

**MINUTES OF THE PROCEEDINGS AT THE MEETING OF THE
POLICY AND FINANCE COMMITTEE
OF THE CANVEY ISLAND TOWN COUNCIL
HELD AT THE PADDOCKS, LONG ROAD, CANVEY ISLAND ON
MONDAY 4TH JANUARY 2010 AT 7.30PM**

PRESENT:

Councillors: J. Liddiard R. Bishop R. Howard
 P. Davies

Non- Committee Members: J. Anderson and D. Anderson

Also present: 1 member of the public
 Mrs L. Lodge – Acting Clerk
 Mrs E. De Can – Deputy Clerk

In the absence of the Chairman, Cllr Liddiard took the Chair.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Cllr N. Harvey – holiday, Cllrs D. Blackwell & P. Greig – unwell.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

3. PUBLIC FORUM

No items raised.

4. MATTERS OF REPORT FROM THE MEETING HELD ON 2nd NOVEMBER 2009 AND NOT ON THE AGENDA

Noted.

The meeting agreed to consider agenda item 6 next.

5. TO REVIEW THE FINDINGS OF THE EXTERNAL AND INTERNAL AUDIT AND CONSIDER ANY ACTIONS REQUIRED (CLERK REPORT) AND APPOINTMENT OF NEW EXTERNAL AUDITOR FOR 2009/10

The reports, previously circulated were considered and the recommendations contained within were discussed. Actions already undertaken were noted and those still to be addressed were identified:

1.1 *A business plan should be drawn up to cover the council's short, medium and long term aims and objectives, set its priorities and allocate its resources.* **Action: Ongoing.**

2.1 *If changes are required to the Annual Return after it has been agreed by the council, they should be reported to the council.* **Action: Noted as**

likely to have been an isolated incident.

2.2 *The accounts should be published by 30 September, even if the audit has not been concluded.*

Action: Noted.

3.1 *When a new clerk is appointed, he/she would benefit from training in the accounting package if not already very familiar with it.*

Action: Noted.

- 4.1 A risk assessment should be carried out on keeping all council funds with one institution, and the possibility of spreading the funds should be considered. **Action: Noted.**
- 4.2 The council should ensure it is not overdrawn at the end of the year, and should endeavour not to overdraw during the year. **Action: Noted.**
- 4.3 The imprest account should be kept at or below its limit. **Action: Noted.**
- 5.1 Full details should always be completed on the stubs of the paying-in book. **Action: Noted.**
- 5.2 There should be a formal written agreement between the council and the Horticultural Society laying down the responsibilities of both parties. The council should carry out a check of the number of plots let. **Action: Noted.**
- 6.1 Castle Point Borough Council should be reminded of its legal obligation in respect of the timetable of payments of the precept to the town council. If the precept is not paid in time, interest should be demanded. **Action: Noted.**
- 7.1 The method of filing paperwork should be made more secure. **Action: Already undertaken.**
- 8.1 The council should carry out an annual review of the effectiveness of the system of internal audit. **Action: Already undertaken.**
- 9.1 Minutes of the Annual Town Meeting should be signed in accordance with LGA 1972. **Action: Already undertaken.**
- 9.2 The pages of the council minute book should be numbered. **Action: Already undertaken.**
- 9.3 Committees should have delegated powers to act; working groups are not permitted delegated powers and have no power to act. **Action: Already undertaken.**
- 9.4 Committees should agree their own minutes. **Action: None as considered acceptable for the minutes to be signed at the Town Council meeting.**
- 9.5 Legal powers should support all expenditure. **Action: Legal powers are always checked before any new undertaking carried out.**
- 10.1 The council should carry out an assessment of the risks facing the council and should give this task high priority. **Action: Already undertaken.**
- 11.1 A review of the insurance should be carried out annually; the clerk could carry out the initial work and make recommendations to the council or a committee, but the members should be fully aware of the council's insurance position and should make the decision on any changes or keeping the status quo. **Action: Already undertaken.**
- 12.1 The council should formally adopt a policy for awarding grants to ensure its decisions are fair and transparent. **Action: Already undertaken.**
- 12.2 The legal power under which a grant is given should be clearly identified. **Action: For consideration, noting that powers are checked by the Clerk prior to inclusion on the agenda.**
- 12.3 The availability of grants from the council should be advertised so that all local groups get an equal chance to apply. **Action: To be included in future newsletters.**
- 13.1 Reserves intended for future projects should be clearly identified as earmarked reserves. **Action: Already undertaken.**
- 13.2 The amount of general reserves should be monitored to ensure they remain suitable for the councils' needs. **Action: For discussion at item 6.**
- 13.3 A Reserves Policy should be considered which will lay down the amount of general reserves which the council aims to maintain. **Action: Already undertaken.**
- 14.1 The Standing Orders and Financial Regulations should be reviewed on a regular basis, preferably annually, to ensure they continue to meet the councils' needs. **Action: Already undertaken.**
- 14.2 The payment systems and processes should be reviewed and policies and procedures drawn up to ensure the finances are transparent and that the audit trail is clear and maintained. **Action: Ongoing.**
- 14.3 All cheque stubs should be initialled by both signatories. **Action: Ongoing.**
- 14.4 The minute reference of the meeting at which the payment was approved should be recorded on the invoice. **Action: Purchase order system now in place.**
- 14.5 Two cheque books seemed to be in use concurrently on the imprest account; there may have been a good reason for this but it is not good practice and should be avoided if possible so that cheque numbers appear roughly sequentially in the accounts. **Action: Noted as likely to have been an isolated incident.**

