

DUNSTABLE TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

**HELD AT THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, GROVE HOUSE, HIGH STREET NORTH,
DUNSTABLE**

ON MONDAY 19 NOVEMBER 2018

Present: Councillors John Kane (Town Mayor), Nigel Warren (Deputy Town Mayor), Peter Hollick (Chairman); John Chatterley (Vice-Chairman), Sid Abbott, Philip Crawley, Eugene Ghent, Gloria Martin, Mike Mullany, Patricia Russell. Gladys Sanders, Ann Sparrow and Pat Staples

In Attendance: Councillor Johnson Tamara, David Ashlee (Town Clerk and Chief Executive), and Rosemary O'Sullivan (Head of Finance and Support Services)

Apologies for Absence: Councillors Terry Colbourne, Liz Jones and Claire Meakins

Public Attendance: None

191 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of Finance and General Purposes Committee held on 10 September 2018 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

192 SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no specific declarations of interest.

193 ACCOUNTS SUB-COMMITTEE

The Committee received the Minutes of the meetings of the Accounts Sub-Committee held 19 September and 24 October 2018.

194 FINANCIAL MONITORING REPORT

The Head of Finance and Support Services presented a revenue budgetary control report for the period from 1 April to 30 September 2018. The summary of net expenditure showed a potential for an overall net revenue saving at the end of the financial year. Any such saving would be allocated to the General Reserve. Members noted the movement in the General Reserve accounting for the in-year savings and previously agreed expenditure on specific projects to be met from it. Further information would be provided on specific projects once final accounts were completed and all anticipated funding had been received where applicable.

Members also noted the current balance of the Council's allocated reserves as at 31 October 2018 and the estimated end of year balances having taken account of agreed/known commitments to date.

195 PERSONNEL SUB-COMMITTEE

The Committee received the Minutes of the meeting of the Personnel Sub-Committee held on 18 October 2018 and adopted the recommendation contained therein.

196 BENNETT'S ADVENTURE PLAY AREA (Minute 189/2018)

The Committee considered a recommendation from Grounds and Environmental Services Committee that this Council agree to the allocation of a further £26,000 contribution to be met from the Parks and Play reserve, which in addition to the £174,000 previously agreed S106 funding, would provide a total budget of £200,000 for the Bennett's Adventure Play Area project.

Members noted that the additional funding would increase the scope for play companies to deliver a more dynamic adventure play area including play for children of all abilities.

Members recalled that a Member/Officer panel had been appointed to assess play companies' presentations and designs which would be based on the budget available. The successful design would be presented to a future meeting of the Grounds and Environmental Services Committee.

RESOLVED: that the recommendation be adopted and £26,000 be released from the allocated Parks and Play reserve.

197 GROVE HOUSE ACCOMMODATION

The Town Clerk and Chief Executive reported on issues in respect of the anticipated vacation of Grove House by Central Bedfordshire Council and the Citizens Advice Bureau, including the proposed refurbishment proposals recommended by the Council's letting agents. Both tenants would be expected to contribute to some dilapidations but it would be unreasonable to expect them to fund the complete decorations proposed.

RESOLVED: that the Council release up to £20,000 from the Grove House property reserve for the purposes of improving the soon to be vacant office space currently occupied by Central Bedfordshire Council and the Citizens Advice Bureau.

198 TOWN MEETING 2019

Members considered the venue and arrangements for the Annual Town Meeting to be held on 4 March 2019.

RESOLVED: i) that the 2019 Town Meeting be held at Grove House, as this year
ii) that no presentation be included in the meeting.

199 ANNUAL COUNCIL MEETING 2019

Members considered options for the venue for the Annual Council Meeting to be held on 13 May 2019.

RESOLVED: that the Annual Council Meeting be held at All Saints Academy and the facility booking and cost be confirmed accordingly.

Action: Head of Finance and Support Services

200 REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS

In receiving reports from representatives on outside organisations, it was noted that representation should be corrected to show:

Dunstable International Town Twinning Association – Councillors Kane (as Mayor) and Warren

Ashton Schools Foundation – Councillors Martin and Sparrow

- a) CAB Management Committee – Councillor Meakins had advised that the CAB continued to deal with a high number of debt cases and associated Debt Relief Order applications, as well as high levels of benefit related issues. In a client experience survey carried out by the National CAB, Dunstable had received a very positive report. New volunteers had been recruited and were currently being trained in order to become Gateway Assessors.
- b) DITA –the next meeting would be held on 20 November 2018
- c) Hospice at Home Management Committee – no report
- d) Ashton Schools Foundation – the next meeting would be held on 21 November 2018
- e) Ashton Almshouses – Councillor Russell reported on small repairs being carried out and the installation of improved location signage
- f) Chews Foundation – Councillor Chatterley reported that the next meeting would be held in December.
- g) Poors Land Charity – nothing to report.

201 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED: that, in view of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted, the press and public be excluded from the remainder of the meeting.

202 DOWNSIDE COMMUNITY CENTRE – DISPOSAL OF A COMMUNITY ASSET (Minute 208/2015)

The Town Clerk and Chief Executive presented a detailed report on the current situation regarding the South England Conference of Seventh-Day Adventists (SECSDA).

Members noted that SECSDA continued to occupy the Community Centre by way of a licence whilst negotiations on the agreed 99 year lease continued. Members considered how the Council should proceed regarding a new offer SECSDA had made to secure the long term lease of the building, including the detail of the financial and legal implications.

RESOLVED: that the Town Clerk and Chief Executive be authorised to negotiate the revised offer as now agreed.