

MINUTES of the meeting of the **FINANCE COMMITTEE** held in Room 11 at the Town Hall, at 7.30pm on Monday 25th September 2023.

PRESENT: Councillor Haugh (Chair)
Councillors Adams, Antony, Brown, Inwood and Lockett

In attendance: Town Clerk
Town Councillor Rees
County Councillor Hill
2 Members of the Public

The Chair welcomed everybody to the meeting and informed those present that the meeting was being recorded. The Chair reminded Members of the Climate & Biodiversity Emergency declared by Royston Town Council and asked Members to be mindful of this when making decisions on behalf of the Council.

154/24 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:

A member of the Royston Allotments and Gardens Association (RAGA) spoke about agenda item 7, Allotments Advisory Sub-Committee. She discussed the terms of reference that had been drawn up and made several suggestions regarding these.

Town Councillor Rees spoke about agenda item 8, Community Consultation 2023/2024. He reported that the Communications Working Party was set up with the initial goal of enhancing engagement with Royston residents and, after discussions, it was decided that the Town Council should undertake a community consultation to engage with Royston residents as it had been approximately 12 years since the last consultation had taken place. He encouraged councillors to support the consultation and approve the required budget.

155/24 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:

Councillors Compton, Harrison, Jani and Squire-Smith.

156/24 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS:

Members were advised to declare any interests at the commencement of the relevant item on the agenda. No requests for dispensations were received.

The Chair moved item 7, Allotment Advisory Sub-Committee forward for discussion next.

157/24 ALLOTMENTS ADVISORY SUB-COMMITTEE:

- a) Members **RESOLVED** to agree to set up an Allotments Advisory Sub-Committee and appoint Councillors Brown and Lockett to the Sub-Committee. At the next Full Council meeting a request for two additional members would be proposed.
- b) An amendment was proposed to add the phrase 'and to consult with interested parties' under c) in the terms of reference.
An amendment was proposed to change point e) to 'A minimum of three Members, an RTC officer and at least one representative from the allotment associations'.
An amendment was proposed to add an additional bullet point under k) in the terms of reference stating 'to provide support to the volunteer organisations'.

Members **RESOLVED** to approve the amended terms of reference for the Allotments Advisory Sub-Committee.

158/24 APPROVAL OF THE FINANCE COMMITTEE MINUTES:

Members **RESOLVED** to approve as a correct record the minutes of the Finance Committee meeting held on Monday 31st July 2023 (minutes 113/24 to 124/24). The minutes were signed by the Chairman.

159/24 MINUTES OF SUB-COMMITTEES AND WORKING PARTY MEETINGS:

- a) Members received the notes of the Cinema Working Party meetings held on 5th and 12th September 2023 into the workings of the council.
- b) Members received the notes of the Events Working Party meeting held on 11th September 2023 into the workings of the council.

160/24 BANK RECONCILIATION AND INCOME AND EXPENDITURE:

- i) Members received and noted the Bank Reconciliations for July 2023 and August 2023.
- ii) Members received and noted the July and August 2023 Income and Expenditure reports compared against budgets for 2023-2024.

161/24 ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT:

Members **RESOLVED** to approve the August 2023 and September 2023 accounts for payment and the transfers between the Town Council accounts.

162/24 COMMUNITY CONSULTATION 2023/24:

A question was asked as to whether councillors that weren't on the Communications Working Party would have the opportunity to comment on the final draft of the community survey before it was published.

Councillor Rees detailed that the Communications Working Party planned to meet with Breakthrough Communications in the coming weeks, if the proposal was approved, and asked councillors to contact him if they had any suggestions for the community survey so that he could take these to the meeting with Breakthrough Communications.

The Town Clerk reported that the Communications Working Party had the authority to solely approve the final draft of the community survey for publishing as it was in their terms of reference to deal with all relevant communications issues. However, she recommended asking officers from Breakthrough Communications whether it would be feasible if all councillors could comment on the final draft of the community survey before it was published.

Members **RESOLVED** to agree a budget of £3,000 for the Communications Working Party to carry out a community consultation.

163/24 BUDGET WORKING PARTY:

It was proposed that Councillors Antony, Compton, Harrison and Haugh were appointed to the Budget Working Party. The proposal was seconded and duly carried.

A recorded vote was requested. Councillors Adams, Antony, Haugh and Inwood voted for the proposal and councillors Brown and Lockett voted against the proposal.

Members **RESOLVED** to appoint Councillors Antony, Compton, Harrison and Haugh to the Budget Working Party.

164/24 COUNCILLORS' REPORTS ON TOWN COUNCIL ACTIVITIES AND AS REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS:

Councillor Brown reported on a public meeting hosted by the Conservators of Therfield Heath on their proposed Countryside Stewardship Scheme. She detailed that the Conservators had identified a potential source of annual income through the scheme and were finalising their application with Natural England. This wouldn't interfere with common land rights but if anyone had views on the matter, they should contact the Conservators as soon as possible. She also reported that the Kite Festival was planned to take place on the heath next year, however if the application to the Countryside Stewardship Scheme was approved, grass cutting would not be able to take place on the heath until September and this would cause a problem for the event. She further reported that a Pasque flower count on the heath would be undertaken using a drone and the Conservators had appointed a new Site Manager/Clerk to their operations.

Date of next meeting: 30th October 2023.

There being no further business the Chairman closed the meeting at 8.15pm.

Signed: _____

Date _____