

## **BARRY TOWN COUNCIL**

### **MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE COUNCIL HELD ON MONDAY, 19 JANUARY 2009 AT 7.00 PM**

**PRESENT**:- Councillor S C Egan (Town Mayor), together with Councillors B Brooks, G D Davey, J Evans, H C Hamilton, A D Hampton, N P Hodges, S A Hodges, K A Kemp, K Kuhnell, K Lewis, L M Payne, B I Shaw, T C Stenstrom, C Turner, S T Wiliam and E T Williams.

**ALSO PRESENT**:- Derek Wolfe, Executive Officer, Cliff Lewis, Deputy Executive Officer, Mark Sims, Responsible Finance Officer, and Julie Hurd, Administration.

#### 101. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors O Cash, J E Charles, P Drake, K Evans, M Wright and South Wales Police.

#### 102. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillors Kuhnell, Lewis and Wiliam declared personal interests in relation to all managing items regarding the Memorial Hall & Theatre Trust by virtue of being Trustees.

#### 103. **MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL'S MEETING HELD ON 15 DECEMBER 2008**

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Council held on 15 December 2008 be approved and signed as a correct record.

#### 104. **POLICE REPORTS**

A statistical report had been submitted from South Wales Police which was tabled at the meeting. As there was no one in attendance from South Wales Police no questions could be asked.

**RESOLVED**:-

- (i) that the contents of the report be noted.
- (ii) that the Executive Officer contact the South Wales Police to ensure that a representative attends the next meeting.

#### 105. **COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE MAYOR**

The Mayor suggested that Town Councillors visit the Christie Organ which was situated in the Memorial Hall & Theatre. Councillor Stenstrom advised the Council that the Christie Organ had been

damaged and that a meeting with ATOS was arranged for 27 February 2009 to discuss this and other matters.

**RESOLVED:** that the Executive Officer contact the Memorial Hall & Theatre to arrange a date whereby Councillors could view the Christie Organ.

106. **QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS**

No questions were asked.

107. **QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC**

No questions were asked.

108. **MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE AMENITIES COMMITTEE HELD ON 17 NOVEMBER 2008**

Councillor Stenstrom noted the recommendation (minute A3 5 (c) page 419), that funding for the purchase of 2,000 colour leaflets promoting the services available in the cemetery at a cost of £300, be included in the estimates for 2009/10 and indicated that this item was included in the draft estimates. He also noted the recommendation (minute A3 5(d) page 420), relating to the request for the inclusion of funding in the 2009/10 estimates for the purchase of a further 100 memorial safety stakes at a cost of £3,500. He suggested that safety stakes should be re-used following tests on the next section of headstones, rather than purchasing additional ones. He requested that the Amenities Committee revisit this.

Councillor S Hodges noted that there were no policies in place with regard to orphan headstones and indicated that laying stones flat could result in bad publicity. Councillor K Lewis noted what Councillor S Hodges had said, stating that he would put it on the agenda for the Committee's next meeting. It was proposed by Councillor Lewis and seconded by Councillor Brooks.

**RESOLVED:** that the minutes of the Committee's meeting be received and noted.

109. **MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE FINANCE, POLICY & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE HELD ON 5 JANUARY 2009**

Councillor T Stenstrom stated that the minutes provided on the agenda were not the minutes that he had agreed with the minute taker and that they will be referred to the next meeting of the Finance, Policy & General Purposes committee.

Councillor S Hodges felt that the minutes of the Finance, Policy & General Purposes committee were short and that certain issues were not addressed.

It was also considered that there was nothing to stop the committee moving forward with the Capability Policy. Councillor Stenstrom informed the Council that the Committee was looking for ratification.

The Mayor advised the Council that the minutes needed to be checked for accuracy and content so the Committee could move forward.

**RESOLVED:** that the minutes of the Committee's meeting be referred back to the Committee, with the exception of the recommendation concerning the adoption of the Capability Policy which was approved.

110. **MINUTES OF THE PLANNING COMMITTEE'S MEETING HELD ON 16 DECEMBER 2008**

It was proposed by Councillor Lewis and seconded by Councillor S Hodges

**RESOLVED:** that the minutes of the Committee's meeting be received and noted.

111. **MINUTES OF THE RESOURCES COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 1 DECEMBER 2008**

Councillor S Hodges asked for clarification with regard to the recommendation set out in minute R32. She asked what the difference was between an external investigation and an audit. The Mayor responded that he considered that there was no difference. Councillor Hodges also asked who would carry out the investigation/audit and whether any costings had been obtained. The Mayor responded that ACAS were to be contacted and that the Mayor hoped the costs would be kept to a minimum.

It was proposed by Councillor Hamilton and seconded by Councillor Davey and **RESOLVED:** that the minutes of the Committee's meeting be received and noted.

112. **REPORTS FROM REPRESENTATIVES OF OUTSIDE BODIES**

It was noted that the lever arch file containing reports from outside bodies was available for inspection at the meeting.

113. **CHANGES TO MEMBERSHIP OF TOWN COUNCIL COMMITTEES**

In the absence of the Leader of the group, Councillor Williams advised he was not aware of the identity of the Conservative member to serve

on the Resources Committee. He would request Councillor Hampton to advise the Executive Officer outside the meeting.

**RESOLVED:** that Councillor S Hodges replace Councillor C Turner on the Personnel Sub-Committee, and that the Leader of the Conservative Group be given authority to notify the Executive Officer outside the meeting regarding the Resources Committee vacancy, and for the Executive Officer to accept that nomination without further recourse to the Council.

114. **SCHEDULE OF PAYMENTS**

Councillor Shaw raised the question of how the line rental for the Town Council's office telephone was paid i.e., whether quarterly or monthly. The Responsible Finance Officer advised that Pinnacle were paid quarterly, whereas Cable & Wireless and NTL were paid monthly.