14.6 Payments made under S137 should be clearly identified in the minutes and in the accounts. Payments should not be made using S137 if other powers exist. A record should be kept of the annual limit of expenditure under S137.

Action: Noted.

15.1 Regular monitoring reports should be made to the council so that the members have knowledge and ownership of the finances.

Action: Ongoing.

16.1 A scheme for members allowances should be drawn up and agreed in accordance with the Local Authorities (Members Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003.

Action: Noted.

17.1 Paperwork related to employee payments should be kept separate from other invoices as they are not documents which are publicly available.

Action: Already undertaken.

18.1 A risk assessment of the use of a debit card should be carried out. **Action: The debit card has been cancelled.**

The committee noted the overall conclusion of the internal audit report as follows:

Although a number of recommendations have been made they are not an adverse reflection on the council and are intended to be helpful. Some can be implemented reasonably easily and others can be considered over a longer period of time. It is inevitable that a new council will take a while to get all its systems and procedures in place.

The interim period while a new clerk is appointed and in the time when he/she is getting up to speed with the councils' activities can be utilised as a time of consolidation for the council.

6. TO CONSIDER MAKING A RECOMMENDATION FOR THE BUDGET FOR 2010/11

Members considered the draft budget papers previously circulated and the following points were noted:

- The projected funds held of £383,500 at 31st March 2010 of which £160,000 was noted as reserves
- Budget headings such as Canvey Lake, Seafront Gardens and Bumblebee Park included an element of maintenance as well as capital expenditure, which was estimated to be larger in 2010/11 than 2011/12 onwards due to the need for relatively urgent improvements
- The Council would be actively seeking external funding for capital projects
- To include a budget heading of £5,500 for Councillors allowances, noting that this did not imply that the Council would resolve to set an allowance for 2010/11.
- To reduce the Environment & Open Spaces Policy and Project development budget as it was felt that the Committee budget had included sufficient headings for the year.
- The draft budget expenditure for 2010-2011 of £489,400
- The precept level per household should not increase in 2010/11, although this would mean that the total precept received would be less than 2009/10.

RECOMMENDATION that the Council raises a precept £265,941 in 2010/11, which equates to a Band D precept of £20.97 per annum, thus remaining at the same level as 2009/10 as per the budget papers attached.

7. TO CONSIDER A GRANT APPLICATION FROM SWEETBRIARS LODGE SOCIAL CLUB

Deferred to the Town Council meeting.

8. TO CONSIDER THE APPOINTMENT OF TWO COUNCILLORS TO THE CANVEY LAKE COMMON LIAISON COMMITTEE

RECOMMENDATION that Councillors J Anderson and D Blackwell are appointed to the Canvey Lake Common Liaison Committee.

9. TO CONSIDER SUBSCRIBING TO THE LCR PUBLICATION PROVIDED BY NALC

Deferred to the Town Council meeting.

10. TO CONSIDER EALC TRAINING EVENTS IN 2010

Noted.

11. TO CONFIRM ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT PREVIOUSLY AGREED

RESOLVED that cheques presented for payments previously agreed were paid.

In accordance with Section 100(A) of the Local Government Act 1972 the public and press will be excluded for consideration of the following item(s) which are likely to involve the disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 1 and 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act.

