



Cricklade Town Council
First Town on the Thames

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POLICY & RESOURCES MEETING
Monday, 5th July 2010
7pm at Ockwells

Councillors present - Cllr D Tetlow, Chairman
Cllr B. Atfield Cllr D. Avenell Cllr B. Beasley Cllr T. Clements
Cllr M. Hatton Cllr R. Szybiak
Cllr P. Colmer (non-voting Member)

Three members of the public were also present.

Fire evacuation instructions were pointed out before commencement.

Public Question Time

There were no questions.

MINUTES

10.11 Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Councillors G Chapman and T Robertson.

10.12 Declarations of Interest

None received.

10.13 Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting dated 4th May 2010 were approved as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

10.14 Clerk's Report

10.04

Clerks Report

Ockwells Lease - Following discussions with the Senior Estates Manger at Wiltshire Council a letter was being drafted to the Legal Team asking about progress on the Memorandum setting out the increases in rent in relation to the recent rise (wef 1 April 2010) as well background as to why the current lease is a commercial one. **Ongoing**

How the number of Band D households is calculated for precept purposes.

The Town Council had previously been given an explanation of how a parish tax base can reduce due to more people claiming a discount, there being more homes empty or second homes. The Town Clerk had asked for an explanation specific to Cricklade. The Principal Accountant at Wiltshire Council had sent a

	<p>summary of Cricklade's tax base report which showed that the drop was due to an increase in the number of properties with 'exemptions or disregards'. (These increased by 17 properties from 09/10 to 10/11.). Members NOTED this additional information. Closed</p> <p>Thames Hall – New Gas Boiler - The Town Clerk and the Chair of the Management Committee have tried to identify suitable grants towards a replacement gas boiler. No grants are available for gas or oil-fired boilers for public buildings as all grant aid is targeted towards renewables. New generation wood-fuelled boilers can run on automatic hop-fed pellets and operate on timers exactly as a gas-fired or oil-fired boiler would. However, there would not be suitable storage for the fuel. The Town Clerk had also contacted the Severn Wye Energy Agency (SWEA – the organisation that undertook energy audits at the Town Hall and Museum) and it confirms that there are no available grants. There is an allocation in EMR for this purchase. Ongoing</p> <p>Thames Hall Management Committee – Floor - Cllr Beasley attended the Annual General Meeting on 21st May 2010 and he reported at the Full Town Council Meeting on 24th May that the new floor in the hall had been poorly laid. In spite of repeated requests from the Chair of the Management Committee, no action had been taken by the contractor. It was AGREED that the Town Clerk looked into guarantees attached to the work to judge whether there had been a breach of conditions. Contact has been made with the contractor who has written an explanation of the work undertaken. This sets out how the work was completed and how the contractors have returned to the hall on at least 2 occasions and rectified problems without charge. However, it seems the problem stems from the levels of moisture coming into the building – the sub floor is sodden. The Town Clerk will arrange for a meeting between the two Town Council representatives and the Chair of the Management Committee to discuss outstanding maintenance issues and the renewal of the Committee's Agreement with the Town Council. Ongoing</p>
10.07	<p>Future Annual Town Meetings – At the last P&R meeting on 4th May the Town Clerk was asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) seek further clarification on the use of churches for Annual Town and Parish meetings and ii) if it is the case that the United Church can no longer be a venue then to book an alternative hall in plenty of time for the Annual Town meeting in 2011. <p>The Town Clerk contacted the Society of Local Council Clerks for further clarification on this and the SLCC advisor has said that it would be acceptable for the Town Council to continue using the venue as it had done for a number of years and that the guidance set out in Local Council Administration (Eighth Edition) is open to interpretation. Members AGREED that once the new 2011 schedule of meetings has been drawn up then the question around a venue for the Annual Town Meeting is revisited. Ongoing</p>
10.08	<p>Insurance Renewal - At the last P&R meeting, Members RESOLVED to renew insurance with existing insurers, Zurich Municipal, under an index linked 3 year long term agreement. This premium had now been paid. Closed</p>

10.15 Correspondence

Members **NOTED** a letter from the Cricklade Town Festival Committee thanking the Town Council for the grant it awarded towards the June 2010 event and one from the Wiltshire Pension Fund setting out its stabilisation policy for employer contributions.

10.16 Budget 2011/12 – Precept Planning Process

Members **NOTED** a timetable for the next precept planning process.

10.17 Ear Marked Reserves

Members considered a schedule of Ear Marked Reserves held by the Policy and Resources Committee. It was **RESOLVED** that the following should be returned to General Reserves subject to confirmation of spend by the Assistant Town Clerk (Finance):

1125/358	Insurance	£ 555
330	Museum Plans	£2,200
357	Town Improvements (Cross over of Town Clerks)	£2,600
1261/359	Town Centre Management	£3,000
		(A total of £8,355.)

It was also **RESOLVED** that a letter should be sent to the Chair of the Historical Society reassuring the Society that although the funds set aside for plans for a new Museum had been returned to General Reserves it was not an indication that the Town Council did not value the project and that the money could still be allocated to the project once a Business Plan was available.

10.18 Exclusion of Press and Public

Due to the special nature of the following item, the Chairman proposed the following resolution – ‘That the following item is conducted under the Public Bodies (Admission of Meetings) Act 1960 – therefore the public and press will be excluded.’

This was unanimously agreed by Members and the public left the Committee Room.

10.19 Funding of the Town Centre Car Park

Members considered a number of options for the funding and progress of the new car park as set out in a discussion document drafted by the Town Clerk. These centred around:

- i) A Public Works Loan
- ii) Selling of a Council-owned asset
- iii) Charging
- iv) Grant funding
- v) Short term measures

Members **AGREED** that the direction to be taken was:

- a) To ascertain project costings with, where possible, options on materials
- b) Undertake some research and preliminary calculations in terms charging for usage with projected revenue and costs
- c) Await the outcome of the Wiltshire Council funding bid and continue negotiations with alternative potential funder(s)
- d) Explore the possibility of spreading a Public Works Loan over a longer period of time to plug a funding gap
- e) Any subsequent rise in local tax (precept) through a commitment to a Public Works Loan must first have the support of local residents via wide consultation

Members **RESOLVED** that any sale of a Council owned asset was unlikely to be offset against the development of the car park and was a separate issue relating mainly to the ongoing maintenance costs of retaining an asset. More detail should be collated about the viability of retaining Council owned assets and that this could be revisited after the next precept round.

Meeting closed at 8.48pm