

**REPORT of the Meeting of the Finance and Policy
Committee held on 22nd April 2010**

Present: Cllr. Chris Clifford (Chairman)

Cllrs. Clare Fardell
Neil Halsall
Clive Parkinson

Judith Payne (Town Clerk)
Sandra Richardson (Deputy Town Clerk)

Absent: Cllr: Maggie Tyrrell

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

The following apologies had been received:-

Cllrs: Alan Dukes (Work Commitment)
Bob Griffin (Out of Thornbury)
Shirley Holloway (South Glos.Council Commitment)
Phyllida Parsloe (Other Engagement)
Ann Rogers (Out of Thornbury)

2. POLICE MATTERS

Apologies had been received from PC Draper and PCSO Golding but a written report had been submitted and tabled for members' information.

- The youths creating anti-social behaviour outside the Hairdressers in St. Mary Centre had been arrested and dealt with through the criminal justice system.
- In March incidences of anti-social behaviour had been reported in the High Street on a daily basis and after increasing high visibility patrols on weekend evenings only one further call had been received.
- One of the current priorities identified by the Safer and Stronger Community Group had been pavement parking in Upper Bath Road. Four police warnings had been placed on four offending vehicles and there has now been an improvement in the situation.
- There had been numerous anti-social behaviour incidents in Pullins Green where it was suspected that youths had been causing damage to residents' vehicles. The situation was being monitored by the police and the installation of CCTV was also being considered.

Members reported that there had been problems with vandalism in Kestrel Close play area and were aware that the police had been notified. Some surprise was expressed that this incident had not been included in the police report.

3. MATTERS ARISING FROM LAST REPORT

(a) Project Steering Group for Thornbury Hospital

Copies of the report of the meeting of the Group held on the 11th March 2010 had been circulated to members, by e-mail, prior to the meeting. The information was received and noted.

The report identified the work being undertaken to produce the Strategic Outline Case for presentation to the Primary Care Trust Board.

It was agreed to write to Robert Knibbs of the PCT and ask if he could give an estimate of the timescale required to produce the Strategic Outline Case.

(b) Safer and Stronger Communities Group – Street Light in Alleyway and Paving Slabs Outside Natwest Bank

An e-mail had been received from Andy Porter of South Gloucestershire Council advising that the cost of installation and connection of a street light in the alleyway would be £2,200 plus vat. This price had been on the condition that the light would be placed on the existing wooden telegraph pole but this was not possible as the wooden poles were being removed.

It was agreed that a letter be sent to South Gloucestershire Council requesting that the installation of a light be placed on the Task Register.

There was nothing further to report on the replacement of the paving slabs outside the Natwest Bank and this matter was now being dealt with by the Environment Committee.

(c) Quaker Lane Toilets

A response had been received from Mark Phillips, Property Manager of the Peer Group, which the Clerk presented to members. Mr. Phillips stated that the proposal put forward at the last Town Centre Partnership meeting was that Council would look at funding the Peer Group to refurbish its public conveniences in St. Mary Centre and keep them open longer hours. The Peer Group had considered the proposal and stated that it was prepared to work with Council to achieve the same but would expect Council to fund both the refurbishment and the operating costs for the facility including running costs, repairs, maintenance and rates.

Members were appalled at the response because, at the Town Centre Partnership meeting, the representative of the Peer Group had stated that the Company had earmarked money for upgrading its public conveniences. Council representatives had asked if the Peer Group intended to keep its upgraded toilets open for longer hours and intimated that Town Council may consider making a contribution towards the running costs of the extended opening hours.

It was agreed to request a meeting with Mr. Phillips to reiterate members' understanding of the proposal and explore any possible way forward.

(d) Thornbury Town Council – Policy Statement

The contents of this document were still being considered and the matter was referred to the next meeting.

