

COWES TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of the FINANCE COMMITTEE held in the Town Council Office, Denmark Road, Cowes on Thursday, 2nd January 2014 at 6.30 p.m.

Present: Councillor Hall (Chairman)

Councillors Banks, Brown, Corby, Jones, McNeill and Walters.

479 APOLOGY FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Peacey-Wicox.

480 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Walters declared personal interests in the grant applications from the I.W. Society for the Blind on the grounds that he was a Trustee of the Society and from the Northwood House Charitable Trust Co. Ltd. as he was a member.

481 MINUTES

RESOLVED

That the Minutes of the Meeting held on 21st November, 2013 be taken as read, approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

482 FOOTPRINT TRUST

The Chairman stated that a representative from the Footprint Trust had been invited to the meeting to provide more detailed information regarding their 'Warmer Cowes' initiative prior to a committee decision regarding their grant application; Mr. Rowe had attended to provide that information. Mr. Rowe reported that the Footprint Trust had run a successful pilot scheme in Ventnor and now wished to role that model out to other areas. The Trust offered free home visits to elderly and vulnerable people who struggled to cope with high fuel bills and often lived in poorly insulated homes. To date they had made over 1,000 home visits giving tailored advice to many hundreds of people. Simple measures to keep people warmer and improve their quality of life could usually be undertaken for very modest amounts. They always examined what grants were available from existing sources for individuals and only those that could get no other help would be assisted from the new fund. If the Town Council was able to provide grant funding it would only be utilised for those living within the parish; following a home visit a report could either be sent to the Town Council for approval or alternatively, the Trust could administer the fund.

The Chairman thanked Mr. Rowe for attending to fully explain the scheme.

483 APPLICATIONS FOR GRANT

The Town Clerk reported that £5,400 remained unallocated in the budget to enable small grants to be made to local organisations; the following applications for grant had been received and copies of all paperwork in respect of the applications had been circulated to members.

a) Footprint Trust.

The 'Warmer Cowes' scheme would assist individual residents in 'fuel poverty'.

b). I.W. Society for the Blind.

Replacement of equipment in respect of the 'talking news' scheme.

c). Ability Dogs 4 Young People

Towards the cost of a highly trained Ability Dog for a disabled young person in Cowes.

d). Northwood House Charitable Trust Co. Ltd.

For servicing the dog and litter bins in Northwood Park for the financial year 2014/15.

RECOMMENDED

- 1). That a grant of £200 be made to the I.W. Society for the Blind;
- 2). That no grant be made to the Footprint Trust for their 'Warmer Cowes' initiative;
- 3). That no grant be made to Ability Dogs 4 Young people in respect of their application to assist one individual although another application to generally support the group would be considered;
- 4). That the Town Council renews the contract for dog/litter bin emptying in Northwood Park for the financial year 2014/14 in the sum of £2,932.50; and
- 5). That the balance in the budget of £5,200 be kept in reserve pending further applications which may be received.

484 I.W. COUNCIL DISCRETIONARY SERVICES

The Town Council were aware of the approximate £28m savings the I.W. Council were required to make over the next three years; these savings would have to be made from 'discretionary' services and preliminary discussions had been held with the I.W. Council in their attempt to find new ways of delivering some of these services.

The Chairman stated that a report in the I.W. County Press had indicated that the I.W. Council had opted to utilise £5m from their reserves to minimise the savings impact in the coming financial year and to give a 'breathing space' for planned alternative arrangements to be made.

The Town Clerk reported that this approach coincided with a response he had received from the Deputy Leader of the I.W. Council which stated 'the I.W Council were looking for a strategy which will take us towards 2017 rather than any unsustainable kneejerk reaction'.

Members accepted that if the Town Council were to seriously consider responsibility for additional services for 2015/16 and beyond, they would firstly need to put an appropriate infrastructure in place. It was agreed that a further meeting be held at 10am on Friday 10th January 2014 to commence the process of setting a budget for the 2014/15 financial year.

(The proceedings terminated at 8.01p.m)

CHAIRMAN

