

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 Tuesday 29th March 2016, commencing at 6.00pm.

PRESENT

Councillor S Moss (in the Chair) and Councillors K Kingston and SN McGrory

ALSO PRESENT

Councillor B Walmsley

OFFICERS PRESENT

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

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

None received

116 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The following Declarations of Interest were made:

- Councillor S Moss declared an interest in the Middlewich Community Trust as she is a trustee;
- Councillor B Walmsley declared an interest in the Middlewich Community Trust as she is a trustee; and in Middlewich Good Neighbours;
- All Members present declared a personal interest in the grant application submitted by the Action Against Ansa group on the grounds that they had opposed the Planning Application submitted by Ansa.

117 MINUTES

Resolved:

That the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 1st February be confirmed as a correct record.

TOWN COUNCIL GOVERNANCE

The Committee considered and reviewed the following documents:

- Town Council Standing Orders – a set of model Standing Orders had been received from the National Association of Local Councils (NALC). The Model set contained parts in bold type which contained statutory requirements; it was recommended by NALC that these be adopted without change. Other parts not in bold were designed to help Councils operate effectively but did

not contain statutory requirements so could be adapted to suit the needs of the Council. There were also parts where information was required to be inserted. Members considered each page of the Standing Orders to ensure they were appropriate for the Council.

- The Town Council's Financial Regulations – these were the current Regulations adopted by the Town Council and no amendments were proposed;
- The Code of Conduct – this was the Code of Conduct adopted by Cheshire East Council and Middlewich Town Council to which all Members had agreed to adhere to when signing their Declaration of Acceptance of Office;
- The Governance Statement – this outlined how the Council met the requirements of the Annual Return;
- The Middlewich Internal Audit Programme – this contained a checklist for reviewing audit requirements and methods of control;
- The Internal Audit Review and Risk Assessment – this identified areas where insurance could be used to manage risk. All measures were in place;
- Financial year end figures and carry forward figures – the Town Clerk circulated a report outlining income and expenditure projections from December 2015 – March 2016; and estimated and known income post 1st April 2016.

Resolved: That

FPG 118 (a) the Standing Orders be amended as outlined at the meeting and be submitted to Cheshire Association of Local Councils to ensure that all amendments are in accordance with statutory and best practice requirements;

FPG 119 (b) the Financial Regulations be approved and adopted;

FPG 120 (c) The Code of Conduct be approved and adopted;

FPG 121 (d) the Governance Statement be approved;

FPG 122 (e) the Internal Audit arrangements be approved; and Jugglers Accounting Management be confirmed as the Council's Internal Auditors;

FPG 123 (f) the Internal Audit Review and Risk Assessment be approved; and

FPG 124 (g) the income and expenditure projections from December 2015 – March 2016; and estimated and known income post 1st April 2016 be received.

125 MIDDLEWICH COMMUNITY TRUST

The Committee considered a draft Letter of Engagement between the Town Council and Middlewich Community Trust. The Trust would be responsible for the management of the Town Hall Function Suite from 1st April 2016.

Members discussed some minor changes to the Letter to provide greater clarity regarding the arrangements.

Resolved:

That the letter be approved subject to amendments to refer to the transfer of the building in accordance with Schedules 1, 2 and 3 and Schedule 3 be amended to refer to on-going monitoring of the arrangements by the Town Council and a yearly review.

126 TOWN COUNCIL GRANT SCHEME

The Committee considered:

- (a) a grant application from Action Against Ansa;
- (b) the completed grant monitoring form from In Tune – Middlewich following receipt of their grant award in 2015; and
- (c) a grant analysis form showing grant applications and decisions for the year 2015 – 2016.

Resolved: that

- (a) the application from the Action Against Ansa group be deferred for further information including:
 - Awaiting a decision on the Judicial Review before committing any public funds to the cause;
 - Awaiting advice to ensure the Council is not acting against the law in supporting a campaign that an elected Councillor has started, appears to still be involved in, and has a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in the matter;
 - Further detail regarding the financial situation of the Action Group is sought - including income received given the public knowledge of two separate crowd-funding pages and street collections, what costs have been incurred so far and a breakdown of future costs, this may include copies of any quotes or invoices the Group has. The Committee notes that the legal costs are an unknown factor at this stage, so any evidence that can shed more light on this aspect of the application would be helpful.
- (b) the grant monitoring form from In Tune – Middlewich be noted; and
- (c) the Grant Analysis Form for 2015 – 2016 be noted.

Date of next meeting –Monday 6 June 2016 at 6.00pm

Cllr S Moss

Chairman

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