Councillor Shaw then asked why the Council could not use one line rental for all. The Responsible Finance Officer advised that this option had been looked into with BT and it was not cost effective as there would have been an installation fee of £200. When all the costs were added up it would work out more expensive. The Leader of the Council confirmed that the matter of line rental had been looked at closely.

Councillor S Wiliam also noted the Newsquest costs for advertising and queried the price as he thought this was far too high for one advert. The Responsible Finance Officer indicated that the price was in fact for three separate adverts relating to Christmas Candlelight Service and two separate advertisements from Mayor relating to seasons greetings.

With regard to the fees regarding the Vale of Glamorgan Council's Elections in 2004, the Executive Officer advised that he had spoken with the Chief Executive of the Vale of Glamorgan Council and had been informed that the Town Council was to be billed for the 2004 elections but that there had been a dispute as the European Elections had been held at the same time. The outcome of this matter was that the Town Council would be billed eventually, along with other Town and Community Councils in the Vale.

The Responsible Finance Officer advised that with regard to cheque number 105239 payable to the Vale of Glamorgan Council in respect of Town Council Elections 2008, the Vale Council had offered all Town and Community Councils the opportunity to defer payment. The Executive Officer had taken up this offer due to our over spend, hence the cheque was to be cancelled.

**RESOLVED:**

- (i) that cheque number 105239 payable to the Vale of Glamorgan Council in the amount of £15,519.62 be cancelled and that payment be deferred in line with the Vale Councils offer;
- (ii) that the schedule of payments for January 2009, consisting of direct debits and cheques numbered 105237 to 105283 (excluding cheque number 105239) total sum of £167,047.44 (£182,567.06 - £15,519.62) be approved.

115. **BUDGET MONITORING REPORT FOR THE PERIOD 1 APRIL 2008 TO 31 DECEMBER 2008**

Councillor T Stenstrom made the following statement, "Councillors need to reminding that we were unable to take action on the deficit at the correct time and it is imperative that Councillors have the correct information at all times, such as enabling them to be able to make correct decisions. The monthly Budget Monitoring meetings in line with the Finance, Policy & General Purposes committee (minute numbers F68 of the meeting held on 19 February 2007 and F79 of the meeting held on 16 April 2007), endorsed this by allowing Council to made the right decisions."

"The Committee did not carry out these actions this year for several reasons, but this only goes to show that you cannot take your eye off the ball. Councillors should re-endorse the decision to hold monthly meetings, and where possible attend these.

The fallacy that because the reserves are healthy, the revenue account can be topped up from reserves is incorrect, and I make certain quotes from the CIPFA (the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy) guidance on reserves the use of. An example of this is that in 1999 Barry Town Council employed a person on Capital (in other words using the reserves for two years), without making provision in the revenue account, thus diminishing the reserves, without making the necessary changes in the revenue account). Councillors, we must never get into this position again, we know we can do it, so let's get on with the job". The leader then quoted a document on reserves and what they should be used for and the categories associated with the Chartered Accountants and he made reference to Section 114 with regard to contingency, reserves and management control. The Council should never again be in the position it was with regard to the 2006-2007 budget.

Councillor S Hodges advised the Council that in the past meetings convened with regard to budget monitoring had usually taken place in the afternoon, which made it difficult for councillors to attend if they are in full time employment. She asked who would be attending those meetings. Councillor T Stenstrom advised the committee that the Chair

and of the Finance Policy & General Purposes Committee Vice Chair and the leaders of the other two groups (i.e. Councillor S Hodges and Councillor A Hampton), the Responsible Finance Officer and Deputy Executive Officer would be in attendance.

Councillor S Hodges indicated that there was nothing in the Standing Orders to cover this and she felt that Standing Orders should cover Budget Monitoring meetings. Councillor T Stenstrom informed the Council that money was put back into the Council and that reserves were not used.

Councillor E Williams asked how much the rent was for the Council's offices. The Responsible Finance Officer informed the Council that the rent was £20,000 per year excluding utility bills. The former asked for a complete breakdown of all costs. The Mayor felt that all Councillors would want to know the costs and asked officers to sort this matter out.

Councillor S Hodges asked the Leader if the Barry Town Survey Steering Group could have their money passed to them. Councillor T Stenstrom informed the Council that a recommendation would be put forward to this effect. He indicated that the funds were available for the Steering Group and that it would get the money at a later date when required. He stated that he did not agree with some of the figures put forward and that it is his intention that the Budget Monitoring committee hold a meeting in one month's time.

Councillor S Hodges also asked the Leader of the Council what was going to happen while he was away on vacation. Councillor T Stenstrom indicated that the Vice Chair and Mayor will be available if anyone wished to consult with them.

**RESOLVED:**

- (i) that the budget monitoring report for the period 1 April to 31 December 2008, be received;
- (ii) that the budget for Civic/Barry Town Survey Steering Group be transferred to an earmarked reserve at the year end, to be paid to the Steering Group at a later date.

116. **URGENT ACTION TAKEN IN ACCORDANCE WITH STANDING ORDER 112**

**RESOLVED:** that the contents of the report be received and noted.

117. **EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT**

Members were requested to give initial consideration to a possible restructuring of the Town Council's staffing structure, which had been in place since November 2004, following the Staff Review undertaken by the Council in 2004.

They considered that additional information was needed and thus this item would need to be referred to the Resources Committee for detailed consideration.

**RESOLVED:** that the Executive Officer provide a more detailed report on the Barry Town Council staffing structure – restructuring proposals to the Resources Committee for their consideration prior to their submission to the Joint Consultative Advisory Group.

Meeting ended at 8.05 pm.

Signed .....  
(Town Mayor)

Dated .....