

GODALMING TOWN COUNCIL

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Municipal Buildings
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22 November 2013

I HEREBY SUMMON YOU to attend the **POLICY & MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE** Meeting to be held in the Council Chamber, Municipal Buildings, Bridge Street, Godalming on THURSDAY, 28 NOVEMBER 2013 at 7.15 pm, or at the conclusion of the Planning & Environment Committee meeting, whichever is later.

Louise P Goodfellow
Town Clerk

Committee Members: Councillor Wheatley – Chairman
Councillor Poulter – Vice Chairman

Councillor P Martin
Councillor Thomson
Councillor C Gordon-Smith
Councillor Reynolds
Councillor Woodham
Councillor S Bott
Councillor Noyce
Councillor Thornton
Councillor Williams

Councillor R Gordon-Smith
Councillor Cosser
Councillor Lister
Councillor Wilson
Councillor A Bott
Councillor Hunter
Councillor Robinson
Councillor Welland

AGENDA

1. MINUTES

To approve as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on the 17 October 2013, a copy of which has been circulated previously.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

3. PETITIONS/STATEMENTS/QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

The Chairman to allow members of the public to ask the Council questions, make a statement or present a petition. This forum to be conducted in accordance with Standing Order 4.

4. DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS AND NON-PECUNIARY INTERESTS

To receive from Members any declarations of interests in relation to any items included on the Agenda for this meeting required to be disclosed by the Localism Act 2011 and the Godalming Members' Code of Conduct.

5. COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee's work programme is attached for the information of Members.

Members of the Public have the right to attend all meetings of the Town Council and its Committees and are welcome.

6. ACCOUNTS PAID SINCE LAST MEETING & SCHEDULE OF PAYMENTS

Town Clerk to report on the accounts paid since the last meeting.

A schedule of the accounts paid will be tabled for the information of Members. The vouchers relating to these payments will also be tabled at the meeting for inspection. All payments made are in line with the agreed budget or other resolution of this Committee or Full Council.

Members to agree that the Chairman should sign the schedule of accounts paid.

7. REVIEW OF CODE OF CONDUCT – IT FACILITIES

Members will recall that at the last meeting of this committee, upon the recommendation of the Staffing Sub Committee, they considered a substantially redrafted Code of Conduct – IT Facilities noting that the current version of the document was adopted in 2001. At that meeting, Members agreed that the draft document should be made formally the subject of consultation with staff and with other Members.

Consultation has taken place with Members and staff and a further amended document has been prepared for agreement and onward recommendation to Full Council (copy of the draft code will be circulated electronically to Members on Monday, 25 November).

8. INCREASE IN FIDELITY GUARANTEE INSURANCE

As reported to Full Council on 21 November 2013 one of the comments arising from the External Auditors' report on the 2012/13 accounts was that the Fidelity Guarantee Insurance should be reviewed to ensure that the Town Council's insurance is adequate for its reserves.

For the financial year 2013/14 the current policy limit is £650,000; this covers the Council's reserves plus 50% of the annual precept. This is adequate cover, but does not allow any flexibility for balances to increase or the precept to be paid early. The meeting of the Audit Committee held on 10 October 2013 recommended that the limit be increased to £800,000 as long as the additional premium was reasonable (Min No 202-13 refers). The premium rating for the current Fidelity Guarantee insurance is in bands, so the Town Council is eligible to increase its limit to £750,000 without any additional charge.

Consequently the Responsible Finance Officer has requested the insurers to raise the Fidelity Guarantee Insurance limit to £750,000 with immediate effect as no additional cost is incurred. However, for a limit between £750,001 and £1,000,000 there would be an annual additional premium of £110.00. The Responsible Finance Officer considers that £750,000 of Fidelity Guarantee cover, would be adequate for the Town Council's needs. Therefore the Committee is asked to consider the Audit Committee's recommendation and consider whether the limit should be increased to £800,000 at a cost of £110.00 for an additional £50,000 of cover or be agreed at £750,000 at no additional cost.

9. MONITORING REPORT

Members to receive the monitoring (cost centre) report for Godalming Town Council up to 30 September 2013 (report attached for the information of Members).

This report gives an indication of the actual income and expenditure as at 30 September 2013.

As a basic monitoring calculation, the profile for each budget should increase by one twelfth each month and the corresponding income and expenditure relating to each budget should reflect this. Most budgets at the current time should, therefore, reflect half of the annual

budget. However, some budgets have different profiles and are paid at different times, these can be quarterly, or annually and therefore the income and expenditure will reflect this.

Comments are only made where the budget is not performing as expected or it is anticipated that Members would find it helpful to have further information.

Income

At this period of the year the income is on track, both halves of the Precept have been received; the second half of the Precept was received in September 2013, this was earlier than expected – it is normally paid in October. Currently, the income for both The Pepperpot and the Wilfrid Noyce Centre are constant, however, the Broadwater Park Community Centre is reflecting an increase in expenditure but this is due to the repairs to the Crinkle Crankle Wall.

