

SWAFFHAM TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the **FINANCE FULL COUNCIL** meeting held on **Monday 29th April 2019** at **6.30pm** in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Swaffham.

Present: Mayor Cllr C Houghton (in the Chair)

Councillors: Mrs S Matthews, Mrs A Thorp, Mrs J Buckley-Stevens, Mrs S Lister, Mr S Bell

Town Clerk: Mr R Bishop

Deputy Town Clerk Mrs C Smith

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1. Apologies for Absence

- 1.1. Cllr W Bensley – work commitments
- 1.2. Cllr B Bowler – previous commitment
- 1.3. Cllr R Bartram – Work commitments
- 1.4. Cllr T Jennison- holiday
- 1.5. Cllr L Scott – work commitments
- 1.6. Cllr J Skinner – unwell
- 1.7. Cllr P Darby – Breckland election campaigning

2. Declarations of Interest

- 2.1. There were no declarations of interest.

The meeting was adjourned at 6.34 for public participation.

See Appendix 1

The meeting resumed at 6.52

3. Minutes of the previous Meeting

- 3.1. The minutes of the meeting held on Monday, 28th January 2019 were amended to include Cllr Bell in the list of attendees, they were then agreed and signed as a true and accurate record by the Chairman.

4. Finance Report

- 4.1. Accounts to 31st March 2019 for Income & expenditure analysis 2018-19.

Following questions from Cllrs the Town Clerk agreed to circulate to Cllrs how long was left on the PWLB loan. It was confirmed that the costs of the new market stalls and trailer had been paid for by the Town Council, but these would be refunded by the grant from Breckland. These monies had not yet been received. It was agreed to accept the accounts to 31st March 2019.

It was agreed to circulate to Cllrs how long was left on the PWLB loan.

It was agreed to accept the accounts to the year-end 31st March 2019

- 4.2. Internal Audit Report 2018-19 (Final).

4.3.

The Town Clerk reported that there were no major issues identified in the internal auditor's report. There were four recommendations to be agreed these were:

R1 – As previously recommended, in accordance with the requirements of the Local Government Act 1972 (Schedule 12), the chairman of the meeting at which the minutes of Council or committee meetings are approved must ensure that the last page of the minutes is signed, and all other pages are initialled.

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Cllrs noted the recommendation and it was agreed to ensure that all minutes are appropriately signed.

R2 – As previously recommended, the Council should determine the frequency with which its staff are to undertake inspections of playgrounds and play equipment during the year. A formal timetable for these inspections should be agreed and monitored.

Cllrs noted the recommendation and it was agreed that the current timetable of inspections was appropriate. These are Mon-Fri daily visual checks. Detailed 'safety inspection and condition report' fortnightly and a yearly annual independent check by a ROSPA registered contractor.

R3 – Once the outstanding s106 monies relating to the Town Centre project are received, the Council should undertake a thorough review of its capital, revenue and general reserve requirements and ensure that it has enough resources to meet future commitments and aspirations.

Breckland Council have taken legal advice to clarify how the s106 monies (£225k) could be spent as it was unclear. The dispute included the possibility that £90k would need to be spent in Station St. The Town Clerk reported that £135k was undisputed and should be coming to the Town Council soon, this would bring the general reserves to a more comfortable level. It was confirmed that Breckland had had this money for several months, Cllrs asked the Town Clerk to enquire if there was any interest due to the Town Council.

Cllrs noted the recommendation and it was agreed that the way in which the s106 money is received and restrictions placed upon it, will determine the level of reserves moving forward. The Town Clerk agreed to pursue an interest payment as the money had been held back for so long.

R4 – As previously recommended, the Council must ensure that it holds signed contracts of employment for all staff and that these are fully up to date.

The Town Clerk reported that this task should be completed during May.

4.4. Confirmation of land at the Buttercross transferred to the Town Council

The Town Clerk reported that one of the legal issues had been resolved, with the transfer of the land surrounding the Buttercross to the Town Council from Breckland Council. The next stage of this process is the first registration of the Buttercross itself.

4.5. Request for Tigger Shaped Memorial from Brett's

Cllrs considered the request for a Tigger shaped memorial and decided it was not in keeping with the character and rules of the Cemetery. It was agreed to decline the request. Brett's would be asked to re-submit a design that may include three flower-pots on a kerbed memorial.

It was agreed to decline the request to place a Tigger shaped memorial, 3 flower pots would be acceptable on a kerbed memorial.

4.6. To receive and consider a match funding request for £500 for an MTI bid for Norfolk Day

Cllrs discussed the bid and agreed that £500 be set aside from the events budget to match a contribution from the Breckland MTI fund. It was suggested that the lamp post banners could include lights.

It was agreed that £500 be set aside from the events budget to match a contribution from the Breckland MTI fund.

