

## DITTON PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE, HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER AT DITTON COMMUNITY CENTRE ON MONDAY 31<sup>ST</sup> MARCH 2008

PRESENT: CLLRS. M J PORTER [Chairman], MRS A R BEADLE [Vice-Chairman], R G W BAKER, J BEADLE, A R MULCUCK & D H NUNN.  
MRS S J KAVANAGH [Clerk of the Council]

592. **OPENING OF MEETING**

The Chairman opened the meeting at 7.30pm.

593. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

All Members were present.

594. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Cllrs. Mulcuck and Nunn declared a personal interest in item 595(d) as they are both members of The Heritage Centre Ltd.

595. **FINANCE**

(a) **Financial Analysis**

The financial analysis, which had previously been circulated, was **READ** and discussed and it was **NOTED** that expenditure and income is on budget.

**RESOLVED** to **RECOMMEND** that the underspend in the Chairman's allowance during 2007/2008 be slipped forward to 2008/2009.

Cllr. Mulcuck advised that he has been questioned about the Council's portion of the Council tax by several people recently since the figures were published by the Borough Council.

**RESOLVED** that, in future, an article be placed in the Spring edition of the Gazette each year, giving an explanation of the precept.

(b) **Budget Management 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter + Comparison**

The budget management figures and comparison were **READ** and it was **NOTED** that there is a small surplus at the end of the third quarter.

(c) **Investment Update**

It was **NOTED** that no investment value details have been received since 31<sup>st</sup> December 2007, but it was felt that due to the current economic situation the investment would probably be down by about 10-12%. This should not give cause for concern as it is intended to be a long term investment. **NOTED** it is still producing dividends and interest.

Since the decision was made to place dividends in a cash account, to prevent them from being capitalised, this has produced £5,365 over three months which will be used for revenue purposes.

(d) Donation Requests

Requests received for grant aid, which had previously been circulated, were considered.

**RESOLVED to RECOMMEND** the following grants be made under sections 142, 144 and 137 of the Local Government Act 1972:-

**Under Section 142**

Malling Area Volunteer Bureau	£200
Victim Support	£100
Malling Citizens Advice Bureau	£100

**Under Section 144**

Ditton Heritage Centre:	£100
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**Under Section 137**

Kent Air Ambulance	£250
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Members were reminded that the members of the Heritage Centre undertake the collection of donations at the annual bonfire and fireworks display and it is usual for them to receive 50% of the collection.

**RESOLVED to RECOMMEND** that an additional sum of £821, which equates to 50% of the donations collected at the above event, be donated to the Heritage Centre Ltd under Section 144 of the Local Government Act 1972.

(e) Grants to Local Organisations

A draft application form to be completed by organisations wishing to apply to this Council for grant aid, was circulated, **READ** and **NOTED**.

**RESOLVED** to adopt the form and add an extra line to enable the secretary of the organisation to sign the application form in addition to the Chair person.

(f) KCC Local Boards & Members Grants 2008/2009

Details of the availability of the above grants, which had previously been circulated, were **READ** and **NOTED**.

It was **NOTED** that it would be possible to apply for one of these grants to assist with the costs of refurbishing the Cedar Room.

(g) Introduction of Mileage Charges – DCK Beavers

It was **NOTED** that, due to the increasing costs of fuel, DCK Beavers are unable to continue to absorb the travelling costs from their offices to clients and will therefore be introducing a mileage charge of 30p per mile from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2008.

**RESOLVED** to advise them that whilst this Council appreciates their increasing fuel costs and the need to deal with this urgently, it wishes it would apply the same principle to the dealing with the questions raised by this Council last September and to which it is still awaiting a response.

596. **FIRE RISK ASSESSMENT REVIEW**

The annual fire risk assessment recently undertaken was **READ** and it was **NOTED** that only minor additional signage was required and an emergency lighting test undertaken once a month.

597. **PARISH COUNCIL DANCES**(a) **Live Bands/Discos**

Following discussion it was decided that a disco would not be appreciated by the clientele and would not provide the atmosphere usually enjoyed at parish dances.

(b) **Raffle Prizes**

It was generally felt that the expenditure on raffle prizes was correct to provide good quality prizes and encourage people to buy tickets.

It was suggested that perhaps an auction could be held in place of a raffle and the prizes be sought through donations. Discussion took place and it was suggested that the downside of this would be that someone would need to source donations, which is not easy in the current economic climate, and it was uncertain whether the clientele at dances would be willing to take part in an auction

It was also suggested that perhaps an extra raffle be held during the latter part of the dances whereby one good (donated) prize is on offer and tickets are sold at £1 each.

598. **IT SUPPORT CONTRACT**

The Clerk advised that she is unhappy with the lack of service and response she is now receiving from the Council's IT support company since they outsourced their helpdesk to Eastern Europe.

**RESOLVED** to **RECOMMEND** that the Clerk be given delegated power to investigate other IT support companies and select a company with a local helpdesk that will give the level of service required together with best value.

599. **WEBSITE UPDATING**

The Clerk advised that she feels the website is looking a little dated and in need of refreshing. Several suggestions for updating the site were shown.

It was **NOTED** that the webmaster would be willing to work with the Council to produce some ideas and, depending on the scale of updating, he estimated it would take 5 – 7 hours to undertake the work at his usual discounted costs of £22 per hour.

**RESOLVED** that the webmaster be asked to work with the Clerk to put some ideas down on paper for consideration at the next meeting of this committee.

**RESOLVED** that the history of the original design by Catherine Baker, be included on the new website.

600. **CLOSURE**

The meeting closed at 8.35pm.

Chairman  
7<sup>th</sup> April 2008