

MINUTES OF THE POLICY & RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE  
MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 11<sup>th</sup> FEBRUARY 2020

PRESENT: Cllr. Beck (in the Chair), Bunyan, Clifford, Fairweather (in part), Fletcher, Gilbert and Pethurst.

APOLOGIES: Cllr. Warne.

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. He notified those present that the meeting was being recorded as a Clerk's aid.

The Chairman advised he would be altering the order of the agenda, moving the item on staffing and Clerk's salaries to the end of the meeting, allowing members of the public to leave before it was discussed in a closed session.

**118/19: Internal finance check:**

Cllr. Beck confirmed that the internal finance check has been completed and everything was in order.

**119/19: Authorisation of payments made after the January meeting:**

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

**120/19: Transfers of monies between accounts:**

No transfers had been required.

**121/19: Cheques for Payment:**

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

These included:

Policy and Resources	£12,681.15
Burial and Properties	£ 4,429.52
Environmental Management	<u>£ 4,925.20</u>
Total	<b>£22,035.87</b>

**122/19: Community Centre:**

Cllr. Fletcher advised a full update would be given at Full Council on Thursday. Members had been sent the supporting paperwork which would be presented by Carl Meewezen, whose experience was already proving to be a huge asset to the project. It was expected that a grant of £420,000 from TWBC would be recommended for approval by the Communities Advisory Board on 19<sup>th</sup> February. The additional £20,000 on top of what had been expected was to cover TWBC's legal costs.

**123/19: Tanyard Dental surgery Update:**

Cllr. Fletcher advised that contracts had not yet been exchanged. A preliminary report from the solicitor had been received and work to progress through the relevant searches was underway.

**124/19: Public Toilets:**

Cllr. Fletcher advised the public toilets in Crane Lane now belonged to the Parish Council. The Clerk advised they would be added to our asset list. Due to constant vandalism, getting them back to an acceptable standard would take massive investment, Cllr. Fairweather was looking into alternative options for the provision of public conveniences.

**125/19: Sissinghurst Tennis Club Lease:**

A request to amend the current lease to meet criteria for a Sports England grant had been received. The Clerk confirmed the Tennis Club pay a peppercorn rent of £2 per annum. Cllr. Beck proposed that any decision would need to be deferred until the current discussions regarding a transfer of land to St George's Institute to facilitate the new Sissinghurst Village Hall had been concluded. This was seconded by Cllr. Clifford and agreed. Members also agreed that should amendments be agreed in the future the Tennis Club would need to be responsible for all legal costs including those of the Parish Council.

**126/19: Membership of Action with Communities in Rural Kent:**

The Clerk confirmed our membership to the organisation had expired on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2018. Cllr. Fletcher explained the benefits of belonging to the organisation. They could provide good advice on community halls and affordable housing, both of which would benefit this Parish Council at the current time. The current cost of membership is £105. Cllr. Fletcher proposed we join; this was seconded by Cllr. Clifford and agreed.

**127/19: Request for permission for Thai food van to trade in Jockey Lane Car Park.**

The Parish Council had received a request from ThaiSo Catering for permission to trade in hot Thai food on a Saturday evening between 6 & 9pm. It was discussed if a charge should apply and how any litter generated would be dealt with? It was delegated to Cllr. Beck to make further enquiries and report back to the Committee prior to any decision being made.

**128/19: Map Update:**

The Clerk confirmed that all efforts to obtain a copy of the maps had been unsuccessful. With this in mind Members agreed they should be returned to the Museum and stored in the correct conditions within a map chest. The Clerk agreed to note them on our asset list.

**129/19: Funding for Honorary Mayor event:**

Cllr. Fletcher proposed that £150 be allocated towards catering costs for the Honorary Mayor event this Friday, this was seconded by Cllr. Fairweather and agreed. It was noted that the event was also receiving sponsorship from Stuart Cleary and Buss Murton Solicitors.

**130/19: Website Development:**

Cllr. Clifford advised a meeting of the working group was imminent. The Clerk advised that our move to a new website provider was now overdue. A previous decision to go with Man and mouse had now been discounted due to migration costs. A company who would migrate all the information from our current provider at nil cost had now been identified. Hosting and management costs would remain similar to current costs.

The Clerk had also confirmed there was no minimum contract period. Cllr. Clifford proposed that we accept this proposal from IT Planning at least until we had decided the direction of any new or upgraded website. This was seconded by Cllr. Gilbert and agreed.

