal auditor at his next visit (12th May 2011).

15892. **TRING TOWN CRIER 2011**

The Chairman reported that the next edition had gone to the printer and a proof was awaited. The proof would be circulated to councillors before publication. The Chairman thanked the Information Officer for her help with the process and Councillor Hollinghurst for arranging the advertisements.

15893. **EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

It was **RESOLVED** that under Section I of the Public Bodies (admission to meetings) Act 1960 the public and press be excluded during the Items in Part II of the agenda for this meeting, because it was likely that publicity would prejudice the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business or for other special reasons arising from the nature of the business or proceedings.

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The meeting ended at 8.20 p.m.

Chairman