Expenditure

Most expenditure is behaving as expected. The crude indication is that six twelfths of the budget should be utilised as a guide at the current stage of the year. However, rates, insurances and subscriptions are paid for the forthcoming year and therefore expended at the commencement of the year. Grants are reviewed quarterly and will reflect the grants approved.

All other budgets appear to be on track at the current time. The income exceeds expenditure by £244,737. This reflects the early receipt of the second half of the precept and indicates approximately 50% expenditure for the year to date. At this time in the financial cycle the indication is that the finances are generally following expectations.

10. CONSIDERATION OF RECEIPTS TAKEN BY PHONE/VIRTUAL TERMINAL

On 11 November 2013 Local Government Minister, Brandon Lewis, laid before Parliament a legislative reform order which will repeal S 150(5) of the Local Government Act requiring two parish councillors to sign all cheques and orders for payment – thus technically preventing parish councils from making electronic payments.

The Government says that new guidelines will allow parish councils to use electronic methods of payment provided robust anti-fraud measures are in place. Councils will need to ensure that they have a sound and comprehensive system of internal control with checks before and after a payment is made. Your officers will report in more detail when an implementation date is known.

However, in the meantime it is possible for this Council to consider receiving money electronically. Increasingly clients of the Town Council and the Joint Burial Committee expect to be able to pay the Council using a credit or debit card. Members are therefore asked to consider the possibility of receiving payments for sales invoices for both the Town Council and the Joint Burial Committee by credit or debit card via a Virtual Terminal. This will facilitate the Council taking payments, at any location that has a computer with internet connection. By enabling all staff to receive funds it would provide greater flexibility for the banking of receipts and they would be credited directly into the relevant bank account as cleared funds and reduce the time of banking monies received.

More detail is given in the report from the Responsible Finance Officer attached for the information of Members.

Members are asked to consider whether or not the Council should agree to the provision of taking payments by card and if so, deciding which provider we should use.

11. LETTER RECEIVED FROM HEAD OF FINANCE, WAVERLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Members to note a letter received from Mr Graeme Clark, Head of Finance at Waverley Borough Council, headed "2014/15 Budget and Council Tax" (copy attached for the information of Members).

12. FIRST DRAFT OF THE REVISED ESTIMATES 2013/14 AND BUDGET 2014/15

The draft revised estimates for 2013/14 and the draft budget for 2014/15 (copy attached for the information of Members) have been prepared for discussion and includes the actual expenditure report for the first seven months of the year. These estimates also include the budgets for Wilfrid Noyce Community Centre, Broadwater Park Community Centre and The Pepperpot.

The current year's Budget (2013/14) is projected to underspend by £1,781 which includes the unspecified £1,500 savings agreed during last year's budget-setting – so that savings target has been over achieved. This revised budget figure includes the agreed transfers from Earmarked Reserves including agreed transfers relating to the community centres.

Income

Due to the recession, bank interest rates continue to be low. The income for the Wilfrid Noyce Community Centre and The Pepperpot have increased and there is now evidence that bookings are growing and revenue for both has slowly increased. (It must be recognised, nevertheless, that the revenue from both is still vulnerable, as users can leave at any time and therefore the revenue is susceptible to going down as well as up). However, the current outcome has produced an improvement over projected estimates and is therefore reflected in the revised estimates. Broadwater Park Community Centre continues to maintain its hirers and income. The urgent work has now been carried out on the Crinkle Crinkle wall (Min No 186-12 refers.) However, there is now some additional work to be undertaken on the wall to complete the work satisfactorily. This necessary work is an additional pressure to the budget, however, the additional cost has been included within the Broadwater budget for the financial year 2013/14, where it is estimated the additional costs will be contained.

The current arrangement regarding the Bandstand has now come to an end and therefore, there is currently no provision made for next year regarding expected income. Consideration, therefore, needs to be given to the way forward regarding the ongoing cost of maintaining the Bandstand and how it should be funded – when the Council agreed to assume ownership it was on the assumption that maintenance of the bandstand should be at no additional cost to the Town Council.

Expenditure

The revised estimates for 2013/14 and the draft budget for 2014/15 have been prepared by evaluating the first 7 months' expenditure in the current year and taking Members' views and minuted decisions into consideration, together with other known factors where possible. The 2014/15 budget has been calculated with the relevant inflation factors where they are known and 0% where unknown or on the best current information where an increase in costs seems likely. In previous years a particular pressure has been the employer's superannuation contributions. Following the last actuarial review Surrey County Council (the pension authority) agreed that all admitted bodies should be phased into the higher contribution and pay transitional contributions over three years. The amount in the 2013/14 budget is the last of these stepped increases. The next actuarial review is now imminent and therefore the cost of the employer's pension contribution for the ensuing three years still is an unknown factor.

