

**COMMUNITY AND LEISURE COMMITTEE held at COUNCIL OFFICES
LONDON ROAD SAFFRON WALDEN at 7.30 pm on 6 JANUARY 2004**

Present:- Councillor D Morson – Chairman
Councillors E Abrahams, H Baker, P Boland, V Lelliott,
J Loughlin, J Menell, J Murphy, S Schneider G Sell and F Silver.

Also present at the invitation of the Chairman:- Councillors R Copping, M Foley, D Gregory and A Wattebot

Officers in attendance:- J Bosworth, S McLagan, P O'Dell, I Orton,
B Perkins and C Roberts.

20 **STATEMENT BY MEMBER OF THE PUBLIC**

Before the meeting Messrs Philip Leeder and Michael Hughes, the Chair and Treasurer respectively of the Thaxted Guildhall Committee made a statement and the summary of this and of the reply given by the Chairman of the Committee is attached to these Minutes.

21 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

The following Members declared interests:

Councillor H Baker as regards the item on Day Centres.
Councillor G Sell as regards the item on Day Centres insofar as his mother was the Secretary of one of the day centres.

22 **MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 28 October 2003 were received, confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

23 **BUSINESS ARISING**

(i) Minute CL18 – Community and Leisure Grant Schemes

Members had regard to the Committee's decision that all organisations in receipt of Contributions Fund allocations should provide the Committee, within 18 months, with a presentation on their work. The Director of Planning suggested that Members should appoint a Task Group to hear presentations on work by organisations in receipt of Contributions Fund allocations.

RECOMMENDED that Councillors Morson, Menell and Loughlin form a Task Group to hear and consider presentations on work-by organisations in receipt of Contributions Fund allocations before agreeing new three year agreements from 2005/06.

24 ORDER OF BUSINESS

The Chairman explained that with the consent of the Committee items would be considered in a different order than appeared on the agenda. Members agreed to this.

25 THAXTED GUILDHALL – AMENDED BUDGET ARRANGEMENTS

Members received the report of the Architect and Property Advisor/Consultant recommending a new funding arrangement for the Guildhall.

They had heard a detailed presentation given by Mr P Leeder and Mr M Hughes, the Chair and Treasurer of the Management Committee, which showed the efforts already made by them to forecast and meet the financial exigencies. The Chairman of the Committee commented upon the excellence of this particular partnership between District and Parish Councils, and Members heard that both Mr P Leeder and Mr M Hughes' father Mr B Hughes (who would achieve 100 years of age on 26 January 2004) were formerly councillors on the Uttlesford District Council. Members also heard representations by local ward Members and accepted their view that the Guildhall was a landmark of the District which should be preserved.

The Head of Community and Leisure Services said that a three year award was in line with the Community and Leisure Committee's grants policy, but Members were concerned that the Management Committee should seek funds from other organisations as well as the District Council.

RECOMMENDED that

- 1 That the day to day costs of Thaxted Guildhall, payable to Thaxted Guildhall Management Committee be funded by an index linked grant.
- 2 The budget for the grant to the Management Committee from 2004/05 be £4,500, index linked.
- 3 The cost of repainting the Guildhall be funded from Reserves, within the year applicable to the repainting cycle, subject to the approval of the Resources Committee.
- 4 The Management Committee be encouraged to approach English Heritage, The National Trust, and other appropriate bodies for financial support, and that officers work with the Management Committee to promote increased use of the Guildhall and report on progress to the Community and Leisure Committee in six months' time.

26 EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

RESOLVED that under section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 1 of part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

27 **STAFFING AND EQUIPMENT NEEDS - BRIDGE END GARDENS**

The Committee considered a report recommending restructuring of the staff to reflect changed circumstances, and purchase of equipment for restoration and future maintenance of the Gardens.

RECOMMENDED that

- 1 The post of Gardener/Environmental Task Force Supervisor be made redundant and the Council's Redeployment Policy (PPN 26) and Redundancy Policy (PPN 24) be entered into with effect from 7 January 2004.
- 2 The one-off Redundancy costs be met from reserves.
- 3 Retrospective recognition be given to the transfer of Gardener A to the post of Gardener 1 with effect from 1 January 2004,
- 4 A Temporary Contract for the post of Gardener 2 is agreed until 31 December 2004,
- 5 Equipment, as set out in the attached Appendix, limited to a total cost of £6,000, be purchased from the existing 2004/05 budget.

(The public were then re-admitted to the meeting)

28 **THAXTED FESTIVAL GRANT REQUEST – SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION**

In connection with the Thaxted Festival grant request, Members heard and took into consideration further detailed information about the costs and benefits of the Thaxted Festival and the probability that the Thaxted Festival Foundation would not support the Young Musician of the Year Festival which was therefore unlikely to happen. They considered that the small budget would be better used on music projects requested by young people across the District

RESOLVED that a grant of up to £2,000 be awarded to the Thaxted Festival Foundation and the budget allocated for the Young Musician of the Year Festival be redirected into the Youth and Arts Development budget to support the development of music projects for young people, in accordance with the revised Leisure and Cultural Strategy.

