

MIDDLEWICH TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of a Meeting of the Town Council's Finance, Policy and Governance Committee, held in Room 3B at the above address on Monday 6th June 2016, commencing at 6.30pm.

PRESENT

Councillor S Moss (in the Chair) and Councillors PM Farrell, K Kingston, DJ Latham, SN McGrory, B Walmsley and W Walmsley

OFFICERS PRESENT

JPA Williams, Town Clerk and DJ French, Assistant Town Clerk

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

None received

127 APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED:

That Councillor S Moss be appointed Chairman of the Committee for the ensuing year.

128 APPOINTMENT OF VICE CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED:

That Councillor SN McGrory be appointed Vice Chairman of the Committee for the ensuing year.

129 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The following Declarations of Interest were made:

- Councillor DJ Latham declared a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in the grant application from the Action Against Ansa Group as he owned a property opposite the proposed Waste Transfer Site on Cledford Lane. Councillor SN McGrory declared that he was the Chairman of the Ansa Liaison Group and Councillor B Walmsley declared that she was a member of the Liaison Group;
- Councillors PJ Farrell, S Moss and B Walmsley declared interests in the Middlewich Community Trust as they are all trustees;
- Councillor S Moss declared an interest in the proposed asset transfer of the allotments on the grounds that she rented an allotment.

130 MINUTES

Resolved:

That the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 29th March be confirmed as a correct record.

131 TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Committee considered the current Terms of Reference.

RESOLVED:

That the Terms of Reference be approved without amendment.

132 TOWN COUNCIL GRANT SCHEME AND APPLICATIONS FOR FUNDING

(a) The Committee considered Grant applications as follows:

(i) additional information from the Action Against Ansa group following their grant application submitted to the previous meeting requesting a grant of £2000 towards their work;

(ii) an application from Middlewich Community Trust for approximately £4000 to repair or replace lighting, including emergency lighting, in the main hall of the Victoria Hall;

(iii) an application from CVS Cheshire East for £658 to provide 2 open surgeries and 4 drop in sessions to encourage people to volunteer as part of the Give 5 Campaign; and

(b) the Committee considered making payment of the grant to Sandbach and District Talking Newspaper following the decision on 1st February that “a grant of £200 be awarded to the Sandbach and District Talking Newspaper subject to funding being received from other sources too”.

RESOLVED: that

(a) no grant is awarded to the Action Against Ansa group but a sum of up to £1,000 be ring-fenced within the Town Council's budget towards a benchmarking project to obtain independent Air Quality assessments; this to be subject to obtaining advice and following discussions with the Environmental Hub Community Liaison Group;

(Note: in relation to the above matter, Cllr DJ Latham had declared a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest and therefore left the meeting during the discussion and decision. Cllr SN McGrory did not take part in the discussion or decision but provided background information to Members of the Committee when requested);

(b) the Town Council is recommended to approve a grant of up to £4,000 to be awarded to Middlewich Community Trust towards lighting improvements; the work to

be paid for by the Town Council and any balance remaining after the work has been carried out, to remain with the Town Council. The Town Clerk to liaise with Cllr Latham to ensure best value is obtained;

(Note: in relation to the above matter, Cllrs Farrell, Moss and B Walmsley, having declared interests on the grounds that they are Trustees, did not take part in the discussion or decision);

(c) no grant is awarded to CVS Cheshire East but they be offered full use of the Town Council stall at the Makers Market on 3 occasions of their choosing; and

(d) the grant of £200 be paid to Sandbach and District Talking Newspapers.

133 END OF YEAR ACCOUNTS AND INTERNAL AUDIT

The Committee considered the Annual Return for the year ended 31st March 2016; together with the Internal Audit report.

RESOLVED:

That

(a) Section 1 of the Annual Return for Middlewich Town Council for 2015 – 16 (Annual Governance Statement) be approved and signed off for submission to the external auditors BDO; and

(b) Section 2 of the Annual Return for Middlewich Town Council for 2015 – 16 (Accounting Statements) be approved and signed off for submission to the external auditors BDO.

134 STANDING ORDERS

The Committee considered the draft Standing Orders. These were the model set which had been amended at the previous meeting and submitted to Jackie Weaver at Cheshire Association of Local Councils (CHALC) for comment.

RESOLVED

That:

(a) the draft Standing Orders be amended in accordance with the comments from CHALC and subject to clarification regarding Part 3 (i) relating to photographing, recording etc a meeting, so as to confirm the correct wording is used; and

(b) the Standing Orders be recommended to Council for adoption with immediate effect.

135 PUBLIC OPEN FORUM

The Committee considered the Public Open Forum arrangements which had now been in operation for around 6 months and enabled members of the public to raise items on the evening of the meeting as well as in advance.

RESOLVED

That the procedure be amended slightly and the new procedure as set out below be recommended for adoption:

“Public Open Forum - procedure

Members of the public are welcome to attend meetings of the Town Council. Each ordinary meeting will include a 15 minute Public Open Forum. This will be held within the meeting after the item on Declaration of Interests. Within a total period of 15 minutes, Members of the Public can raise any issue relating to Middlewich. The item will not be discussed but Councillors may ask questions of or seek clarification from the questioner or the Town Clerk. All items raised are at the discretion of the Mayor or person presiding at the meeting.

If a member of the public wishes to, they can raise a question in advance of the meeting; this must be submitted to the Clerk and Assistant Clerk in writing in the form of a question by 10.00am on the Monday of the week prior to the next Town Council meeting ie 7 days prior to the meeting. This will enable the Council to discuss and make a decision on the item, if appropriate.

For all items raised by Members of the Public, the Council may decide to provide a written answer.”

136 TOWN COUNCIL BUDGET TIMETABLE

The Committee considered a motion referred from the Council on 21st March proposing a new timetable for the budget process. The Committee noted that the Town Council’s budget was mainly to provide for the efficient management of the Council and the Town Council did not provide essential services for the public.

RESOLVED

That the budget process remain as previous years apart from holding a Town Council meeting in early December to consider the draft budget; and this meeting be held in public.

137 POLICY ON DOCUMENTS ON THE WEBSITE

The Committee had agreed on 1st February to introduce a policy whereby the Town Council agenda sheet only, but no background reports be published on the website; and minutes be published as soon as possible; subject to review in 3 months’ time.

As these arrangements had been running for 4 months, the Committee was asked to consider whether they wished to make any changes.

RESOLVED

That the policy on documents on the website remain as it currently is in that the agenda sheet for Town Council meetings be published; and minutes of all public meetings be published as soon as possible after they have been approved; these arrangements be reviewed in 6 months' time.

138 PART 2

To make a resolution to move into Part Two session and exclude the Public and Press from the Meeting on the basis that the item to be discussed involves commercial and legal matters

RESOLVED

That the meeting be moved into Part Two session for the remainder of the meeting.

139 POTENTIAL ASSET TRANSFERS

The Committee considered the following matters:

- (a) the status and continuation of the Middlewich Tuesday Market; and
- (b) The potential asset transfers from Cheshire East Council of:
 - (i) Booth Lane and Rutland Drive Allotments and
 - (ii) Southway Public Conveniences

RESOLVED

That Cheshire East Council be advised that

- (a) Middlewich Town Council does not wish to take over the Tuesday Market in Middlewich;
- (b) the Town Council is willing to take on a 125 year lease of the 2 allotment sites in Middlewich; and
- (c) the Town Council requires a breakdown of costs relating to business rates; water supply; electricity and other associated costs of owning and managing Southway public conveniences prior to making a decision regarding transfer.

Date of next meeting –Monday 5 September 2016 at 6.00pm

Cllr S Moss

Chairman

