



Cricklade Town Council
 First Town on the Thames

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POLICY & RESOURCES MEETING
Monday, 15th March 2010
7pm at Ockwells

Councillors present - Cllr D Tetlow, Chairman

Cllr B. Atfield

Cllr D. Avenell

Cllr B. Beasley

Cllr G. Chapman

Cllr T. Clements

Cllr Colmer

Cllr M. Hatton

Cllr T Robertson

Two members of the public were also present.

Fire evacuation instructions were pointed out before commencement.

Public Question Time

There were no questions.

MINUTES

09.47 Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Councillor R Szybiak.

09.48 Declarations of Interest

Name	Item	Type of Interest	Nature of Interest	Action
Cllr B Beasley	5ii) Grant Application	Prejudicial	Member of Thames Hall Management Committee	Spoke and did not vote
Cllr G Chapman	5ii) Grant Application	Prejudicial	Member of Thames Hall Management Committee	Spoke and did not vote
	5iii) Grant Application	Prejudicial	Trustee of Cricklade Community Day Centre	None
Cllr T Robertson	5iii) Grant Application	Prejudicial	Trustee of Cricklade Community Day Centre	None
Cllr D Tetlow	5iii) Grant Application	Prejudicial	Trustee of Cricklade Community Day Centre	Spoke and did not vote

09.49 Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting dated 11th January 2010 were approved as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

09.50 Clerk's Report

09.38/42	<p>Ockwells Lease As part of ongoing work in the lead up to the Town Council's lease renewal, the Town Clerk had undertaken preliminary research to identify what funds the Town Council contributed to the Ockwells refurbishment project. Following an unsuccessful bid for Heritage Lottery funding, North Wilts District Council paid £130,000 for the former glove factory. The Town Council made a capital investment of £10,000 (on 1.5.96) towards the purchase. No conditions were attached to this but a letter on file indicates that a re-sale value should be divided on the same basis as the purchase price (10/130th). There is no legal obligation attached to this. And it has no bearing on the rent payable. <u>Supplementary Information</u> – Cllr Robertson and the Town Clerk had met with a Cricklade resident with an extensive background in lease negotiation who had offered some good advice. Key points to note include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) The lease is a standard commercial lease rather than being drafted with statutory obligations (i.e. it attracts open market rents) ii) The Town Council has landlord/tenant protected rights iii) The Town Council is entitled to a new lease unless: Covenants have not been performed If the landlord wants the building for its own occupation The building is for re-development iv) A notice to renew the lease should be given one year ahead of the expiry date (21 May 2012) v) The Town Council should consider an appeal against the rateable value. <p>ACTION The Town Clerk to follow up i) above with Wiltshire Council's legal team to find out why a commercial lease was issued. And to check possible impact of a rates appeal before drafting and submitting one. Ongoing</p>
09.38/42	<p>How the number of Band D households is calculated for precept purposes. The Town Clerk had reminded Wiltshire Council about this Cricklade specific request and is still awaiting a reply. The Wiltshire Council Tax (North) leaflet and the Cricklade Town Council leaflet are both available on the website www.cricklade-tc.gov.uk Ongoing</p>
09.38/42	<p>Land Registration – Town Clerk continuing liaison with solicitors about any ownership documents held by their offices and registration requirements. This will be a lengthy process. Ongoing</p>
09.45	<p>Employment Law – Following the P&R meeting on 11 January, the Town Clerk was authorised to enter into a 5 year contract with the identified company which offered the most cost effective service. This had been negotiated and the contract allows for a break in the contract after 3 years. The service has already been offering advice (free of charge until 1 April 2010). Closed</p>
09.44	<p>Funding of Information Point – It was agreed at the P&R meeting on 11th January that the Town Clerk i) should write to Wiltshire Council again setting out Cricklade's special case in being remote from Wiltshire Council's services and how a more local handling of information giving was vital, ii) liaise with other town councils about how enquiries about Wiltshire Council are dealt with and iii) write to the Operations Manager for Customer Services about an extension to the existing SLA. Points i) – iii) were completed or being undertaken. It was noted that Wiltshire Council had now agreed that the full payment would be paid towards the running of Information Points in North Wiltshire's 6 towns in 2010/11. (It was previously announced that North Wiltshire's' towns would only receive 80% of the funding). Although the funding of £8,000 would be</p>

	<p>available for 2010/11 it was unlikely that this would continue further. However, it was still vital to reiterate to Wiltshire Council the vital role played by Cricklade in providing information to local people.</p> <p>It was RESOLVED that the money identified during the precept planning round to enable the Information Point to continue should be ear marked towards the future continuation of this important Front Office service.</p> <p>Ongoing</p>
09.20/27/ 35/42	<p>Cricklade Museum Lease – New lease had now been registered with the Land Registry. The official copy of the Register of title and the relevant title plan had been passed to the Historical Society.</p> <p>Closed</p>

