



MINUTES

Minutes of a meeting of the **POLICY AND FINANCE COMMITTEE** held in the Stable Block Meeting Room, Stone House, Corve Street, Ludlow on **MONDAY 23rd JANUARY 2012** at **7.00PM**

PF/118 PRESENT

Chairman: Councillor McCormack

Councillors: Aitken; Newbold; Parry; Perks; Pound; Smithers; Wilcox

Officers: Veronica Calderbank, Town Clerk;
Lucy Morgan, Secretary

PF/119 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Phillips.

PF/120 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

In accordance with the terms of the Local Authorities (Model Code of Conduct) (England) Order 2007 issued under Section 51 of the Local Government Act 2000 Members declared interests as follows:

Personal Interests

<u>Member</u>	<u>Item</u>
V. Parry	Ludlow in Bloom Queen's Diamond Jubilee Group
J. Smithers	Ludlow in Bloom Queen's Diamond Jubilee Group
G. Perks	Flag Protocol Twinning

Prejudicial Interests

No prejudicial interests were declared.

PF/121 PUBLIC OPEN SESSION (15 minutes)

There were no members of the public present.

PF/122 PUBLIC OPEN SESSION FEEDBACK

All questions posed at the previous meeting were answered during the meeting.

PF/123 MINUTES

RESOLVED (unanimous)

That the minutes of the Policy and Finance Committee meeting held on 14th November 2011, be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

PF/124 RECOMMENDATIONS FROM SERVICES COMMITTEE

Babies Memorial

That:-

- i) the existing babies memorial stone is cleaned;**
- ii) no barrier is added to enclose the babies memorial area;**
- iii) that a small oblong bed is created within the babies memorial area but is maintained by the DLF workforce;**
- iv) that the canopy of the holly tree is raised during regular maintenance work of other trees in the Cemetery.**

RECOMMENDED (unanimous)

That:-

- i) the existing babies memorial stone is cleaned;**
- ii) no barrier is added to enclose the babies memorial area;**
- iii) that a small oblong bed is created within the babies memorial area but is maintained by the DLF workforce;**
- iv) that the canopy of the holly tree is raised during regular maintenance work of other trees in the Cemetery.**

PF/125 Change in Cemetery Regulations

That the request to have kerb stones placed around a relative's grave is denied and that no changes be made to the Cemetery Regulations.

Councillor Parry explained that the current policy on no new kerbs had been in place for some years due to the maintenance difficulties they cause. Following a discussion it was decided that this was not a straightforward issue and the difference between replacement and maintenance needed further clarification.

RESOLVED (unanimous)

That a report be presented to the next Services Committee for a proposed policy for the replacement/maintenance of kerbs at Henley Road Cemetery.

PF/126 POLICIES**a) Flag Protocol**

The Town Clerk stated that legally the Council's properties were not classed as public buildings and not bound by the relevant rules, therefore a town protocol was required. Councillor Wilcox said that as long as the policy was in line with custom, it should be adopted. Councillor Aitken asked if this meant flags would only be flown on the days stipulated in the policy, the Town Clerk confirmed this.

RECOMMENDED (unanimous)

That the Flag Protocol be adopted.

PF/127 b) Twinning Protocol

Councillor Perks stated that the proposed policy was clear and concise, he congratulated the Town Clerk. He said that from his involvement with the Twinning Associations they were looking for the Council's support particularly with regards to Mayoral visits to the Town.

Councillor Aitken queried the workload involved with this Protocol, he stated that he believed the Twinning Associations were looking for Council support not for the Council to take over the organisation of events etc. He added that the Associations were made up of individuals with the interest and time to fully manage each event. Councillor Wilcox agreed that it was important to work in conjunction with the Associations and not to take over.

Councillor Parry expressed her concerns that currently the Council had no idea what events were being organised with twinned town as there was no communication between the Town Council and Twinning Associations. Councillor Aitken stated that the Twinning Sub-Committee could act as a conduit to pass information between the parties involved.

Councillor Perks advised that the Council was in a good position to support to Twinning Associations through publicity i.e. website, newsletter etc. and also well positioned with regards to applying/accessing funding. He went on to emphasised that a policy was required to clarify the relationship of responsibilities of the Council and Twinning Associations.

Members discussed paragraph 1.3 in detail, especially with regards to the individual responsibilities of the Council and the Twinning Associations. It was agreed to revise the wording the paragraph.

RECOMMENDED (unanimous)

That paragraph 1.3 of the Twinning Protocol be amended to read "The Sub-Committee is prepared to assist the Twinning Associations in respect of

schedules of activities and programmes for individual exchanges and events with any financial involvement being approved by Council”.

PF/128 Members discussed and agreed the following amendments to the protocol

RECOMMENDED (unanimous)

That the following amendments be made to the Twinning Protocol:-

1.5 – Replace “be responsible for” with “assist with”

2. – Delete “is to be followed”.

3.1 - Insert “by the Council” after “allocated”.

3.3 – Amend to read “The Council will decide whether or not to make any payment towards travel and subsistence expenses”.

3.4 – Delete

3.6 – Delete

3.7 – Replace the word “County” with “Country”

PF/129 **RECOMMENDED (unanimous)**

That the Twinning Protocol be approved and passed to the Twinning Sub-Committee for them to further recommend amendments to Council if required.