### **131/19: GDPR Update:**

Cllr. Pethurst had requested this item be discussed following his attendance at a KALC Website Accessibility training seminar. Concerns were raised regarding councillors using private email addresses for council business. It appeared from other delegates that the majority of councils use dedicated council email addresses. Cranbrook & Sissinghurst Parish Council had tried this in the past, however not all members had successfully used these email accounts, which had led to emails going unanswered. Cllr. Fairweather voiced concern about using a generic email address on personal IT equipment and suggested that in support of TWBC's commitment to be carbon neutral by 2050 we should consider going completely paperless. It would require financial investment if all councillors were issued with their own tablet, however the cost would be offset against current printing and paper costs. It was agreed the Clerks would investigate potential avenues to explore through advice from the TWBC I.T department and Goudhurst P.C who have recently gone down this route.

### **132/19: Parish Cake:**

Members were provided with a list of debts totalling £775 that had accrued over a period of time up until autumn 2019. A new disciplined method of selling had now been introduced reducing the likelihood of a similar situation occurring again. Cllr. Clifford proposed that £775 of what had been deemed as unrecoverable debt be formally written off, this was seconded by Cllr. Bunyan and agreed.

### **133/19: Contracts:**

#### **a) Grounds Contract:**

The Clerk confirmed that the invitation to tender for the Grounds Contract had been published on the government Contracts Finder and Parish Council website since 21<sup>st</sup> January. The closing date had been set at 28<sup>th</sup> February. It was agreed to delegate the opening of the tenders to Cllrs. Gilbert, Clifford, Fairweather and Fletcher. This would take place in the Council Chamber at 6pm on Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> March. They would make their recommendation to the committee at the next meeting

#### **b) Increase in energy charges:**

Our energy providers had advised that charges were being increased. Cllr. Beck stated that the three year option was the most economical and proposed we accept a three year fixed contract, with our current providers, this was seconded by Cllr. Gilbert and agreed.

### **134/19: Grant Applications**

#### **a) Messy Church Request:**

A request to waiver the Vestry Hall hire fees had been received from St. Dunstan's Messy Church. Members agreed the monthly event was well attended. It was proposed by Cllr. Fairweather, seconded by Cllr. Clifford and agreed to support the request.

#### **b) Request from The Counselling Centre – Tunbridge Wells.**

A request for financial assistance had been received. It was proposed by Cllr. Beck, seconded by Cllr. Bunyan and agreed that with regret the application could not be supported.

**135/19: Items for Information:**

a) Cllr. Clifford reported that planning for events to commemorate the V.E. Day Anniversary on Friday 8<sup>th</sup> May continue. Efforts to secure a Town Crier for the event were ongoing.

b) Cllr. Clifford reported that Cllr. Gilbert's work on the redesign of the office space is ongoing. He is liaising with the Clerks to ascertain their requirements. Cllr. Clifford had approached Iden Signs to discuss new signage for the building.

c) Cllr. Clifford reported on the launch of an established community magazine in the area called CommunityAd. This is a commercial enterprise as opposed to our not for profit parish magazine, Parish Cake.

d) Cllr. Fletcher advised there was a Cranbrook Business Association meeting scheduled in the George for the 28<sup>th</sup> February.

e) Cllr. Fairweather advised comments on the TW Draft Local Plan had now been published on the TWBC website. There are 8000 comments by 2000 contributors. It makes very interesting reading and because TWBC still does not have a five year land supply, Cranbrook and Sissinghurst remain vulnerable to speculative development.

**136/19: Staffing:****a) Approval of advertisement for additional member of staff:**

Cllr. Fletcher advised that in depth discussions had been had with the Clerks regarding their current roles. Lynn had indicated her preference to reduce her hours to 20 hours per week. A draft advert for an additional full time Deputy Clerk was tabled. It was suggested that a sentence was added to include the essential element of excellent IT skills. It was proposed by Cllr. Beck, seconded by Cllr. Gilbert and agreed the advertisement should be submitted for two editions of the Wealden Advertiser and the Tunbridge Wells Times. The Clerk would also submit the advert to SLCC and KALC for publication on their websites

**b) Clerk's Salaries:**

The Clerks salaries were discussed, it was proposed by Cllr. Fletcher, seconded by Cllr. Gilbert and agreed that their salaries would each be increased by one spinal point as per the conditions of their contract. The Deputy Clerk would move to spinal point 24 and the Clerk to spinal point 31 from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2020.