12. TO CONSIDER GOVERNMENT FUNDING FOR COUNCIL ASSETS

The Town Clerk to investigate funding options for the purchase of future council assets.

13. OFFICE HOURS AND STAFF LEAVE

Noted that the Chairman and Vice Chairman would be informed of dates of leave for staff and all office closures such as bad weather and training commitments.

The meeting closed at 9.40pm.

CHAIRMAN

18TH January 2010

		<u>Last Year</u>		<u>Current Year</u>			<u>Next Year</u>	
		Budget	Actual	Agreed Budget	Revised Budget	Actual YTD	Projected Actual	Next Year Budget
<u>Policy & Finance</u>								
<u>101</u>	<u>Central Costs</u>							
4000	Staff Salaries	£60,000	£65,407	£90,000	£90,000	£40,243	£55,000	£95,000
4008	Staff Training	£3,000	£1,764	£2,500	£2,500	£965	£1,500	£2,500
4009	Staff Expenses	£1,000	£1,351	£1,000	£1,000	£220	£300	£1,000
4012	Premises Costs	£35,000	£39,983	£15,000	£15,000	£9,656	£14,000	£15,000
4020	Telephone/Broadband	£2,200	£1,338	£1,800	£1,800	£944	£1,600	£2,000
4021	Stationery	£10,000	£2,588	£2,500	£2,500	£1,704	£2,300	£2,500
4025	Insurance	£3,000	£436	£3,000	£3,000	£1,229	£1,229	£3,000
4030	Advert/Publicity/newsletter	£5,000	£3,744	£6,000	£6,000	£3,096	£5,500	£6,000
4040	IT Costs	£4,000	£2,349	£2,000	£2,000	£980	£1,400	£2,000
4041	Office Equipment	£6,000	£444	£2,000	£2,000	£2,576	£2,000	£2,000
4056	Internal Audit	£750	£74	£500	£500	£500	£750	£500
4057	External Audit	£1,000	£1,006	£1,000	£1,000	£0	£1,000	£1,000
4099	General Expenses	£19,975	£887	£1,000	£1,000	£506	£500	£500
4200	Policy & Project Development	£0	£794	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0
4300	Organisational Development	£0	£5,999	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0
	Overhead Expenditure	150,925	128,164	128,300	128,300	62,618	£87,079	£133,000
<u>105</u>	<u>Grants</u>							
4500	Grants	£5,000	£4,241	£5,000	£5,000	£3,000	£5,000	£5,000
<u>110</u>	<u>Civic and Democratic</u>							
4099	General Expenses	£0	£77	£0	£0	£195	£0	£250
4100	Election Expenses	£7,000	£3,652	£10,000	£10,000	£1,930	£1,930	£10,000
4109	Members Expenses	£2,000	£0	£1,000	£1,000	£23	£200	£1,000
4110	Members Training	£3,000	£543	£2,000	£2,000	£123	£600	£2,000
4115	Members Travel/Subistence	£3,000	£4	£500	£500	£0	£200	£500
4120	Allowances	£5,500	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£5,500
4130	Subscriptions	£3,000	£2,291	£2,500	£2,500	£2,025	£2,300	£2,500
4150	Room Hire	£500	£1,024	£2,000	£2,000	£1,167	£2,000	£2,000
4200	Policy & Project Development	£2,000	£946	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0
4160	Regalia				£1,000		£1,000	£0
4121	Chairmans Allowance	£0	£0	£500	£500	£730	£500	£500
	Overhead Expenditure	£26,000	£8,537	£18,500	£19,500	£6,193	£8,730	£24,250

