

DUNSTABLE TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

HELD ON MONDAY 15 NOVEMBER 2021

Present: Councillors, Liz Jones (Deputy Town Mayor), Sid Abbott (Chairman), Wendy Bater, Lisa Bird, Matt Brennan, John Gurney, Kenson Gurney and Peter Hollick

In Attendance: Councillor Gloria Martin (remotely), David Ashlee (Town Clerk and Chief Executive), David Brough (Senior Finance Manager, remotely), Lisa Scheder (Finance and Procurement Manager, remotely), John Crawley (Head of Grounds and Environmental Services, remotely for item 4) and Ian Reed (Democratic Services Manager)

Apologies for Absence: Councillors ,Mark Cant, Cameron Restall and Gloria Martin (Mayor)

Public Attendance: One

177. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of Finance and General Purposes Committee held on 20 September were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

178. SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no specific declarations of interest.

179. ADOPTION OF PLAY AREA AT THE GATEWAY DEVELOPMENT, LONDON ROAD

The Committee considered a report on a request received from Central Bedfordshire Council (CBC) and Abbey Developments for the Town Council to formally adopt the play area at The Gateway housing development. The Committee was advised the area was known as a local area for play and it was a small area of open space specifically designed and laid out for younger children's play.

It was a 400m² play area located at the junction of Fossett Grove and Montgomery Grove. It was also noted CBC had confirmed that the Section 106 maintenance contribution payment would be £92,517. A discussion took place about the request to adopt the play area. It was noted that if the Council chose to adopt the play space the Council would ensure repairs had been undertaken before adoption...It was considered that the commuted sum was sufficient in value to maintain the play area for about 20 years including a full replacement of all equipment after 10 to 15 years. It was further noted that the Corporate Plan 2020-23 included several corporate priorities which would support the adoption of the play area.

RESOLVED: That the play area at The Gateway development be adopted subject to the Head of Grounds and Environmental Services in liaison with the Chairman of Grounds and Environmental Services satisfactorily negotiating the completion of the remedial works required before and land transfer takes place.

180. FINANCIAL MONITORING REPORT

The Town Clerk and Chief Executive presented the financial monitoring report for the period ending 30 September 2021. The Committee also noted details of the Council's earmarked reserves as of 31 October 2021.

The Town Clerk and Chief Executive made members aware of the current financial position the Council was in. The Committee was advised that the Council was in a much better position than had been reported to recent meetings. It was noted with satisfaction that notwithstanding approved commitments from the General Reserve the actual revenue budget was forecast to be underspent by £31,227 at the end of the financial year. This was primarily a result of improved trading at Creasey Park Community Football Centre and savings accrued as a result of staff vacancies.

The Committee also considered the external auditors (Mazars) opinion on the completed AGAR for the financial year 2020/2021 and were pleased to note that no material comments had been made and that the Council's end of year accounting had been completed successfully.

RESOLVED: That the above reports be noted.

181. ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE ANNUAL COUNCIL MEETING 2022

The Town Clerk and Chief Executive presented the report and sought approval for arrangements to secure a venue for the Annual Council meeting to be held on 16 May 2021.

RESOLVED: That a suitable venue be secured by the Democratic Services Manager in consultation with the Mayor subject to the hire of the venue does not exceed £700.

182. REPORTS FROM OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS

CAB Management Committee – no update.

Dunstable International Town Twinning Association (DITA) – Councillor Hollick reported that DITA was looking to host representatives from twinned towns attending Dunstable from 2 to 5 June 2022 to celebrate Her Majesty the Queen's Platinum Jubilee. Councillor Hollick reported that there was a meeting of DITA the next day to discuss the visit. The Mayor reported she had not been invited to the meeting. Councillor Hollick advised the meeting he had suggested to DITA that the Mayor be invited.

Hospice at Home Management Committee – A report was made covering the work of trustees and fundraising. Volunteers had been treated to a day out to thank for their work over the past 18 months. A new Treasurer had been appointed. Councillor Jones reported that the charity was clearly moving back towards normal operations.

Ashton Alms-houses Charity – a meeting was arranged for 9 December.

The meeting closed at 19.31