

MINUTES OF THE POLICY & RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 8TH NOVEMBER 2016

PRESENT: Cllr. Goodchild (in the Chair), Cllrs. Clifford, Holmes, Rook, Swann, Veitch and Warne.

APOLOGIES: Cllr. Bunyan

Declaration of Interests, Dispensations, Predetermination or Lobbying:

Members are required to declare any interests, dispensations, predetermination or lobbying on items on this agenda. Members are reminded that changes to the Register of Interests should be notified to the Clerk.

39/16: Internal Finance Check:

Cllr. Swann confirmed that the internal finance check had been completed and everything was in order.

40/16: Authorisation of payments made after the October meeting:

A list of payments made after the October meeting, is filed with these minutes.

41/16: Cheques for Payment:

Cheques for November were signed for payment as per the list filed with these minutes. It was proposed by Cllr. Goodchild, seconded by Cllr. Swann and agreed to authorise payment of the cheques as presented.

These included:

Policy and Resources	£12,082.73
Burial and Properties	£ 1,729.88
Economic & Community	£ 198.00
Environmental Management	<u>£ 3,253.70</u>
Total	£17,264.31

Cllr. Veitch confirmed the payment to Greenlink Ecology was for a management plan for the slow worms as required by condition 3 of the Cranbrook Engineering/Wilkes Field planning permission.

42/16: Staffing:

The advertisement for the position of Deputy Clerk had run for two weeks in the Wealden Advertiser as well as being posted on the KALC and Parish website. We had received seven applications. A shortlist of four had been drawn up and those candidates had been invited for interview on Wednesday 16th November. Cllr. Veitch was optimistic that a suitable candidate would be found for the role. It was confirmed that the position would be full time, Cllr. Warne queried whether there would be sufficient hours built into the schedule for the Neighbourhood Development Plan to be clerked? The Clerks agreed to speak to Hawkhurst Parish Clerk to gauge the extent of admin support that had been required when they undertook their plan.

A discussion followed on how the NDP Committee could be best supported with several suggestions put forward.

The salary for the newly promoted Clerk Lori Ham was discussed and it was proposed by Cllr. Veitch, seconded by Cllr. Goodchild and agreed that this be increased by two spinal points to point 32 to reflect the role of Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer from 1st November. It will increase by a further point once the CiLCA qualification has been achieved, rising to point 34 in April to allow for the annual increment.

A discussion took place on the starting salary for a newly appointed Deputy Clerk, it was proposed by Cllr. Clifford, seconded by Cllr. Holmes and agreed that spinal point 26 be offered, but with the flexibility being delegated to Cllrs. Veitch and Goodchild to increase this to a maximum of point 28 if considered necessary.

43/16: Contracts:

Councillors were given copies of the current specification for the Grounds Contract which is due for renewal on 1st March 2017. The Clerk was happy to walk round with any Councillors and review the current specification. It was confirmed to Cllr. Goodchild that the Chairman of the relevant committees were all responsible for ensuring the contract was being fulfilled to a satisfactory standard. Cllr. Veitch requested assurance that the Slow worm management plan would be considered when looking at the grounds contract to ensure there was no conflict between the two.

The Clerk advised members that the contract with the current power supplier for the streetlights – Haven Power needed to be reviewed. We have until the end of this month to advise them if we wish to cancel or the contract will automatically be renewed. The process of finding a new supplier is done via a government consultation body that researches the best value for the authority. They have been approached but have yet to respond. It was proposed by Cllr. Veitch, seconded by Cllr. Goodchild that the responsibility be delegated to Cllr. Swann to award the contract.

44/16: Grant Applications:

- a) An application had been received via KALC from the organisation Porchlight which helps homeless people or those sleeping rough. They help with benefit applications, accessing healthcare, providing advice and hot drinks to those in need. Cllr. Holmes stated that now Government funding has been withdrawn from these organisations they are now looking for funding from the community. It was proposed by Cllr. Swann, seconded by Cllr. Rook and agreed that as we already support the Citizens Advice Bureau in Cranbrook, which directly helps our parishioners, we would be unable to help Porchlight with any funding.
- b) An application had been received from the Cranbrook branch of the Royal British Legion requesting £300 for the Armistice Parade and Festival of Remembrance. The funds would be for the Orders of Service and the cost of the Town Band. It was proposed by Cllr. Swann, seconded by Cllr. Holmes and agreed to award the amount requested.

45/16: Promotion of Parish Council:

Cllr. Clifford informed the Committee that he, Cllrs Holmes and Warne were putting all their efforts into bringing a proof of a new full colour publication to the next meeting. He was expecting that it would be published quarterly and be self-funded via advertising revenue.

Cllr. Clifford reiterated his request for the Chairs of the Committees to provide articles promoting their activities. There would be a media release referring to the Neighbourhood Development Plan sent out tomorrow.

The Clerk advised Members that the cobbler in Carriers Road was still looking for a location to site a portacabin after his business was recently destroyed by a fire. After a discussion it was proposed by Cllr. Clifford, seconded by Cllr. Goodchild and agreed to offer him three spaces in Jockey Lane Car Park at a charge to be determined, for an initial period of six months.

46/16: Budget Discussion:

Cllr. Swann had requested this be put on the agenda to discuss funding for the Neighbourhood Development Plan. There was already £7,500 already earmarked plus a possible government grant of £9,000. Cllr. Warne stated that the timing of applying for the government grant was crucial as they are awarded in six month tranches and could not be used for expenditure already incurred. The current quotes for a consultant are around £49,000 so we would need to budget for £32,500 over the next two years. This did not include any contingency for additional admin support. The Clerk stated that admin support in the form of clerking the meetings could not be guaranteed until after Christmas when it was hoped the new member of staff would be in post.

Cllr. Rook stated he was still cynical on the benefits of an NDP and its status in law, and remained in favour of a Parish Plan. Cllr. Veitch felt that the process of involving the community was in itself beneficial and even if the legal status was diminished the information gathered would still be worthy of the investment.

The Clerk reminded Members that the choice of consultant was a Full Council agenda item on Thursday. Cllr. Warne stated that the Committee were not ready to make a recommendation on the choice of consultant and would like to defer the item. She would like to schedule an additional meeting on Monday 28th November when a third consultant could present to all Councillors and the Members of the Steering Group.

Cllr. Swann stated that looking at early indications of his budget calculations, it was likely that the precept would need to be increased by around £19,000, although not all the Committees had discussed their budgets yet, so this was only an estimation at this stage. The increase was due to the additional £16,250 for the NDP budget and the £5,130 cost of the by election in March. He had managed to make savings elsewhere to reduce the overall budget increase. The budget for this Committee would be looked at in more detail next month but he had felt it important to have these initial discussions tonight.

47/16: Items for Information:

Cllr Holmes reported that Bartholomews in Carriers Road were not renewing their lease and would be leaving Cranbrook at the end of the year. He believed that they would still be offering a free delivery and collection service from their base in Wittersham.

Cllr. Veitch informed Members that she had still not received a response from the Co-Op with regard to the access issue. There was a meeting scheduled with TWBC to discuss the next step.

Cllr. Rook advised that he would be attending the Memorial Service for Becky Daw on Friday 11th November.