

BURNHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of the Finance & General Purposes Committee held at Burnham Park Hall on Wednesday 5 June 2002 at 8.00 pm

Members Present: *Councillors, P C Adams, H R Blair, J P Capel, S E Davies, B D Dhillon J Somers and S L Tilbey*

PART I

01 Councillor J Somers opened the meeting as Vice-Chairman of the Council

02. **Appointment of Chairman**

Councillor S L Tilbey proposed and Councillor S E Davies seconded that Councillor B S Dhillon should be appointed Chairman of the Finance & General Purposes Committee for the municipal year 2002/03

RESOLVED

- ◆ As there were no other propositions Councillor B S Dhillon was appointed Chairman of the Committee for the municipal year 2002/03.

03. Councillor B S Dhillon assumed the duties of Chairman of the Finance and General Purposes Committee and expressed his thanks to Councillor M Taylor who had acted as Chairman of the Committee through the last year.

04. **Appointment of Vice Chairman**

Councillor J Somers proposed and Councillor S L Tilbey seconded that Councillor M Taylor should be appointed Vice Chairman of the Finance and General Purposes Committee for the municipal year 2002/03

Councillor H R Blair proposed that Councillor S E Davies should be appointed Vice - Chairman of the Finance and General Purposes Committee. There was no seconder for this proposition.

RESOLVED

- ◆ As there were no further propositions Councillor M Taylor was appointed Vice-Chairman of the Finance and general Purposes Committee for the municipal year 2002/03.

05. **Apologies**

Apologies were accepted from Councillor L K Hazell, M Taylor and J M M Thomson.

06. **Declaration of Interests**

Councillor S L Tilbey declared a personal interest in Agenda item 15 regarding 1 Bay Tree Court.

07. **Minutes of the Committee Meeting – 25 March 2002**

Councillor B S Dhillon, Chairman of the Committee presented and moved the minutes of the meeting held on 25 March 2002.

RESOLVED:

- ◆ That the minutes be approved.

Finance Report

08 **Budget Expenditure at 30 April 2002.**

The Executive Officer presented a report of Finance and General Purposes Expenditure compared to the predicted annual budget as at 30 April 2002

RESOLVED

- ◆ That the report was received and noted.

09. **Review of Hall Hire Charges.**

The Executive Officer presented a report requesting Members to review the Burnham Park Hall hire charges for 2002/03 and 2003/04

The Executive Officer report requested Members to consider change the time table for reviewing hall hire charges so it would be in line with Budget process. The current timetable requires charges for the hire of facilities to be implemented in September and January and under the new proposal charges would be reviewed in October /November for implementation in April of the following year.

The Report requested Members to consider that the hall hire charges for commercial bookings should be frozen as it was the opinion of Officers that the current charges were now at the maximum it was possible to charge considering the condition of the halls.

The Report suggested that the established customer charges for hall hirers should be brought in to line with the new customer rates over the next two years. Members discussed the possible options for implementing the new charges.

RESOLVED

- ◆ That all hire charges would be reviewed in the budget process during October/November for implementation in following April.
- ◆ That the commercial charges should remain unchanged at this time.
- ◆ That the established hall hire charges should increase by 10% in two increments, 5% in October 2002 and 5% from April 2003, with the final intention of aligning the charges for all customers.

10. **Current Council Investments.**

The Executive Officer presented a report identifying the rates on interest received on the Councils current investments as follows;

Location of Investment	Amount of Investment	Maturity date	Interest rate
Newbury Building Society	£428,597.20	15/07/02	4.0%
Newbury Building Society	£ 55,176.30	17/06/02	3.95%
Halifax Building Society	£ 30,200.34	on call	1.25%
Lloyds TSB	£ 1,146.61	on call	0.2%
Total Investment	£515,120.45		

The Executive Officer informed the meeting that a new rate of 4.09% had just been negotiated with the Newbury Building Society.

RESOLVED

- ◆ The report was received and noted.

11. **Hanging Basket Contract**

The Executive Officer presented a report identifying the take up of the hanging basket contract for 2002/03.

Members expressed their disappointment at the low take up by the business community.

RESOLVED

- ◆ The report was received and noted.

