

**REPORT of the Meeting of the Finance and Policy
Committee held 10th July 2008**

Present: Cllr. Phyllida Parsloe (Chairman)

Cllrs. Alan Dukes
Neil Halsall
Clive Parkinson
Judith Payne (Town Clerk)
Sandra Richardson (Deputy Town Clerk)

Apologies: Cllrs. Clare Fardell (Other Meeting)
Bob Griffin (Mayoral Engagement)
Shirley Holloway (Other Meeting)
Maggie Tyrrell (Indisposed)

1. POLICE MATTERS

The Chairman welcomed PC Roger Jones to the meeting and invited him to report to committee.

PC Jones reported that the town had been fairly quiet over the past couple of months with no discernible crime trends. There had been incidences of anti social behaviour reported in the Mundy Playing Fields and the underpass between Streamleaze and Tesco. The problems at the Streamleaze underpass had been prioritised at the last Safer and Stronger Community Group meeting and the police had been given that area regular attention. South Gloucestershire Council's Street Cleansing Department had cleaned up rubbish and removed graffiti from the underpass.

The town centre had been reasonably quiet with just a few sporadic incidents which had not resulted in any charges. It was anticipated that the Royal George Public House would be reopening in the near future and the Clerk advised that planning permission had now been granted to convert the premises' existing outbuildings to function rooms.

The Safer and Stronger Community Group had been trying to publicise its existence in the area and notices had been distributed in the town. The Chamber of Commerce had also been approached for help in raising the awareness of the group.

The reported traffic problems in Gloucester Road had been investigated and it transpired that there had only been two accidents there in the past four years.

PC Jones was asked what measures had been taken to combat the problems of vandalism in the Mundy Playing Fields on a Friday and Saturday night. He advised that police were patrolling the area regularly but that he would check with PC Neil Wyman on the current situation. PC Jones was asked by members to ensure that the Mundy Playing Fields were checked by the police in the early hours of Saturday mornings on a routine basis.

PC Roger Jones was thanked for his attendance and left the meeting.

2. MATTERS ARISING FROM LAST REPORT

(a) Project Steering Group for Thornbury Hospital

(i) Steering Group Meeting – 9.6.08

Notes of the meeting held on 9th June 2008 prepared by Cllr. Phyllida Parsloe had been tabled for members' information.

Concerns were expressed that the notes indicated that a case for a hospital at Thornbury would not be made on health care needs but would be based on cost efficiency. Members felt that Frenchay Hospital, by virtue of its size, would possibly prove to be more cost efficient than Thornbury Hospital. It was hoped that the involvement of the GP's in the Thornbury Project may be instrumental in lowering the cost of provision.

It was mentioned in the penultimate paragraph of the notes that Cllr. Shirley Holloway had indicated that the Steering Group had suggested names of some local health care providers in the voluntary and private field and members asked who those providers were. Cllr. Phyllida Parsloe advised that she had visited Ledbury Hospital which, in addition to the hospital, included extra care housing and a young persons' brain injury unit on site. The project had been funded by Sure Health and then leased back to the local Primary Care Trust. Cllrs. Phyllida Parsloe and Shirley Holloway had suggested that South Gloucestershire PCT might like to pursue this course of action.

(ii) Sir Chris Clarke – Chairman of South Gloucestershire PCT

Members comments made at the last meeting had been conveyed to the Chairman of the South Gloucestershire PCT and his response had been circulated with the agenda for members' information. The information was noted.

(iii) Stakeholder Workshop – 2.6.08

In the absence of Cllrs. Shirley Holloway and Maggie Tyrrell there was no report available for the meeting on 2nd June 2008.

(b) Access Issues

There was nothing to report on this matter at the present time

(c) Thornbury and Alveston Safer and Stronger Community Group

Copies of the notes of the public meeting held on 3rd June 2008 had been tabled for members' information. Cllr. Clive Parkinson reported that there had been an emphasis on the lack of facilities for youngster in the town and members agreed that the group should be investigating ways of providing youth activities.

It was noted that a local resident had reported Council's lack of response to his complaint and Cllr. Clive Parkinson asked the Clerk to provide him with a briefing note on Council's actions relating to the matter.

At a recent meeting of the Chairs and Vice Chairs of the Partnership a leading police officer expounded the virtue of the Safer and Stronger Community Group as the ultimate body to represent the community. It was agreed that such a statement could alienate town and parish councils and could be deemed as compromising their role as leading representatives of the community. The group was, however, a good instrument for interaction with the local police.

(d) Review of Allowances for Councillors

There was nothing further to report on this matter.

(e) Mayors' Insignia Badges

The Clerk had sent all the necessary information to Toye, Kenning and Spencer and was awaiting a quotation for the supply of lapel badges. The Clerk anticipated that the badges could cost in the region of £700. The Clerk agreed to investigate if Council had a statutory power to incur expense for such an item and would report her findings at the next meeting. Cllr. Alan Dukes wished it minuted that he was totally against the purchase of Past Mayors' Insignia Badges.

(f) 67 High Street – Subletting Premises

The Clerk expressed concern that it appeared that the tenants of 67 High Street were no longer using the premises and that two quarters rent totalling £9,250 were owed. The Clerk had, however, ascertained a contact address and was vigorously pursuing the matter.