		<u>Last Year</u>		<u>Current Year</u>			<u>Next Year</u>	
		Budget	Actual	Agreed Budget	Revised Budget	Actual YTD	Projected Actual	Next Year Budget
<u>Environment & Open Spaces</u>								
<u>201</u>	<u>Open Spaces</u>							
4099	General Expenses	£50	£50	£0	£0	£0	£0	£1,000
4200	Policy & Project Development	£0	£114	£10,000	£10,000	£0	£0	£3,500
4400	Tewkes Creek Maintenance	£2,000	£1,110	£500	£500	£695	£1,000	£2,000
4425	Dog fouling/litter management	£0	£0	£5,000	£5,000	£0	£5,000	£33,000
4450	Allotment Costs	£0	£288	£1,500	£1,500	£95	£600	£2,500
	Overhead Expenditure	£2,050	£1,562	£17,000	£17,000	£790	£6,600	£42,000
4201	Canvey Lake	£0	£0	£50,000	£50,000	£700	£5,000	£130,000
4202	Bumblebee Park	£0	£0	£3,000	£3,000	£0	£3,000	£3,000
4203	Skateboard Park/Bungalow	£0	£0	£6,000	£6,000	£80	£2,000	£11,000
4207	Sea Front gardens	£0	£0	£10,000	£10,000	£3,880	£5,000	£10,000
	Direct Expenditure	0	0	£69,000	£69,000	£4,660	£15,000	£154,000
1000	Allotment Income	£844	£870	£1,700	£1,700	£1,757	£1,757	£1,800
	Fishing permits							£100
	Net expenditure - 201	1,206	692	84,300	84,300	3,693	£19,843	£194,100
<u>205</u>								
<u>Environmental Projects</u>								
4099	General Expenses	£0	£4,495	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0
4200	Policy & Project Development	£88,000	£5,761	£10,000	£10,000	£0	£0	£0
4206	Probation Service Schemes	£0	£154	£1,000	£1,000	£0	£0	£1,000
4210	Street Lights	£9,000	£0	£15,000	£15,000	£0	£24,000	£15,000
4215	High Street planters	£8,000	£420	£12,000	£12,000	£1,359	£4,000	£8,000
4216	Hanging Baskets	£0	£0	£0	£0	£2,681	£2,500	£4,000
	Overhead Expenditure	£105,000	£10,830	£38,000	38,000	£4,040	£30,500	£28,000
	Environment & Open Spaces total	£106,206	£11,522	£122,300	£122,300	£7,733	£50,343	£222,100

		<u>Last Year</u>		<u>Current Year</u>			<u>Next Year</u>	
		Budget	Actual	Agreed Budget	Revised Budget	Actual YTD	Projected Actual	Next Year Budget
<u>Community</u>								
<u>210</u>	<u>Community Projects</u>							
4099	General Expenses	£0	£47	£0	£0	£0	£0	£5,000
4200	Policy & Project Development	£5,000	£1,555	£20,000	£20,000	£0	£0	£0
4300	Organisational Development	£10,375	£1,000	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0
	Overhead Expenditure	£15,375	£2,602	£20,000	£20,000	£0	£0	£5,000
4208	Christmas Events & lighting	£0	£2,900	£5,000	£5,000	£5,786	£5,500	£20,000
4209	Festive Lighting	£0	£1,153	£5,000	£5,000	£1,342	£5,000	£0
4211	Events	£0	£0	£15,000	£15,000	£6,458	£8,000	£5,000
4212	Citizenship Training	£0	£0	£5,000	£5,000	£1,400	£1,400	£4,000
4213	Town Directory	£0	£0	£5,000	£5,000	£50	£2,500	£5,000
4214	Bus Shelter Renewal	£0	£0	£5,000	£5,000	£895	£2,400	£5,000
4215	Armed Forces							£6,000
4216	Summer Fun							£35,000
4217	Citizen Award							£10,000
4204	Environment & Conservation Event	£0	£0	£5,000	£5,000	£0	£0	£10,000
	Direct Expenditure	£0	£4,053	£40,000	£40,000	£15,931	£24,800	£100,000
1050	Grants Received	£0	£0	£0	£0	£5,000	£5,000	£0
	Net Expenditure	£15,375	£6,655	£60,000	£60,000	£10,931	£19,800	£105,000

		<u>Last Year</u>		<u>Current Year</u>				<u>Next Year</u>
		Budget	Actual	Agreed Budget	Revised Budget	Actual YTD	Projected Actual	Next Year Budget
<u>Reserves</u>								
<u>901</u>	<u>Earmarked reserves</u>							
9001	High Street planters	£0	£8,059	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0
	Election				£10,000			£10,000
	Allotments				£10,000			£10,000
	Tewkes Creek				£5,000			£5,000
	Canvey Lake				£50,000			£50,000
	Sea front Gardens				£5,000			£5,000
	Street lights		£9,000	£15,000	£24,000			£0
	General reserve				£80,000			£80,000
	Total reserves				£184,000			£160,000
<u>Income</u>								
1176	Precept Received	£266,004	£266,004	£266,738	£266,738	£266,738		£265,941
1190	Interest Received	£10,000	£11,624	£8,000	£8,000	£918	£3,200	£3,000