

RAUNDS TOWN COUNCIL

POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Minutes: 21 July 2015: Start Time 7.30pm.

PRESENT:

Cllr L Jones. (Chair), Cllr H Howell, Cllr L Wilkes.

IN ATTENDANCE:

Ms K Houlihan, Town Clerk (Minutes)

192.15 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:

Members received apologies from Cllr D Hughes, Cllr R Levell.

193.15 NOTIFICATION OF REQUESTS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC TO ADDRESS THE MEETING IN COMPLIANCE WITH ADOPTED PROTOCOL.

None received.

194.15 NOTIFICATION OF MEMBERS QUESTIONS IN COMPLIANCE WITH THE COUNCIL'S STANDING ORDERS.

None received

195.15 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.

None Received.

196.15 MINUTES.

The minutes of the last meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee Meeting held on 2 June 2015 were examined for accuracy.

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Policy and Resources Committee Meeting held on 2 June 2015 be approved.

197.15 RESOLVED that the press and public will be excluded from agenda items 198.15 and 199.15 due to the confidential and commercial sensitivity nature of the business under the public bodies (admission to meetings) act 1960 s.1

198.15 SAXON HALL

Members reviewed the confidential report of the clerk.

Points raised during the discussion included:

- The revenue account for Saxon Hall showed a small surplus for 2014/15
- That the cost justification for additional security equipment wasn't clear.
- That any alterations to staffing levels or duties need to be considered by the personnel committee.

Following extended discussion...

RESOLVED to recommend to the Full Council that:

- a) The Finance Committee be asked to review the income and expenditure and usage at Saxon Hall on an ongoing basis.
- b) The Personnel Committee continue their holistic review of all staffing.
- c) That the Clerk has the discretion over which groups should be supervised and that there should be no overarching requirement that Saxon Hall be staffed when it was let.

199.15 TOWN HALL LEASE REVIEW

Members reviewed a sample lease and a discussion was held thereon:

Following discussion it was...

RESOLVED to recommend to the Full Council that:

- a) Legal advice would be sought to update and review the lease.
- b) Existing tenants should be migrated to the new lease once completed.
- c) The Finance Policy and Resources Committee be asked to review the charges for the Town Hall as part of the budgetary process.
- d) That the Town Council review parking arrangements at the Town Hall.

200.15 COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY

Members reviewed sample communication plans and considered a template document and it was...

RESOLVED that the clerk and the chair of the Policy and Resources Committee would draft a communications strategy and a communication plan for approval by the Full Town Council.

201.15 TO CONSIDER THE COUNCILS MEDIUM TERM STRATEGY (BUSINESS PLAN)

The Chair proposed that the Town Council prepare a business plan and that this be aligned to the national wellbeing index.

Following discussion it was...

RESOLVED that the Chair of the Policy and Resources committee and the clerk would prepare a business plan aligned to the national wellbeing index. The plan would be presented to a future meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee.

202.15 RAUNDS MIDDLE CO-OP

The Chair updated members on progress to date:

- People and Places had been appointed to carry out the Market Research Element of the feasibility study a meeting had been arranged for 28th July 2015 to discuss the research and questionnaire this was at a cost of £2,500 which was in line with budgeted expenditure.
- The clerk had arranged meetings with possible legal advisers.

RESOLVED to note the report

203.15 TOWN COUNCIL LAND

Members considered adopting a Town Council policy on the acquisition, adoption and disposal of Town Council land.

Members considered the report of the clerk (Appendix 1) and in consideration of the report it was...

RESOLVED to recommend to the Full Council that ...

- a) The Policy & Resources Committee establish a register of all land held by the Town Council.
- b) The register of land includes details of any restrictive covenants on the land.
- c) That all land owned by the town council is registered with the Land Registry.
- d) That all land owned by the town council is assessed for its amenity value.
- e) That if the land has no amenity value the council should consider disposal. Where land is to be disposed of it maybe through:
 - (i) The sale of land to local residents (e.g garden extension)
 - (ii) Gifting or leasing the land to another organisation
 - (iii)The sale or lease of the land for commercial purposes

204.15 NALC CAMPAIGN FOR PUBLIC TOILETS TO BE EXEMPT FROM BUSINESS RATES

Members considered sending a letter in support of the campaign.

RESOLVED that the Town Clerk send a letter to NALC in support of the campaign.

There being no further business the meeting concluded at 9pm

Approved: (Town Mayor)

Meeting date: 8 September 2015..... (Council)

Confirmed: (Chairman)

Meeting date:15 September 2015..... (Committee)

Appendix 1: Report to: Policy and Resources Committee July 2015 - Town Council Land

Summary: A report by the Town Clerk on Town Council Land	
1.0	Background Raunds Town Council owns a number of pieces of land within the Town.

1.1	<p>Audit</p> <p>The internal auditor has highlighted that there may be instances where not all land owned by the Town Council is registered with the Land Registry.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the Council should identify which, if any of its land and / or property assets are currently not registered at the Land Registry and consider arranging for registration to take place. Experience has shown this to be a worthwhile and cost-effective measure for a Council to take, especially where boundaries are vague, assumed or poorly defined. WJM Marshall NCALC 2015 <p>The Town Council must be able to demonstrate that they have acted on any issues raised by the auditor, the council should therefore act on this.</p>
1.2	<p>Grounds Maintenance</p> <p>Ownership of land places a liability on the council to maintain the land to a suitable standard. The renewal of the grounds maintenance contract has highlighted to the council the increasing cost of maintaining land in council ownership.</p>
1.3	<p>Annual Tour of inspection</p> <p>The annual tour of inspection has already highlighted to members there are areas where boundaries are unclear or poorly defined.</p>
2.0	<p>Policy on Land Holding</p> <p>In line with many local authorities Raunds Town Council some of the land owned by Raunds Town Council is for a clearly identifiable purpose such as Bassfords Recreation Ground or Amos Lawrence Playing Field. Other pockets of land have been transferred to the council over a period of time and there may be no clear purpose as to why these pieces of land are held. Once the register of land has been established and updated the council should review the benefit of holding each piece of land. The outcome of this assessment could be either that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) the land has value as an amenity for the community, or b) the land could be improved to have an amenity value for the community, or c) the land has no amenity value. <p>If the land has no amenity value then the council may wish to consider the disposal of the land. If the council were to dispose of any public open space there are strict rules which must be adhered to. However the council could consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) the sale of land to local residents (e.g. garden extensions) b) gifting the land to another organization c) the sale of land for commercial purposes. <p>The council would need to consider any existing covenants on the land and any restrictions the wished to impose on future owner of the land.</p>
3.0	<p>Recommendations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> f) The policy and resources committee establish a register of all land held by the town council g) The register of land includes details of any restrictive covenants on the land h) That all land owned by the town council is registered with the Land Registry i) That all land owned by the town council is assessed for its amenity value j) That if the land has no amenity value the council should consider disposal