There are two agreed growth items. As agreed in the Committee's work programme a provision of £3,200 for Staycation has been built in to the 2014/15 base budget. Also, as

agreed (Min No 222-13 refers) a provision of £13,000 has been made in 2014/15 for the Neighbourhood Plan. Additional costs have also been put into the revised estimates to provide for office redecoration as the carpet is now in urgent need of replacement. A further provision has been made for the taking of payments by phone/virtual payment.

Since September, steps have been taken, which has determined that the telephone/computer systems be separated from Waverley. This means that for the future the costs of these will now be borne by the Town Council as Waverley expect the Town Council to take direct responsibility for its own telephone/computer charges. For the revised estimates and budget these costs have been identified separately within the budget and deducted from the overall facilities budget of £15,000 – but there remains a risk that Waverley will still make the same level of charge for facilities management and that the £15,000 budget will be inadequate in 2014/15.

There are still one or two changes that may need to be made to the 2014/15 budget figures, including national non-domestic rates and the revised employer's superannuation contribution, we need confirmation for both. These issues may have a further impact on the final level that the precept is set, it is proposed to revisit the budget again when more accurate information is available.

Currently, the prepared budget for 2014/15 indicates an increase to the precept sufficient to balance the budget in cash terms. It must be noted that we currently do not know the Band D equivalent property figure and cannot calculate what that increase would represent against a Band D Council Tax bill.

The Movement of Balances is also attached for the information of Members to show the impact on Reserves for both 2013/14 and 2014/15.

Members are asked to consider the attached draft budget.

13. WILFRID NOYCE COMMUNITY CENTRE IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

By the date of this meeting, the WNCC improvement project working group (established by decision of this Committee Minute no 162-13 refers) will have met three times since its formation. The main thrust of meetings to date have been to establish an action grid to be able to establish a user requirement statement and financial model that will form the basis of future recommendations.

However, the working group believes that, in order to be able to present this committee with a comprehensive report that recommends improvements to the WNCC (without replicating that which is available elsewhere within Godalming Town Council's estate) and to recommend a robust financial model, the terms of reference of the working group should be expanded to allow it to review all property, land and buildings, within the GTC estate.

Therefore, this committee is asked to agree to expanding the terms of reference of the WNCC working group to allow that group to conduct a review of all GTC property in order to inform the working group of all options which may be relevant to its recommendations to this committee.

14. FARNCOMBE INITIATIVE

Members to receive and consider a report from Councillor Cosser in his capacity as Surrey County Councillor (copy attached for the information of Members).

15. CHANGES TO TOWN COUNCIL TELEPHONES AND IT SUPPORT

Members to consider a report from the Town Clerk (report attached for the information of Members).

16. TOWN COUNCIL REPRESENTATION ON EXTERNAL BODIES – REPORT ON SCC TREE WARDENS

Members are asked to note a report from Councillor Lister on the SCC Tree Wardens activities (report attached for the information of Members) an organisation on which Councillor Lister represents the Town Council.

17. ITEMS FOR THE INFORMATION OF MEMBERS

Members to note the content of correspondence received from Age UK Waverley and the Chairman of the Godalming Museum Trust (two letters attached for the information of Members).

18. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Policy & Management Committee is scheduled to be held on Thursday, 9 January 2014 at 7.15 pm in the Council Chamber or at the conclusion of the Planning & Environment Committee, whichever is the later.

19. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Brought forward by permission of the Chairman. Requests to be submitted prior to commencement of the meeting.

THE COMMITTEE MAY WISH TO EXCLUDE THE PUBLIC AND PRESS FROM THE MEETING AT THIS POINT PRIOR TO CONSIDERATION OF THE FOLLOWING ITEM BY REASON OF THE CONFIDENTIAL NATURE OF THE BUSINESS TO BE TRANSACTED IE. STAFFING MATTERS.

20. ALLOTMENT LAND AT GEORGE ROAD

Members to consider a confidential report from the Town Clerk (report attached for the information of Members).

GODALMING TOWN COUNCIL

Disclosure by a Member¹ of a disclosable pecuniary interest or a non-pecuniary interest in a matter under consideration at a meeting (S.31 (4) Localism Act 2011 and the adopted Godalming Members' Code of Conduct).

As required by the Localism Act 2011 and the adopted Godalming Members' Code of Conduct, **I HEREBY DISCLOSE**, for the information of the authority that I have [a disclosable pecuniary interest]² [a non-pecuniary interest]³ in the following matter:-

COMMITTEE:

DATE:

NAME OF COUNCILLOR: _____

Please use the form below to state in which agenda items you have an interest.

Agenda No.	Subject	Disclosable Pecuniary Interest	Non-Pecuniary Interest	Reason

Signed _____

Dated _____

¹ "Member" includes co-opted member, member of a committee, joint committee or sub-committee

² A disclosable pecuniary interest is defined by the Relevant Authorities (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests) regulations 2013/1464 and relate to employment, office, trade, profession or vocation, sponsorship, contracts, beneficial interests in land, licences to occupy land, corporate tenancies and securities

³ A non-pecuniary interest is defined by Section 5 (4) of the Godalming Members' Code of Conduct.