(e) 67 High Street Offices

(i) Letting

Resolved that in accordance with Standing Orders and under section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 the press and public be excluded from the meeting for this item of business i.e. to consider the offer from a prospective lessee of Council's property at 67 High Street on the grounds that it involves likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part 1 para. 3 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (relating to financial or business affairs of any particular person including the authority holding the information).

On return to open session it was resolved to continue negotiations with the potential tenant.

(ii) Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) and Recommendation Report

The Clerk had arranged for several of the recommendations such as loft insulation and window repairs to be carried out by Council's handyman.

(f) State of Changing Rooms at Thornbury Leisure Centre

(i) A response had been received from Mark Crutchley advising that, following the excellent news that a funding route had now been secured for improvements to the Leisure Centre, South Gloucestershire Leisure and South Gloucestershire Council would wish to meet to present early proposals on the refurbishment to Town Council members and ascertain their views. Kim Hazeldine, South Gloucestershire Council's Head of Community Sport) would be contacting Council as soon as early proposals were available. Members welcomed the information.

Mr. Crutchley had also responded in the affirmative to members' request for a private briefing on future plans for the Leisure Centre as a whole.

(ii) A letter had also been received from Gráinne Stables, South Gloucestershire Council's Asset Project Officer, advising that the planning for the improvement project was still in the initial stages. There would be an opportunity for staff, leisure centre users and all interested parties to view the plans before the commencement of work.

It was agreed to write to Ms. Stables advising that Council would wish to be actively involved in any consultation process regarding the future plans for the Leisure Centre.

(g) Town Centre Strategy Action Plan

The Clerk had, only recently, written to the Chamber of Commerce and would anticipate that a response would be received in time for the next meeting.

(h) Thornbury-in-Bloom Award Winning Plaque

There had been a misunderstanding in the proposed size of the plaque and wrong order placed. The wording on the plaque suggested by Thornbury in Bloom had not included a date and members felt that the design should be reconsidered. The Clerk would discuss the matter with the Chairman and Secretary of the Thornbury in Bloom Committee.

(i) Mayor of Thornbury's Youth Award

The Clerk reported that no applications had been submitted for the Mayor's Youth Award despite having circulated all schools, churches and youth organisations. Articles had also been published in the Thornbury Magazine and Thornbury edition of the Gazette.

The Mayor would be advised of the situation.

(j) Display of Poppy Mosaic

Members were advised that Cllr. Phyllida Parsloe would be raising the matter at the next Town Centre Partnership Meeting.

4. MATTERS IN PROGRESS

(a) Citizens' Advice Bureau - Lease

The Clerk advised that, after careful consideration of proposed changes to the lease to include a condition that the rooms could be let to other organisations when not in use by CAB, she had concluded that inclusion of that specific condition would comprise the other lessee conditions in the original lease.

It was agreed to accept the Clerk's advice and offer a new lease to CAB with no changes from previous years.

(b) Extension of Thornbury Carnival 2011

An e-mail had been received from Cllr. Phyllida Parsloe following her meeting with David Goldring and Chris Saich of the Carnival Committee which had been circulated to members via e-mail. The Carnival Committee members were keen to see if there was any interest amongst various groups to consider extending the Carnival in 2012 to include the Friday evening and Sunday. The Carnival Committee members wanted the Town Council and Chamber of Commerce to join with them in inviting local groups to a meeting in September to explore the possibility further.

Members felt that it was not appropriate for them to be a signatory on the invitation but expressed willingness in assisting the provision of a meeting place. Mr. Goldring and Mr. Saich would be advised of members' decision.

(c) Town Centre Partnership Draft Constitution

Copies of the proposed Draft Constitution for the Town Centre Partnership had been e-mailed to members prior to the meeting for information.

It was agreed that South Gloucestershire Council had the responsibility for town centres within its area and should be advising on the production of a Constitution. It was felt, however, that a formal constitution for the Partnership would be advantageous particularly when applying for funding for particular initiatives.

It was agreed that the Constitution should reflect that the Town Council was a formal member of the partnership but that it was not appropriate for the Town Council to be the accountable financial body as stated in 8(iv) of the draft constitution.