09.51. Grant Applications

There were 3 grant applications to consider:

- i) West and North Wiltshire Young Musicians – This application was for £50 towards the purchase of equipment and instruments for use by young musicians including some resident in Cricklade. It was **RESOLVED** to award £50 (S137) to this group.
- ii) Thames Hall Management Committee – This application was for £1,200 towards a new gas boiler to replace an old and inefficient one at the Hall. It was **RESOLVED** that this was a more appropriate charge to the Town Council's Buildings Maintenance budget and that any allocation from this should be deferred to a future Policy and Resources Committee. And that £1,200 from the Buildings Maintenance budget should be ear marked for this purchase.

It was **AGREED** that the Chairman of the Management Committee should discuss with other members of the committee (to include the Town Council's representatives) the requirement for a boiler. This might include confirmation through a technical inspection report. Also, that the Town Clerk liaises with the Chairman of the Management Committee about obtaining 3 quotes for the replacement boiler and makes enquiries about available grants towards the purchase.

- iii) Cricklade Community Day Centre - This application from the trustees of the Centre was for £540 towards driver awareness training for up to 6 mini bus drivers. It was **RESOLVED** to award £540 (S137) to the Cricklade Community Day Centre.

Members **NOTED** that the balance remaining in the 2009/10 budget was £590. As this was the final opportunity to award grants for 2010/11, this balance would be allocated to General Reserves.

09.52 Chargeable Services

Members **NOTED** a report submitted by the Town Clerk recommending that some charges for services offered by the Front Office were increased. It was clear that the services provided were important to local residents and that the new charges would continue to be offered at competitive rates. It was important too to look at other services that could be offered e.g. the scanning of documents. It was **RESOLVED** that the new charges would take effect on 1 April 2010 and would be as follows:

<u>Copying</u>	
B/W (per A4 sheet)	10p
Colour(per A4 sheet)	20p
<u>Faxing(per page)</u>	50p (UK) £1 (Outside UK)
<u>Laminating (per page)</u>	£1 (A4) £1.50 (A3)

And that the rules around the use and charges for the hire of the Meeting Room should be submitted for review at a future Policy and Resources Meeting.

09.53 Communication Processes

Members **NOTED** a discussion report put forward by the Town Clerk with suggestions to improve the flow of information. The main points of discussion were:

- **Website** – Agreement was already in place to fund improvements to the website. This might include a Blog from the Town Clerk and/or the Chairman of the Town Council, a photo gallery, more information about community groups, better links, etc. It was important to ensure that it was all properly controlled.
- **Agendas** – Best practice was that Councillors and the public should have the same agenda and supporting documents (except for confidential and commercial items where already agreed procedures would be followed). This was open and transparent.
- **Minutes** – Again best practice indicates that minutes should appear in draft on the website once they have been written by the Clerk and cleared by the Chair of Committee. Current practice is to post them on the website after they have been formally approved and signed off at the following meeting which can mean that they are not available to the public for between 3 – 8 weeks depending on the cycle of meetings. A watermark indicating that the document was still in draft would indicate that the minutes were not final and still subject to scrutiny.
- **Press Releases** – To ensure that Cricklade gains maximum publicity for its efforts and to help raise its profile further, it was suggested that each agenda include an item whereby Members identify those issues that warrant a press release.
- **Newsletters** – Town Council led newsletters had been trialled in the past but had proved time consuming, difficult to distribute and costly. There was agreement that the best vehicle for a newsletter remained the Chronicle.

It was **AGREED** that the Town Council should try to better inform local communities and that the Town Clerk

- i) identifies a suitable website designer for the necessary improvements and modernising of the website
- ii) ensures that the public has access to the same agenda and supporting documents as Members (*except where confidential and commercial items are to be discussed*). These should be available on the website with a hard copy in the Front Office or on request. The front sheets should continue to be displayed as is legally required. There should be no requirement to duplicate effort by sending out agendas to groups and individuals separately
- iii) arranges for minutes to be posted on the website after approval by the Chair of Committee with a watermark indicating that the document is still in draft. The watermark can be removed once formally approved and signed off
- iv) has the continued delegated authority with the Assistant Town Clerks to issue press releases as necessary
A proposal to include a standing item on the agenda to identify issues for promotional coverage was not passed

09.54 Exclusion of Public & Press

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 were excluded and left the room.

09.56 Public Liability Issue

The Chairman informed Members of a public liability issue currently being dealt with by the Town Council's insurers.

Meeting closed at 8.25pm