29 **POLICY PRIORITIES AND BUDGETS**

The Committee considered the report on Policy Priorities and Budgets for 2004/05 as it affected the budget for the Community and Leisure Committee giving particular consideration to the savings required by the Council.

RESOLVED that

- 1 the revised 2003/4 budget and draft 2004/5 budget be approved and submitted to the Resources Committee for consideration.
- 2 the proposed re-distribution of tasks within the current Community and Leisure team be agreed to include those tasks proposed for the newly agreed leisure officer post
- 3 a part time lower graded post be created instead of a leisure officer post
- 4 the savings proposals regarding work reallocation and Bridge End Gardens be agreed and the listed budget review items below be approved and submitted to the Resources Committee for consideration-
 - (i) £5,000 from redistribution of tasks within the current Community and Leisure team to include those proposed for the leisure officer post, and creation of a part-time lower graded post instead of a leisure officer post.
 - (ii) £1,700 from changes to staffing at Bridge End Gardens
 - (iii) £1,250 from the Leisure and Cultural Grants Scheme plus a further reduction of £2,500 in this budget reflecting reduced support to the Thaxted Festival.
 - (iv) £1,500 from the Contributions Fund.
 - (v) £1,500 from the Community Partnership Fund.
 - (vi) £1,000 from increased charges for Community and Leisure activities.
 - (vii) £1,000 from reducing the Youth Initiatives budget.
 - (viii) Support was not agreed for Birchanger TIC.

(During the debate on this item Councillor S Schneider declared an interest, in so far as she was the Council's representative on the Community Sports Forum, and Councillor J Menell declared an interest in so far as she was a member of the Primary Care Trust, the Community Partnership and the Buffy Bus Association.)

30

BEST VALUE REVIEW OF DAY CENTRES – FINAL REPORT AND IMPROVEMENT PLAN

The Committee considered a report about the recommendations of Scrutiny Committee 1 which had now been incorporated in the Final Report and Improvement Plan. Members noted the accelerated project dates and efforts to reduce user age limits.

RESOLVED that the Final Report and Improvement Plan resulting from the Best Value Review of Day Centres be approved and adopted.

31 **CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2004/05 – BIDS**

Members were informed that this item would be submitted to the next meeting of the Committee.

32 **PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM 2003/4**

The Committee considered the report of the Performance Manager giving an update on performance management and recommending the layout of a new reporting mechanism.

Members found the report very clear and easy to understand and complimented the Performance Manager on the new layout used which they thought would be a great asset to the Council during the CPA process.

RESOLVED that the arrangements be agreed and that it be noted that performance review data will be reported to Scrutiny Committees and that any under performance will have a rescue package incorporated in the report.

32 **LEISURE AND CULTURAL GRANTS SCHEME – RECOMMENDATION FROM SCRUTINY COMMITTEE NO 1**

Members considered a request of Scrutiny Committee No 1 that the upper limit for these grants be increased from £400 to £500. They had regard to Officers' view that the available budget would support the move, which was in line with the Scrutiny Committee's views on Council grants policy.

RESOLVED that the upper limit for grants under the Leisure and Cultural Grants Scheme be raised from £400 to £500.

33 **UTTLESFORD SUPERSTARS**

Councillor F Silver asked Members to consider assisting him with this sports initiative which he hoped to hold in Great Dunmow. Members thought funds for the initiative might be available from the Community Support Forum, and they asked Officers to help Councillor Silver and report to the next meeting of the Committee.

The meeting ended at 10.12 pm

Statement by Messrs P Leeder and M Hughes.

Messrs P Leeder and M Hughes, the Chair and Treasurer respectively of the Thaxted Guildhall Committee made a statement about the financial position of the Thaxted Guildhall as follows:-

They explained that the Thaxted Guildhall Committee had managed the Guildhall since 1976. The Uttlesford District Council had given them financial support each year from that date in sums which had increased over the years from £400 to £1750. The Committee members had in the past given their services voluntarily, but this was not always the case now. The Guildhall required income for maintenance of the building and the permanent display there. Income was obtained by letting three rooms in the building, by charges for admission to the building, by financial support from a charitable foundation and by payments from Moorcroft Potteries which had previously used the premises for exhibitions but was now using premises elsewhere.

Costs included overheads such as electricity, insurance etc, improvement of the permanent display, and payments to the Custodian, Secretary and Treasurer. There were fewer school visits and the Moorcroft Potteries income had now ceased. The charitable income was not guaranteed to be given, the new custodian was no longer voluntary and payments were now needed for cleaners. As a result there was no fund for decoration., despite increases made to the letting charges and selection of the best payment plans for insurance and electricity.

The arrangements made so far had however prevented the Guildhall from becoming a burden to the taxpayer.

The Chairman of the Committee thanked Messrs Leeder and Hughes for their attendance and the useful information they had given which would be taken into consideration when the Committee considered the Guildhall budget arrangements at a later stage in the meeting.