



RAMSGATE TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Finance & General Purposes Committee Meeting

Venue: The Council Chamber, The Custom House, Harbour Parade, Ramsgate

Date: Wednesday 13th September 2023 at 7pm

Present: Councillors: Green (Chair), Albon, Austin, Crittenden, Driver, Hetherington, Hudson, Huxley, Makinson, Moore, Nixey and Ovenden.

Also in attendance:

Miss L Fidler, Town Clerk & RFO

154/23 **APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received and accepted from Cllrs Ara (work commitment), Dark (unwell), Wing (personal commitment) and Young (personal commitment).

RESOLUTION: To approve the apologies for absence.

155/23 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

156/23 **CLIMATE CHANGE TASK GROUP**

(i) Members received the Minutes of the Climate Change Task Group Meeting held on 1st August 2023.

RESOLUTION: To note these Minutes.

(ii) Members received the Minutes of the Climate Change Task Group meeting held on the 6th September 2023.

RESOLUTION: To note these Minutes.

(iii) Members considered the revised Terms of Reference for the Climate Change Task Group, as recommended at the meeting on the 6th September 2023. Cllr Austin (Task Group Chair) was congratulated on hard work

RESOLUTION: To approve the revised Terms of Reference.

157/23 **COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP**

Members received a written report from Miss L Fidler, Town Clerk &

RFO, and consider the options detailed therein regarding committee membership.

RESOLUTION: Membership of Committees will be reduced. Cllrs will be asked to provide their 1st, 2nd and 3rd choice for Committee membership and then the Chair & Town Clerk will come up with a proposal for membership. Once approved this will be trialled for six months. The following general committee rules will be introduced:

- **All Councillors will receive agenda packs and minutes [so that everyone is up to date with what is happening].**
- **All Councillors have the authority to call in a matter to full Council, whether they are on a committee or not. [Members would need to be prepared to give some authority to their colleagues....if everything is being called in to full council, membership of committees would need to be reconsidered).**
- **Committee Chair's will permit non-voting members who are present at a meeting to make representations on agenda items when requested.**

158/23

ACCOUNTS

Members received the following:

- (i) Financial Comparison – Expenditure to 31st August.
- (ii) Financial Comparison – Income to 31st August.
- (iii) Financial Summary – Cashbook to 31st August.

RESOLUTION: This information was noted.

159/23

DECARBONISATION PLANS FOR THE CUSTOM HOUSE

Councillors received a written report from Miss L Fidler, Town Clerk & RFO, regarding a decarbonisation plan for The Custom House.

RESOLUTION: Officers to work-up a decarbonisation and energy efficiency plan for The Custom House, with the intention of having a plan ready for whenever suitable grants become available.

160/23

TECHNICIAN'S FLEET & DEPOT

- (i) Councillors received a written report from Miss L Fidler, Town Clerk and RFO, regarding replacement of the Ford Transit van with an EV alternative.

RESOLUTION: To lease an electric Peugeot Expert from Stellantis & YOU on a four-year agreement, to replace the diesel Transit van.

- (ii) Councillors received a written report from Miss L Fidler, Town Clerk and RFO, regarding disposal of the two milk floats.

RESOLUTION: A milk float will be offered to GB Carnival for £1000 with the condition that the vehicle can no longer be

stored by the Council. The milk float(s) will then be put into auction with a reserve price of £1000.

- (iii) To receive and note a report regarding the Technician's future depot. It was agreed that moving the Technician's outside of the town centre would not be desirable; staying at Radford House is the preferred option.

RESOLUTION: The report was noted. Contact will be made with East Kent Spatial Development Company about the project, and pre-application advice will be sought from TDC.

161/23 **RADFORD HOUSE**

- (i) Councillors received a verbal update from Cllr Nixey on progress and activities at Radford House. A copy of this report is attached to the official minutes (Appendix 1).

RESOLUTION: To note this information.

- (ii) To receive a report from PS Tax and consider the recommendations contained therein on how to ensure all VAT is reclaimable from the Radford House development work.

RESOLUTION: This information was noted.

162/23 **80TH ANNIVERSARY OF D-DAY**

Councillors received a PDF presentation from the Royal Pageantmaster, Bruno Peak, and considered if the town council wishes for Ramsgate to take part as guided. Organisation of this event would involve the PA to the Mayor and Town Centre & Tourism Manager. It was noted that if the Council is to take part, planning would need to commence this year, to ensure that an appropriate budget is allocated in 2024/2025.

RESOLUTION: Ramsgate Town Council should take part in these commemorations. A plan that we can execute well is required, and consideration of how to tell Ramsgate's stories should be considered.

163/23 **DATE & TIME OF NEXT MEETING**

Wednesday 25th October 2023 at 7pm

Minutes 161/23**Progress report from Cllr Nixey regarding Radford House**

- Walkers Construction have been on site for three weeks undertaking the urgent work that were approved by the Council; there are lots of pieces to this work, broadly speaking this work includes:
 - Taking samples of the construction materials so that these can be tested; so that materials used in the future match the current construction.
 - Making the building watertight, by removing the ivy and repairing/clearing downpipes and gutters.
 - Some health & safety matters that affect current use (for example levelling tripping hazards).
 - Insulating the loft.

- As per any exploratory work, this work has thrown up more questions and decisions on how to proceed are being made. For example,
 - Walkers were going to do some repairs to the flat roofs, but have flagged up that one of the roofs isn't worth repairing, we're better off replacing this as part of the main works, this temporary repair has now been taken out of the contract.
 - Due to a nesting pigeon in the neighbours property, hand tools were required for some work instead of electric.
 - The presence and location of asbestos has also raised a number of queries, despite us having a demolition asbestos report.

- A further planning application will be required, the Architect is due to submit this next week. Consent is required for things that are different to those included in the existing consent - namely altering the pedestrian entrance to the building, and relocation of the vehicle control gates, both of which are associated with creating the safe pedestrian zone around the front and side of the building. Our architect has been in contact with TDC's planning department, and the planning officers are happy with the proposed changes – but permission still needs to be given.

- A risk workshop is taking place tomorrow (Thurs) to discuss the business plan. Suzy continues to trial different uses for the building and gather data to inform the business plan. And we've got five 'sitting hirers' who are hiring rooms upstairs – these tenants will stay until we need them to leave during construction. The weekly "Chat Time" sessions that are provided using the Cost of Living Support Grant that Suzy obtained are really proving their worth, and all councillors are encouraged to drop in.

- A Conservation Management Plan is being undertaken, our architect has explained that *"we do need a CMP. Most importantly in relation to the building control application. Because, under the building act, we are changing the use*

to the building, there is a presumption (requirement) that the thermal performance will be improved; adding internal insulation to the walls, roof etc. The only realistic way of justifying not making these thermal improvements is on the grounds of 'harming' the historic fabric of the building. A carefully drafted CMP would help justifying retaining the existing plaster etc and explaining that internal insulation cannot be added without affecting the existing historic details; cornice, skirtings etc. To 'embed' this justification the CMP should be included in the planning / listed building application, it then forms part of the evidence the local planning authority have used to arrive at their decision. To put this in context, the cost of the CMP, which ever proposal is selected, will be far less than the cost of thermal improvements."

Also, a CMP will be necessary when applying for any grants.

- With regards to grants, the Town Clerk put in an "expression of interest" form for the Community Ownership Fund, for £350k. This has been successful, and we've been invited to complete a full application form, this will be submitted by the deadline of 11th October. NB. It may be that we'll struggle to meet the criteria for grants over £250k, but we will try.