

## **Finance & General Purposes Committee Meeting**

**Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> March 2002 at 7.15 p.m.  
at Bevan House, Camps Road, Haverhill**

**PRESENT:**                      **Chair:**                      **Cllr. Maggie Lee**  
   **Town Councillors:** **E Goody, G Kiernan and A Smith (Except items**  
   **1 & 2)**

**ALSO PRESENT:** **Two members of the public.**

## **MINUTES**

### **1.     Apologies for absence**

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillors Bowman, and Hancock.

### **2.     Minutes**

Cllr Goody proposed and Cllr Kiernan seconded that the Minutes of Meeting held 22<sup>nd</sup> January be approved as a true record, all being in favour.

### **3.     Matters arising**

#### **a)     Bus Shelter, Spindle Road**

The Clerk reported that it had proved impossible to site the bus shelter in the position selected by the Clerk after consultation with residents because it would have obstructed the sight lines of motorists exiting Poplar Close. Unfortunately the Borough Council had selected a more suitable site without the opportunity for further consultation, and there had subsequently been complaints from two residents. A further site inspection had taken place involving Cllr Larry Kiernan and it had been agreed by both the Borough and Town Council that the existing site was the best location, as it was adjacent to an existing bus stop and an underpass providing a safe crossing of the road. The Clerk added that one of the residents had indicated that they would make a complaint to the Ombudsman.

#### **b)     Suffolk County Council Pension Fund Contributions**

The Clerk reported that Suffolk County Council had reviewed the pension contributions made by local Councils as a group and agreed that the employers' contribution rate for 2002/3 should be 220% of the employees' contributions.

c) Litter

The Clerk reported that St Edmundsbury Borough Council had cleared the litter from the trees along Withersfield Road and given notice to both Sainsburys and Focus that prosecution proceedings may be started if the problem reoccurred.

d) Street Lighting – Elmdon Place & Ehringshausen Way

The Clerk reported that St Edmundsbury Borough Council had advised that the light outside 28 Elmdon Place was being checked by their contractors and that the lighting by the entrance to Brook Service Road from Ehringshausen Way would be renewed to a higher standard during 2002.

e) Reeds Lane

Cllr Maggie Lee reported that complaints were still being received regarding the speed of vehicles using Reeds Lane. In addition the segregated area for pedestrians was on the side of Reeds Lane with overhanging bushes and inadequate drainage. The Clerk was asked to raise the matter again with St Edmundsbury Borough Council.

f) Swan Lane

The Clerk reported that the start of the works had been put back yet again to mid-April. The Clerk added that he had written to St Edmundsbury Borough Council advising that the proposed diversion route would be obstructed by road closures in connection with events in the Market Square during June and August.

**4. Correspondence**

a) St Edmundsbury Borough Council – Surface Water, Withersfield Road

The Clerk reported that on 27<sup>th</sup> February St Edmundsbury Borough Council had advised that the drainage channels in Withersfield Road, which had minimal fall between gullies, were to be cleaned and the silt removed. Recent heavy rains had indicated that there was still a problem with standing water in this area after heavy rain and the Clerk stated he would chase St Edmundsbury Borough Council on the matter.

b) Suffolk County Council – Neighbourhood Nursery

The Clerk reported that Suffolk County Council were currently negotiating with two contractors to provide at least twenty-five places for children in the Clements Ward under the Neighbourhood Nursery initiative. In addition the County Council are also working with organisations to develop childcare, and were targeting Haverhill as an area for the development of childcare places with childminders. Cllr Maggie Lee stated that it was essential to provide capacity for school holidays, as many existing providers were unable to offer under-fives childcare during school holidays.

**5. Grant Application by Haverhill Advocacy & Mentoring Service**

The Clerk reported that Haverhill Advocacy & Mentoring Service (HAMS) had been successful in attracting major funding from various sources to enable its work to continue during 2002/3. In addition HAMS was now administratively and financially separate from Haverhill Association of Voluntary Organisations. Cllr Maggie Lee proposed and Cllr Goody seconded that a Grant of £500 be made to HAMS, all being in favour.

The Clerk then advised that there was an underspend of approximately £620 in the Grants budget, and that the Leisure & Environment Committee had asked that this be set aside to provide “fast track” funding for local groups organising events in connection with the Jubilee. Cllr Kiernan proposed and Cllr Smith seconded that the Town Clerk, in consultation with the Chairs of Finance & General Purposes and Leisure & Environment Committee, prepare a “fast track” scheme to provide financial support to Jubilee celebrations of a local nature, all being in favour.

## **6. New Arrangements for Internal Audit**

The Clerk reported that the new “lighter touch” audit, due to be announced by District Audit later this month for implementation from 1<sup>st</sup> April would require Local Councils to appoint Internal Auditors to undertake a specific list of checks on the Council’s finances. It was not possible for “connected” persons to be Internal Auditors, which ruled out Councillors undertaking the role, or a “quid pro quo” arrangement between Council Clerks. The Clerk indicated he was gathering indications of interest from qualified auditors. The Chair asked the Clerk to advise a later meeting on the process required for appointment of an Internal Auditor.

## **7. Authorisation of payments**

Cllr Goody proposed and Cllr Smith seconded that the payments shown on the lists detailed below were approved for payment, all being in favour.

<b>List Date</b>	<b>Item Numbers</b>	<b>Cheque Numbers</b>	<b>Total Value for List</b>
29.01.02	1-8	3800-3807	£5,756.38
19.02.02	1-8	3808-3815	£1,532.01
19.02.02	1-7	3816-3822	£7,835.15
12.03.02	1-14	3823-3836	£8,214.03
19.03.02	1-8	3837-3844	£3,019.70
19.03.02	1-8	3845-3852	£7,268.87

Cllr Gerry Kiernan was delegated to undertake a random check of Petty Cash payments.

## **8. Town Hall**

Cllr Maggie Lee proposed and Cllr Goody seconded, all being in favour that the public and press be excluded from the remainder of the meeting on the grounds that the matters to be discussed will involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraphs 1 and 7 of Part 1 of Schedule 12 (A) of the Act Section 100(A) (4) of the Local Government Act 1972

Councillors Smith, Maggie Lee and Gerry Kiernan declared an interest as elected Members of St Edmundsbury Borough Council. The Clerk confirmed the advice given previously that they were entitled to speak on this matter but not vote.

The Clerk provided an update to the negotiations, which were of a complex nature, involving both the Borough and Town Councils and the Charity Commissioners. In view of the nature of the negotiations the Clerk was asked to provide a regular weekly update for all Committee Chairs and to provide a written report for the Town Council meeting.

## **9. Closure**

The meeting was closed at 9.00 p.m.