

STROUD TOWN COUNCIL

**Minutes of the meeting of the
Recreation and Finance Committee**

26th April 2010 at 7.30 pm

**Present: Cllr Cockcroft (Chair), Cllrs Green, Hurrell,
Lisster, Poulton, Read**

In attendance: Susan Creswick (Clerk)

| | Action |
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| <p>1. Apologies</p> <p>Apologies were received from Cllrs Beeching (alternative commitment) and Townley C. (unwell).</p> | |
| <p>2. Declarations of Interest</p> <p>Cllr Read declared a prejudicial interest in item 9. Festival Fortnight.</p> | |
| <p>3. Minutes of the meeting of 8th march 2010</p> <p>These were approved as a correct record and signed by Cllr Cockcroft.</p> | |
| <p>4. Clerk's Report</p> <p>This was noted.</p> <p><u>Summer Crescent.</u> It was emphasised that the council needs to be involved in the consultation over play equipment if there is the possibility that it will undertake future maintenance of the area.</p> <p><u>Bank Gardens.</u> Cllr Read gave a brief report on a meeting with the District Council that had taken place earlier in the day. The proposed use of Hartpury College students to design a paving scheme was confirmed, with a prize fund of £500 to include a contribution from the District Council. The best schemes will be put forward for public consultation to determine preferred features for a final design.</p> <p>Cllr Read also reported on the powers available to deal with dog fouling and dogs off leads. A report will be made to full Council on the use of Dog Control Notices in due course.</p> | <p>Clerk</p> <p>PD'A</p> <p>Clerk</p> |

5. Report from the Green Spaces Manager

This was noted. In the Manager's absence, the Clerk reported on potential staffing changes and it was requested that a recommendation be made to the Personnel Committee.

Action

PD'A

6. Tree Planting Plans for Uplands and the Leazes

The planting plan for Uplands had previously been agreed by the Tree Group and the Green Spaces Manager. A short discussion about the choice of trees for the various parts of the Leazes playing field was held. The proposals were accepted but with two additional points. First, it was agreed to have two central trees, either side but away from the play equipment that will mature to a significant size without dominating the important views afforded by the site. Secondly there was concern at the cost of purchase all standard trees and it was agreed that approximately 50% should be planted up as whips/smaller stock. This lower cost approach would need to accept greater risk of losses to vandalism, but this was offset by considerable purchase cost and labour (planting and watering) savings. The committee agreed that the work on both sites should be completed in the coming planting season after advice on capacity from the Green Spaces manager.

PD'A

PD'A/Clerk

7. Tree Surgery at Summer Crescent

A request from a resident to reduce the crown of a mature beech tree was considered. It was agreed that the council would pay for a report from an arboriculturalist and this would be discussed with the resident who had indicated his willingness to pay for any tree surgery. The Clerk and Green Spaces Manager were authorised to conclude this.

AR/SC

8. Merrywalks Facilities

The Clerk reported that a meeting had been agreed with a Director from the County Council for 5th May regarding the bus shelters. The formal planning application for the telephone kiosk was being processed.

9. Food and Walking Festivals

Cllr Read expanded on the grant application and explained how the work was being divided. The administration officer would be doing the co-ordination as in previous years on behalf of the council, while work on the website would be done by her privately for the festival company. A grant of £4650 was approved for payment in May.

10. Internal Control Report

The report from Cllr Lisster undertaken in September 2009 was noted.

11. Report of the Independent Internal Auditor

Action

The report dated 15th April 2010 was noted. The recommendation to raise the level of fidelity insurance was discussed again and it was agreed not to increase the insured sum as there had been no changes since the discussion the previous year that would warrant such action.

12. Budget Monitoring to 31st March 2010

It was noted that there had been no requirement to use reserves in the year and that several items would be carried forward in reserves as previously agreed.

A request was made to ensure that the breakdown of expenditure on Lansdown Hall in the budget monitoring statement was carefully presented. It was suggested that there should be progress reports to each full Council on this project.

Clerk

13. Payments for February and March 2010

Payments totalling £123,592 were noted. A request was made to investigate the possibility of finding a lower cost telephone/broadband service and mobile service.

PD'A

14. Exclusion of Press and Public

There were no representatives to exclude.

15. Draft Lease for Lansdown Hall

In general the draft was considered acceptable although the legal language was regretted as not being 'plain English'. Concerns were expressed about the ability of the landlord to terminate the contract in the event of under-performance and a reduction in the frequency of the reviews was proposed. An additional document outlining the required contents of the annual report is to be prepared.

Clerk

The Clerk was authorised to progress this with the solicitor and in consultation with the committee chair.

SC/DC

The meeting closed at 9.45 pm.

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Chair

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Date