(d) Financial Matters

(i) Review of Effectiveness of Internal Control

Copies of Council's Internal Financial Controls had been circulated with the agenda for members information when considering Council's responsibilities to review the effectiveness of internal financial control. Members considered whether the Council was receiving regular and adequate financial information from the RFO and that the system was effective.

After discussion it was agreed that a recommendation be made to Full Council that the Finance and Policy Committee had conducted a review of the effectiveness of the Council's system of internal control and was completely satisfied that a suitable and effective system of internal control was in place.

(ii) Review of Effectiveness of Internal Audit

Members had been circulated with copies of the Internal Audit Review Checklist produced in the 'Governance and Accountability for Local Councils'. Consideration was given to the expected standards of internal audit and the evidence of achievement (copy of the completed annual review is attached to this report).

Two issues were highlighted as follows:-

- (i) Members did not consider that the Internal Auditor should be seen as a catalyst for change.
- (ii) There was a need for members to be offered refresher financial training if required and this would be organised by the RFO.

It was agreed that a recommendation be made to full Council that the Finance and Policy Committee had conducted a review of the effectiveness of the Council's system of internal audit and is satisfied that a suitable and effective system of internal audit is in place.

5. FINANCIAL STATEMENT

The Financial Statement for March 2010 was received and noted.

6. ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT

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

South Glos Council	Town Hall Rates	1092.43
South Glos Council	Cemetery Rates	241.20
South Glos Council	Tennis Court Rates	33.12
South Glos Council	Quaker Lane Toilet Rates	68.24
Days Contract Hire	Purchase of Ford Transit	6203.03

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

Central Services

Sage (UK) Ltd	Sage Cover	1380.63
Sage (UK) Ltd	Pay Envelopes	24.68
OTIS Ltd	Lift - Contract Maintenance	518.71
OTIS Ltd	Repair to Lift	608.53

Corona Energy	Gas – Town Hall	305.84
J.N.C. (Fire Protection) Ltd	Fire Alarm call out	98.41
Action for Market Towns	Membership 2010-2011	217.38
SITA UK Ltd	Duty of Care	62.69
Siemens	Copier Rental	575.19
British Telecommunications	Telephone – Town Hall	175.08
Pitney Bowes Finance plc	Quarterly Rental	80.04
ICCM	Cemetery Corporate Membership	85.00
Danwood Group Ltd	A4 Paper	44.06
Virgin Media	Broadband connection	25.85
Unitary Engineering Services	Repair to Drop-In Centre Radiator	174.49

Playing Fields & Cemetery

British Telecommunications	Telephone – Playing Fields	34.99
Bristol Water	Water – Cemetery	110.60
T H White	Wiper blade & filters	82.91
Thornbury Tyre Services Ltd	Tube	37.48
Screwfix Direct	Jigsaw & Router	99.89
Thornbury Motors Ltd	Petrol	85.15
Veolia Environmental Services	Container rental	121.58
Veolia Environmental Services	Container rental	222.00
GAP Supplies Ltd	Bolts & washers	18.20
Countrywide	Round-Up	82.99

Environment

Hawkins	Woodstain	9.98
Thornbury Motors Ltd	Petrol	85.14
GAP Supplies Ltd	Timber & screws for seat	64.42

Land & Property

South Glos Council	April Rates - 67 High Street	747.00
GAP Supplies Ltd	Manhole cover – Quaker Lane	35.30
Bristol Water	Water & sewage - 67 High Street	357.78

7. CORRESPONDENCE

(a) ALCA – South Gloucestershire Area Group

Copies of the minutes of the Group meeting held on 22nd October 2009 had been circulated to members by e-mail prior to the meeting. The information was received and noted.

(b) Parish Charter Working Group – Draft Terms of Reference

A copy of the new draft Terms of Reference for the group had been circulated to members via e-mail prior to the meeting. The information was received and noted.

8. SCHEDULE OF PUBLICATIONS

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