3. MATTERS IN PROGRESS

(a) Parish Charter Working Group

Cllr. Clive Parkinson reported on his attendance at the meeting held on 8th July 2008. Only seven people had attended including South Gloucestershire Council officers. Consideration had been given to the feedback on the South Gloucestershire Council's consultation relating to the proposal to notify parishes of planning application electronically. South Gloucestershire Council had decided to trial the proposal with three of the parishes that had indicated a willingness to receive applications electronically. One small, one medium and one large parish had been selected for the trial and South Gloucestershire Council would then have, once that had been completed, an indication of what resources would be needed to supply to the town and parish councils to enable them to view applications through his method.

The current Parish Charter was also reviewed and the recent consultation on the role of the charter and revealed that most town and parish councils did not feel that any specific changes were necessary. South Gloucestershire Council officers advised that the way the Parish Charter Working Group interacted with the parishes was being reviewed and the possibility of setting up two different groups was being explored. One group, Parish Charter Working Group, would meet a couple of times a year to see how the Charter was working and the second group would act as a liaison between South Gloucestershire Council and the town and parish councils.

The information was noted.

(b) Residents of The Close – Nuisance at Mundy Playing Fields

A letter had been received from seven residents of The Close seeking Council's help to alleviate the problems of anti-social behaviour in the Mundy Playing Fields near their homes on Friday and Saturday nights. They felt that a gate which could be locked at appropriate times would help alleviate the problem and asked that Council consider locating one at the entrance to the playing fields.

The Clerk had ascertained that gating orders across public footpaths could be obtained but that the process was lengthy and complicated with no guarantee of success. Members had looked at the possibility of putting a gate at the entrance to the playing fields quite recently and, at that time, had unanimously agreed that it was inappropriate in that location. It was agreed that other security methods could be considered and agreed to contact the Safer and Stronger Community Group to explore the possibility of obtaining funding for effective CCTV surveillance equipment. It was also agreed that the Chairman would meet with the local residents to discuss the problems and explore possible solutions.

(c) Mr. G. Quintana – Initial Notification of Application to High Court for Judicial Review

As agreed at the last meeting the Clerk had sought the advice of the Legal Department of National Association of Local Councils and a response was awaited.

(d) Avon Pension Fund – Employers’ Discretions – Draft Policy Document

Copies of Council’s proposed Draft Policy Document had been circulated with the agenda for members’ information. It was agreed to recommend to Council that the draft be adopted with no amendments.

(e) External Redecoration of Town Hall

Quotations for the external redecoration of the Town Hall had been received from four contractors and these are listed below in alphabetical order.

Ashton Painting Contractors
Ian Baker
W.A.E. Mizen & Son
Pete Ponting Ltd.

The prices quoted are listed in ascending order.

£8,260
£9,928
£9,993
£11,650

It was agreed to accept the lowest quotation.

4. FINANCIAL STATEMENT

The Financial Statement for May 2008 was received and noted.

5. ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT

Resolved that the following accounts paid out of meeting be approved:-

South Glos Council	Rates – Town Hall	1097.00
South Glos Council	Rates – Cemetery	121.00
South Glos Council	Rates – Quaker Lane Toilets	62.00

Resolved that the following accounts now due for payment be approved:-

Central Services

Telewest	Broadband rental	25.85
Pitney Bowes Finance PLC	Quarterly rental	80.04
British Telecommunication	Telephone bill Town Hall	191.60
Pitney Bowes	Top up for franking machine	154.51
The Consortium	Cleaning materials & stationery	94.01
Petty Cash		50.00

Playing Fields & Cemetery

Countrywide Farmers	Red Line	27.99
Countrywide Farmers	Roundup	63.99
Mrs N Cox	Clothing damage recompense	4.00

Veolia Environmental Services	Waste disposal	166.19
Veolia Environmental Services	Waste disposal	92.59
British Telecommunication	Telephone bill - Pavilion	26.89
Thornbury Motors Ltd	Petrol	79.26
Tytherington Road Nursery	Flowers for cemetery	442.17
Brass Founders Sheffield	Brass plaques	182.89
Esso Petroleum Co Ltd	Oil	482.75
Chipping Sodbury Glass	Replacement glass	35.63
Brass Founders Sheffield	Brass plaques	130.72
Hags Play Limited	Replacement swing and chains	296.72
Premier Surfacing Contractors Ltd	Paths	932.95
Newey & Eyre	Light fittings	133.96

Environment

Hawkins of Thornbury	Silicone	11.98
Thornbury Motors Ltd	Petrol	184.93
Tytherington Road Nursery	Reimbursable baskets Thornbury in Bloom	410.83
Tytherington Road Nursery	Town baskets	4593.23
Tytherington Road Nursery	Reimbursable baskets Thornbury in Bloom	324.30
Tony & Sue's Flowers Ltd	Reimbursable tubs Thornbury in Bloom	39.74
Tony & Sue's Flowers Ltd	Reimbursable Rock St Thornbury in Bloom	176.25
Avon Displays	Fairtrade signs	165.68

Grants & Contingencies

Armstrong Hall Complex	Mortgage – 4 Chapel Street (July)	182.05
Mr R Griffin	Mayor's Allowance	600.00

6. CORRESPONDENCE

(a) South Gloucestershire Council – Removal of Payphones

Details had been received from South Gloucestershire Council concerning BT's proposals to remove 60 public payphones in South Gloucestershire, two of which were in Thornbury. The Thornbury payphones were in Avon Way and Eastland Avenue.

It was agreed to object to BT's proposal to remove two payphones in Thornbury as such removal would not only create problems for those residents who do not possess mobile phones, which include vulnerable groups such as elderly people, children and disabled persons, but would also have safety implications for those needing to contact the emergency services.

7. SCHEDULE OF PUBLICATIONS

The schedule of publications received had been circulated with the agenda and was noted for information.