

HEATHFIELD AND WALDRON PARISH COUNCIL

FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

MONDAY 17 MARCH 2008 AT 7.30 P.M.

AT HEATHFIELD COMMUNITY CENTRE

PRESENT: Mr Bassingthwaite (Chairman), Mrs Carr, Mrs Clark, Mr Davis, Mr Harmer, Mr Hough and Mr Kerby.

The Clerk was in attendance.

Also present: Representatives from Waldron Country Market, Homecall and Sheepsetting Pre-School

HOME CALL

Ms Wilkinson explained about the Homecall scheme which provided house calls to visually impaired people and said that there were 9 clients in Heathfield. Since ESCC withdrew funding, the service had experienced financial difficulties and various alternative sources of funding had been explored. If a grant was approved, the money would be ring-fenced for Heathfield clients.

SHEEPSETTING PRE-SCHOOL

The Pre-School had successfully moved into classrooms at the Cross-In-Hand CP premises 2 years ago, however, the School now needed the classrooms back and the Pre-School were having new premises built on the site. Government guidance indicated that outdoor facilities should be available at all times and the grant application was in respect of a multi-sensory pathway as part of the outdoor play area.

WALDRON COUNTRY MARKET

Mr Wilkinson informed the Committee that the Country Market had a small, loyal base of customers and was largely self-sufficient, however, the cost of hiring the Lucas Memorial Hall was causing difficulties. The Market also provided an opportunity for local people to meet and chat and it was felt that it would be a shame if it had to close.

The Meeting commenced at 7.47 p.m.

08/01 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence had been received from Mr Chambers, Mr Hart, Mr Newnham and Mr Woolley.

08/02 **DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS**

The following disclosures were made:

Mr Harmer disclosed a prejudicial interest in respect of the grant application from Mary Burfield Court because he took part in activities there.

Mr David disclosed a personal interest in respect of Sheepsetting Lane Pre-School because one of the staff members was married to one of his employees.

Mr Kerby disclosed a personal interest in respect of Homecall arising from his position as part-time Chief Executive of the National Talking Newspaper and member of Wealden Talking News.

Mr Bassingthwaighe disclosed a prejudicial interest in respect of the town sign as a member of the Rotary Club

08/03 **MINUTES**

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 11 December 2007, having been previously circulated, be confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

08/04 **MATTERS ARISING**

There were none.

08/05 **FINANCIAL REPORTS**

The Committee noted the Budgetary Control Report and Balance Sheet as at 29 February 2008.

08/06 **INTERNAL AUDIT**

The Committee considered the report as at February 2008 and the following actions were agreed:-

Parish Action Plan – agreed that implementation progress on the Heathfield Healthcheck should be investigated to enable a report to be submitted to next FGP Committee meeting.

Staffing and Asset Management – comments regarding staff appraisals and re-valuation of assets were noted and action would be taken to implement.

Three year medium term business plan – the Committee considered that the Parish Council gave due consideration to future financial planning when setting the budget but this could be formalised and it was agreed that the Chairman and the Clerk would prepare a draft plan for consideration.

Financial reporting and monitoring – Members noted the auditor’s comment that payment transactions should be circulated quarterly to all members and that Financial Regulations be amended to incorporate this.

Risk Management – the risk assessment carried out for the office did not include risk in respect of a fire. The company who maintained the fire extinguishers had

been asked for a quotation to provide a fire risk assessment but that had not been forthcoming. It was agreed that quotations should be obtained as a matter of urgency.

08/07 **GRANT APPLICATIONS**

(a) Mary Burfield Court

An application had been received in respect of the provision of hanging baskets outside the building. The Committee considered that this would help to improve the appearance of Mary Burfield Court and would be enjoyed also by those visiting the area. It was, therefore, **RESOLVED** that a grant of £100 be made.

Mr Harmer left the room during consideration of the above matter.

(b) Homecall

The Committee noted that there were 9 clients within the parish being helped by the charity and considered that it provided a worthwhile service. It was, therefore, **RESOLVED** that a grant of £1,250 be made.

(c) Sheepsetting Pre-School

Whilst supportive of the Pre-School and wishing it success in respect of the relocation to a new building on the Primary School grounds, the Committee felt that the proposed multi-sensory pathway was an expensive project that may not be well used by the children. It was, therefore, **RESOLVED** that no grant be given in this instance.

(d) Waldron Country Market

The Committee noted that, whilst largely self-supporting, the Market struggled to meet the hiring costs for the Lucas Memorial Hall. It was acknowledged that the Market provided a useful opportunity for people of the village to socialise and that it should receive support. It was, therefore, **RESOLVED** that a grant of £100 be made.

08/08 **UPDATE FROM HEATHFIELD PARTNERSHIP – MARCH 2008**

A report had been circulated to Members and the Committee duly noted the activities of the Partnership as at March 2008.

08/09 **HEATHFIELD TOWN SIGN**

Although the sign was in place and had previously been officially unveiled, the Committee noted that the Parish Council were required to formally adopt the sign and insure it. It was, therefore, **RESOLVED** that the sign be formally adopted by the Parish Council.

08/10 **EYE TESTS FOR EMPLOYEES**

It had been brought to the Clerk's attention that the Parish Council should adopt a policy regarding this. The Committee considered a report setting out the background legislation and HSE guidance and noted that the Clerk had also sought information from Wealden District Council. Following consideration, it was **RESOLVED** that free eyesight tests should be available for all employees working with display screen equipment and that in cases where spectacles are required solely for use when using VDU's, these should be provided free of charge to the employee.

08/11 **MARKET TOWN MAPS**

A report had been circulated to Members regarding tourist guides and maps for the town. The Committee noted that a new edition of the Heathfield and Waldron Town Guide was due shortly. This was published at no cost to the Council, apart from the cost of delivery to households, as revenue from advertising covered the production costs.

Wealden District Council had made an approach regarding a market towns tourism map they were producing and asked whether the Parish Council would like to make a contribution. It was suggested that a contribution of £800 would provide 10,000 copies for the Parish Council to distribute. The Parish Council had previously published a Heathfield map but copies of this were now depleted and there was a need for a comprehensive map of the town.

It was, therefore, **RESOLVED** that a contribution of £800 should be made to Wealden District Council to enable 10,000 copies of the market towns and tourism map to be made available for distribution in the parish.

08/12 **CRIME AND DISORDER ACT 1988 SECTION 17 – TO CONSIDER EFFECTS (IF ANY) ARISING FROM ITEMS ON THE AGENDA**

There were none.

08/13 **RISK MANAGEMENT**

The Committee reviewed the risk list relating to its areas of activity and noted that, whilst some changes in procedure had taken place, the risk management list was still appropriate and satisfactory.

In respect of matters discussed at the meeting, there were risk management issues relating to the insurance of the town sign and the issues raised in the internal auditor's report, particularly fire risk procedure at the office.

08/14 **MATTERS RAISED BY MEMBERS PREVIOUSLY NOTIFIED**

There were none.

08/15

DATE, TIME AND PLACE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting would be held on Tuesday 17 June 2008 at 7.30 pm in the Ian Price Room, Heathfield Community Centre, Sheepsetting Lane, Heathfield.

The meeting closed at 8.51 p.m.

Signed:

Chairman

Dated: