

BARRY TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE FINANCE, POLICY & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE HELD ON MONDAY 29 MARCH 2010 AT 7.00PM

PRESENT: Councillor T C Stenstrom (Chairperson) together with Councillors B Brooks, G D Davey, S C Egan, J Evans, A D Hampton, N P Hodges, S A Hodges, K Kemp and L M Payne.

ALSO PRESENT: Derek Wolfe – Executive Officer
Cliff Lewis – Deputy Executive Officer
Mark Sims – Responsible Finance Officer
Amy Bardsley – Administration

F221 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors P Drake, H Hamilton (Town Mayor – Ex-Officio) and S T Wiliam.

F222 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

<u>Member</u>	<u>Interest</u>
Councillor B Brooks	Planning Application No. 2010/00123/RES
Councillor A D Hampton	Planning Application No. 2010/00123/RES
Councillor N P Hodges	Planning Application No. 2010/00123/RES
Derek Wolfe	Vale Solicitors, Agenda Item 17

F223 MINUTES OF THE COMMITTEE'S MEETING HELD ON 18 JANUARY 2010

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the Finance, Policy & General Purposes Committee's last meeting held on 18 January 2010 be approved and signed, subject and further to minute no. F210, it be agreed that the debtor not be allowed to hire the Pioneer Hall in the future.

F224 BUDGET MONITORING REPORT TO 28 FEBRUARY 2010

The Committee received the budget monitoring report for the period 1 April 2009 to 28 February 2010 advising the projected net underspend of £80,227 in 2009/10, in addition to the budgeted underspend of £43,377. The Chair of the Finance, Policy & General Purposes Committee thanked officers in particular the budget holders for their hard work during 2009/10 in securing sufficient savings to enable the Council to proceed with phase one of the cemetery extension. He advised that the Deputy Executive Officer will be providing a report to

the next meeting of the Committee with regards to an Assets Management/Property/Equipment Reserve Account for the consideration of purchasing one off items or emergency projects. This is to utilise any savings made from the budgets over and above those that will be allocated for the cemetery extension and other projects.

Councillor Stenstrom read out the following motion for consideration:-

“It is incumbent on Councillors to obtain the best return on its assets and resources. Failure to do so is neglectful. Several matters within the Councils remit can be seen to not meet this criteria:-

1. Cemetery Lodge
2. Chapel
3. Legal Advice
4. Inability to conclude leases and other related matters, such as consultants and professional opinion.

This has resulted in a loss of revenue to the Council, and additional payments being required without Council authorisation.

Therefore Council should examine its present arrangements with a view to correcting the existing problems, and ensuring that in future Council acts speedier in resolving problems.”

As a result of the motion it was

RESOLVED: that

- (a) a small Working Group consisting of 3 Labour, 1 Conservative and 1 Plaid Member be created to meet with the Responsible Finance Officer to review Council operations with a view to improving the financial management of the Council, and that Group Leaders be requested to provide names to the Executive Officer regarding appointments to the Working Party.
- (b) the contents of the budget monitoring report for the period 1 April 2009 to 28 February 2010 be received and noted.
- (c) Thanks be given to those budget holders and staff responsible for being prudent throughout the 2009/10 financial year which has contributed to the savings being identified.

F225 SCHEDULE OF PAYMENTS FOR MARCH 2010

RESOLVED: that the schedule of payments for March 2010 (final) consisting of direct debits and cheque numbers 105908 to 105942 inclusive, in the amount of £78,455.29, be approved.

F226 **STANDING ORDER 112 URGENT ACTION**

The Executive Officer informed the Committee that a final demand letter was received from the Vale of Glamorgan Council with regards to payment for Community and Town Elections in 2004. The Chair of the Committee ensured Members that cheque numbers 105515 and 105516 were cancelled due to the cheques being out of date. The Executive Officer advised the Committee that a memorandum was sent to Group Leaders requesting their views regarding the payment of invoices dated 30 April and 5 May 2009. The Leader of the Council informed Members that he responded with the view to settle the outstanding invoices and that no other Group Leader had responded. Therefore replacement cheques 105906 and 105907 were issued to pay the final demand. Councillor Hodges stated that she considered that the final decision on payment of the invoices rested with the Leader of Council and that the Leader did not require the agreement of other groups, she thanked the Leader for taking the decision to pay the invoices.

RESOLVED: that the Executive Officer's report on the decisions taken in accordance with Standing Order 112 in relation to the payment in March of various accounts by cheques numbered 105871 to 105905 inclusive on grounds of urgency be received and noted.

F227 **INTERNAL AUDIT – UPDATE**

Members were requested to give consideration to an update on the appointment of an Internal Auditor . They were advised that an advert had been placed in the local press with a closing date for applications of 31 March 2010.

RESOLVED: that the internal audit update report be received and noted.

F228 **ART IN STORAGE**

Members were provided with a summary of all items of art, photographic prints and historical gifts which were held by the Council. The possibility of a public open day was discussed, with a view to displaying the art, photographic prints and historical gifts to the public. Councillor N Hodges suggested that the Council be selective of which items they display due to the lack of space for all to be displayed.

RESOLVED:

1. that a public open day be scheduled for members of the public to view selective items of art, prints and gifts etc in the Council Chamber between May and July 2010.

2. That officers advise the Council's insurers that the open day will be taking place.

F229 **LOCAL GOVERNMENT PENSION SCHEME – EMPLOYER SPECIFIC INVESTMENT STRATEGY**

The Committee received a report advising that Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan Pension Fund are offering pension scheme employers the opportunity to change the way in which its contributions were invested to a more stable portfolio of Index Linked Government Bonds.

The two options outlined in the report were considered by members and concerns were raised regarding government bonds and whether they are sustainable. Following further discussions it was

RESOLVED: that the Town Council continue with the current long term equity and property strategy (option 1) and that the City & County of Cardiff Council be informed accordingly.

F230 **ASSETS REGISTER**

Members were provided with an updated assets register which they were requested to receive and note. Members were advised that there were two items outstanding from the register:-

1. The water fountain/horse trough at the cemetery – a valuation was being sought from Simon Morgan of Mossfords;
2. the silverware displayed in the Mayor's Parlour – a valuation was being sought from Paul Gentiles, Barry.

Members were advised that once the valuations had been received the Council's insurers would be notified and any necessary adjustments to the policy made accordingly.

RESOLVED: that the information provided be received and noted, subject to a Valuation being obtained for the Cemetery water fountain located just outside the Chapel.

F231 **VALE OF GLAMORGAN CASH SCHEME GRANTS 2010/11**

Members received a report to consider whether the Town Council might apply for funding from the Vale of Glamorgan Council's Community Action Self Help (C.A.S.H) Grant Scheme 2010/11, either in relation to this Council's own potential schemes, or on behalf of any voluntary/not for profit organisations based in the town.

The Leader of Council advised members that the Council should be submitting 2/3 applications to the Vale of Glamorgan Council CASH

Grants Scheme, per year and that should the Council not have projects that meet the Scheme's criteria they should consider applying on behalf of other organisations behalf, providing that they benefit the town. The Executive Officer advised that there was only one project for consideration and requested the Deputy Executive Officer advise members accordingly. The Deputy Executive Officer requested that members consider agreeing to the continuation of the biodiversity project within the Merthyr Dyfan Cemetery and expand the biodiversity area, as this meets with the Vale of Glamorgan Council's CASH Scheme criteria.

RESOLVED: that:-

- (a) in future this Council submits applications to help fund potential schemes every year;
- (b) an application for Community Action Self Help (CASH) Grant Funding to help towards Phase 2 of the Biodiversity project be submitted to the Vale Council.

F232 **REFERENCE FROM OTHER COMMITTEES**

(a) **Revised Draft Whistleblowing Policy**

RESOLVED: that the revised draft Whistleblowing Policy be approved, subject to the following:-

- the word "prove" be replaced with "investigate" in paragraph 7.2 of the Policy
- an extra bullet point on paragraph 11.1 be added to the end namely "The Public Services Ombudsman for Wales".

(b) **Possible Amendments to the Council's Grievance Procedure for Employees**

RESOLVED: that the two proposed amendments to the Council's Grievance Procedure for employees be approved as follows:-

1. That a pro rata form be provided for the registering of your complaints.
2. The responsibility as per the capability policy be now incorporated into all appropriate policies.

(c) **Planning Application No, 2010/00123/RES – Land at and Adjoining White Farm, Merthyr Dyfan, Barry (Residential and Open Space Development, Including Associated Building and Engineering Operations)**

Councillors Hampton, Brooks and N Hodges left the chamber for this discussion.

Members gave consideration to submitting a planning application for Land at White Farm for future burials.

After discussions it was **RESOLVED** that a report be submitted to the next Finance, Policy & General Purposes Committee from the Planning Advisor and Executive Officer detailing options available for extending the Merthyr Dyfan Cemetery.

(d) **Provision of Technical & Architectural Services for Barry Town Council**

Members considered a recommendation from Amenities Committee held on the 1 March 2010.

The Chairperson considered that the awarding of contracts by the Amenities Committee, needed to be referred to the Finance, Policy & General Purposes Committee. The Executive Officer disagreed with this and offered to circulate a statement.

The Chair of the Committee did not disagree with the decision that had taken by the Amenities Committee regarding the reappointment of the Council's Architects as a matter of urgency to enable the continuation of works to phase one of the cemetery extension, however he disagreed with the process of how the decision was reached. This was endorsed by Councillor Egan that the proper tendering process be adhered to.

RESOLVED: that:-

- (a) Martin Killick Associates be appointed as technical & architectural services for the Town Council until June 2011 or completion of Phase 1 of the Cemetery extension.;
- (b) Officers commence a competitive quotation exercise early in 2011 to allow sufficient time for the Council to consider the competitive quotes received and to appoint a new contractor for the provision of technical/architectural services from June 2011 onwards.

F233. **ALTERNATIVE METHODS FOR DEALING WITH URGENT BUSINESS**

The Committee received a report on ways to examine possible alternative options whereby the Council and its Committees can transact business that will not await the next available ordinary meeting of the Council or Committee concerned, apart from making use of the existing Standing Order 112 Urgency Provisions.

RESOLVED:

1. That an Urgency Committee be established comprising five Councillors (3-1-1) with delegated powers in relation to all matters affecting the Council, except those expressly reserved by statute for consideration by the Full Council.

F234 **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Councillor S C Egan advised that a draft schedule of meetings for 2010/11 had been prepared which would be included on the agenda for the Annual Meeting in May.

RESOLVED that the draft schedule of meetings be circulated to all Councillors in advance of the Annual Meeting for their consideration.

F235 **EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

RESOLVED that in accordance with section 1(2) Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 and in view of the confidential nature of the business about to be transacted, the press and public be now excluded from the remainder of the meeting.

F236. **TOWN COUNCIL PLAQUES – REFURBISHMENT OR RENEWAL**

Members received a report on ways to examine various options for either renewing or refurbishing existing commemorative plaques in Barry relating to Grace Williams and to Bob Hope's parents. Following discussion on the various options placed before the Committee it was

RESOLVED that:-

- (a) the Executive Officer write to the owner of the property in Old Village Road advising that the plaque currently in place on her property had not been provided by the Council and therefore maintenance of this plaque is not the responsibility of the Council.
- (b) The plaques on the property in Greenwood Street and Richard Street which were provided by the Committee be refurbished and that annual inspections and maintenance be carried out by

Hook Signs on the Council's behalf, subject to receiving annual quotations.

F237. PROVISION OF LEGAL ADVISORY SERVICES – QUOTATIONS

The Executive Officer left the Chamber for this discussion.

The Committee received a report making them aware of legal services available from a number of local law firms and asking Councillors to give consideration to various detailed quotes. Discussions ensued on the legal advice currently provided to the Council and on the Council's future requirements. Three solicitors had provided quotations and members asked Councillor Kemp for her input and recommendations.

RESOLVED that:-

- (a) That the Council use those solicitors most suited to particular cases or actions in hand, i.e. Passmores and J A Hughes on an as and when required basis.
- (b) a Service Level Agreement be entered into with the Vale of Glamorgan to provide legal service and where appropriate other solicitors be engaged;
- (c) Councillor Kemp provide the Deputy Executive Officer with a list of Cardiff based Solicitors, specialising in charity law and that this list be kept on file with Loosemores Solicitors details for referral at times that a charity law solicitor is required, subject to receiving competitive quotations.

The meeting closed at 8.55pm.

Signed
(Chairperson)

Dated