PF/130 **c) Protocol on Member/Officer Relations**

The Chairman stated that her perception was that the relationships within Ludlow Town Council had vastly improved in the last few years and that this Protocol was important to underpin this achievement.

The Chairman added that further clarification was needed in 2.1 with regards to the phrase “direction and control”. The Town Clerk stated that she would refer this back to NALC.

The Chairman drew Members attention to the final sentence of paragraph 2.2 which she stated was very important. Councillor Parry agreed that staff needed to be allowed to run the Council on a day to day basis, Councillor Wilcox added that Members must voice any objections or issues through the official Committee process.

Councillor Aitken asked that it be emphasised that Ludlow Town Council is not a political Council. The Town Clerk suggested that this could be resolved/restated each year at the Annual General Meeting.

Members discussed and agreed the following amendments to the protocol:-

3.3(b) – Delete the words “both in relation to personal matters and party political issues”.

3.3(c) – Delete the final sentence.

New Paragraph 4(c) – The Town Clerk may make recommendations to the Council

5.1 - insert the word “Procedure”.

Amend “Authority” to “Council” throughout the Protocol

RECOMMENDED (unanimous)

That, subject to the amendments above, the Protocol on Member/Officer Relations be adopted.

PF/131 Protocol on Communications

The Chairman asked that as the Council already had a Press Protocol, did this Protocol replace or substitute the current adopted policy. The Town Clerk stated that it would replace the current protocol if preferred.

Several Members raised concerns with paragraph 4b. Councillor Parry stated that due to the volume of enquiries she received from the public it would be impossible to pass on details of everything. Members agreed this item should be clarified by highlighting in bold the phrase “relating to the Town Council or one’s role within it”. Members also agreed to insert the word “formal” in paragraph 3.

PF/132 RECOMMENDED (5:0:2)

That subject to the amendments above the Protocol on Communications be adopted.

PF/133 Protocol on Bullying and Harassment

Members asked that the protocol be used in line with the Town Council’s Grievance Policy.

RECOMMENDED (unanimous)

That subject to the insertion of the paragraph “6. This protocol is to be construed in accordance with the Ludlow Town Council Grievance Policy”, the Protocol on Bullying and Harassment be adopted.

PF/134 Guidance Notes on Whistle-Blowing

The Chairman asked that the word “malpractice” in paragraph 1. be highlighted in bold as it is a very important point in the policy.

RECOMMENDED (unanimous)

That subject to the amendment above the Guidance Notes on Whistle-Blowing be adopted.

PF/135 QUEEN'S DIAMOND JUBILEE

The Town Clerk updated Members on her recent meeting with members of the Queen's Diamond Jubilee Group. She stated that a report would be presented to the next Council meeting on the purchase of bunting for the Olympic torch relay and the Queen's Diamond Jubilee. Councillor Parry added that bunting was also needed for the Jubilee Senior Citizen's Party.

Councillor Smithers stated that several other local town and parish Councils were interested in contributing to the Olympic torch relay and Queen's Diamond Jubilee celebrations. The Town Clerk clarified that the main events in the county were being run by Shropshire Council, it was up to Ludlow to arrange their own event if they wished. Members agreed to refer any interested parties to the Queen's Diamond Jubilee Group.

PF/136 3rd QUARTER ACCOUNTS

The Town Clerk stated that she had asked for any questions with regards to the accounts to be submitted prior to the meeting and she had received none. The Chairman drew Members attention to the level market rents received which already exceeded the budget.

The Town Clerk pointed out that Council had previously resolved to ring-fence the income received from the Linney car park meter to maintenance of the car park. In light of the fact that the income had now exceeded its budget she would ask Council to widen the ring-fence to include the Linney riverside park generally.

The Chairman stated that the 3rd quarter accounts looked good which bodes well for the year end and next year's budget.

RESOLVED (unanimous)

That the 3rd Quarters Accounts be noted and thanks be expressed to the staff.

PF/137 FINANCIAL INFORMATION**a) Payments**

The Town Clerk pointed out that though by law the Town Council only need to make publicly available expenditure over £500.00, Ludlow Town Council fully discloses all expenditure.

RESOLVED (unanimous)

That the payment list for November and December 2011 be noted.

PF/138 b) Income**RESOLVED (unanimous)**

That the income report for November and December 2011 be noted.

PF/139 USE OF THE GUILDHALL

The Town Clerk stated that Members needed to decide whether to allow other organisations to use the Guildhall prior to a decision being made as to its future use. She added that a request had been made for its use of the 8th May 2012. Councillor Smithers added that allowing other groups to use the building may encourage viable suggestions for the building's future use.

The Chairman stated that the Town Council would need to charge to cover staff costs but that we should not undercut other meeting spaces in the town. The Town Clerk said that as the Council was receiving business rate relief for the building being unoccupied there may be difficulties if the Council charges for its use. She stated that she would check with Shropshire Council Non Domestic Rates officers and refer the matter back to Council.

PF/140 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC: PUBLIC BODIES (ADMISSION TO MEETINGS) ACT 1960

The Chairman moved that the public be excluded from the meeting for the following item(s) of business pursuant to section 1 of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, on the grounds that publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

RESOLVED (unanimous)

That the public be excluded and the meeting continue in closed session.

The meeting closed at 8.55pm.

Chairman

Date

N.B. Confidential Minutes will be issued.