12. **Update on purchase of hall booking system software**

The Executive Officer reported that since the last meeting SCRIBE software had introduced on to the market a new hall bookings system software package. The Executive Officer requested Members that the product was available for trial at no cost as the Council was already a user of SCRIBE for the street lighting system. If the product was found to be satisfactory the cost of the software was £100.

Resolved:

- ◆ That the software package should be trialed and if satisfactory should be purchased at a cost of £100.

13. **Grants to Outside Bodies**

The Executive Officer presented the grant applications from the Burnham Access Group and the Lighthouse Project.

Cllr P C Adams asked for clarification of how charges for the lease to Burnham Tennis Association would be adjusted for the initial reduced rents or did this qualify for a grant through Section 137. The Executive Officer informed the meeting that the Burnham Tennis Association Agreement would be subject to the full annual rental as per their legal agreement. Any reduction in rent would be at the discretion of the Recreation and Amenities Committee who would have to allow for any rebate within their established budget, this rebate would not be authorised under Section 137. However if the Tennis Association had a specific project which would qualify under the Council's Grant making policy they would be entitled to apply.

The Executive Officer issued Members with some guidance on Section 137 expenditure and reminded members that, this was not a power to raise money, but a power to spend a restricted sum of money, under certain conditions on items which the Parish Council did not already have a power to spend.

Resolved:

- ◆ Members received and noted the applications and resolved that they should be considered along with other applications at an additional meeting of the Finance and General purposes Committee meeting on Monday 17 June 2002.

14. **Jubilee Costs**

The Executive Officer presented a report on the current estimated costs of purchasing Jubilee mugs or coins. Members discussed the timing of such a purchase and the difficulties in administering the distribution fairly to the parish. Members also considered the impact this would have on the earmarked section 137 Expenditure to other bodies applying for grants within the community.

The Executive Officer reminded members that certain projects under the Recreation and Amenities Committee had been identified as possible Jubilee projects.

Resolved:

- ◆ That the funding should be directed to projects which would have a greater impact on benefiting the community through grants

15. **Appointment of Internal Auditor**

The Executive Officer presented a report for the purposes of considering the appointment of an independent internal auditor. The report detailed the duties of the Parish Council under the new method of working and the requirement to appoint an independent internal auditor. The Executive Officer reported that at a meeting of the Parish Clerks, the difficulties of both appointing an auditor and the costs of an auditor were impacting on all Councils. The meeting had recommended approaching both H K Baines and Watts and Deloitte Touche to obtain a discounted rate for a consortium of Councils.

Members considered the timescales to complete an internal audit throughout a year, and although 10 days was considered to be excessive, it was anticipated that 6+ days would be the minimum period required.

Members discussed the implications and the costs of the scheme and in particular the potential cost if the audit was not satisfactory or the cost of a spurious investigation.

Resolved:

- ◆ That the Executive Officer should liaise with the other Parish Councils re a consortium approach to purchasing internal audit services.
- ◆ That £2,500 is allocated from within budget if possible to fund the work of the internal auditor; if necessary the additional cost would be found from reserves.

16. **Proposed changes to charges for South Bucks District Council Pay & Display car parks.**

Members received a report from South Bucks District Council giving notice of proposed increase in car park charges.

Members discussed the report and the following issues were raised:

The High Street is already struggling and putting up the car park charges will stop people visiting Burnham or result in them using off street parking in surrounding residential areas.

The proposed time limits for short stay parking were not adequate to give people the chance to park and then go into the High Street to shop.

The car park in Jennery Lane was considered to be a nightmare and these new charges will drive people away.

Concern was expressed about the use of Summers Road as a long stay car park and the lack of a provision for shopping trolleys.

The increase in charges is more likely to reduce income not generate more income.

The knock on effect may be felt in the Parish Council car park thereby reducing car parking for hall and library users.

Resolved:

- ◆ That the Executive Officer would write to SBDC raising the points expressing the Committee's objections and referring to the items discussed.

17. **Transfer of Justice License**

Members considered the transfer of Justices licence for Budgens 60-62 High Street, Burnham.

Resolved:

- ◆ The Committee had no objection.

Date and time of the next meeting

18. **Monday 17 June 2002 at 7.30 pm**
Monday 29 July 2002 at 7.30 pm

Exclusion of Press and Public

19. **Resolved**

- ◆ That under Section 100 (A) (4) of the Local Government Act 1972 the Public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part 1 Schedule 12A to the Act

Chairman

Date