4.7. Review of new cemetery prices.

The Open Spaces Committee agreed to review the pricing of the Cemetery and recommended that the aim was to more closely match income with expenditure moving to a more cost neutral position. The deputy clerk reported that an exercise looking at income and expenditure over the last four years had indicated that a price rise of 53% might achieve this aim. Given that many of the variables affecting the costs were difficult to accurately predict.

Cllrs discussed the costs and agreed by a majority decision to implement a 53% rise in prices immediately with a further review at year end to check the position of income against expenditure.

It was agreed to implement a 53% rise in prices immediately with a further review at year end to check the position of income against expenditure.

4.8. Financial Year End Approvals

4.8.1. Annual Internal Audit Report 2018/19 – Cllrs noted that Page 3 of the Annual Return had been filled in and signed by the internal auditor.

4.8.2. Income and Expenditure – The Town Clerk explained the general reserves were down as the capital reserves could not show a negative situation. This had arisen as the Town Council had funded the Town Centre work that should be covered by s106 monies. These monies were yet to be received. Once they were received, they would go into general reserves, bringing this back to a better position.

It was agreed to accept the income and expenditure and balance sheet report.

4.8.3. Notice of Public Rights - Cllrs agreed that the notice of public rights would be made, and the public would be able to inspect the accounts 17th June – 26th July.

It was agreed that the notice of public rights would be made, and the public would be able to inspect the accounts 17th June – 26th July.

4.8.4. Annual Governance Statement 2018/19

As in previous years the Town Clerk asked the Council to review and agree on all nine questions:

1. We have put in place arrangements for effective financial management during the year, and for the preparation of the accounting statements.

Councillors unanimously agreed with the statement

2. We maintained an adequate system of internal control including measures designed to prevent and detect fraud and corruption and reviewed its effectiveness.

Councillors unanimously agreed with the statement

3. We took all reasonable steps to assure ourselves that there are no matters of actual or potential non-compliance with laws, regulations and Proper Practices that could have a significant financial effect on the ability of this authority to conduct its business or manage its finances.

Councillors unanimously agreed with the statement

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4. We provided proper opportunity during the year for the exercise of electors' rights in accordance with the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations.

Councillors unanimously agreed with the statement

5. We carried out an assessment of the risks facing this authority and took appropriate steps to manage those risks, including the introduction of internal controls and/or external insurance cover where required.

Councillors unanimously agreed with the statement

6. We maintained throughout the year an adequate and effective system of internal audit of the accounting records and control systems.

Councillors unanimously agreed with the statement

7. We took appropriate action on all matters raised in reports from internal and external audit.

Councillors unanimously agreed with the statement

8. We considered whether any litigation, liabilities or commitments, events or transactions, occurring either during or after the year-end, have a financial impact on this authority and, where appropriate, have included them in the accounting statements.

Councillors unanimously agreed with the statement

9. (For local councils only) Trust funds including charitable. In our capacity as the sole managing trustee we discharged our accountability responsibilities for the fund(s)/assets, including financial reporting and, if required, independent examination or audit.

This was not applicable

5. To receive and consider annual Policy review of Policies as listed below:

- 5.1. EH (I) 002 Internet Usage Policy
No changes were recommended to the Policy.

It was agreed to accept the EH (I) 002 Internet Usage Policy without amendment.

- 5.2. EH (S) 005 Social Media Policy
Recommended amendments
Additional twitter profiles added into the first paragraph; @swaffhamevents operated by the Project Support Officer, and @MarketSuperint1 operated by the Market Superintendent.

Similarly, under the Facebook section What's Going On in Swaffham managed by the Project Support Officer.

Under General guidelines a new paragraph added
Direct messages on Twitter or via Messenger on Facebook will be monitored and answered where appropriate to do so. Personal criticism of Councillors and Staff will not be tolerated, complaints will be dealt with through the Town Council's complaints procedure or Staff Grievance and Disciplinary Procedures.

Under Other Social Media Sites, a further sentence is added
In 2019-20 the Town Clerk will start to explore 'Instagram' and 'LinkedIn' and give the town Council a presence to see if there is any positive impact.

Initials.....

New section added as follows: -

Photographs / Video's

A Photo & Video release form is required as permission that Swaffham Town Council can use photographs, video's and names can be used in future print publications, online publications, presentations, websites & social media. See Appendix 1

It was agreed to accept the EH (S) 005 Social Media Policy with recommended amendments.

5.3. TC (F) 001-009 Financial Risk Assessments

Recommended amendments

Very minor changes as follows: -

Page 2 – changes to staff involved section adding the Project Support Officer and changing Internal Control measures to reflect changes in duties of the Office Administrator and the Deputy Clerk.

Page 4 – add in Project Support Officer to Staff Involved section

Page 5 – add in Orford Road Playing Field to the Location section

Page 6 – remove Barclays Bank from the External section

Page 7 – remove F006 completely

Page 10 – add in paragraph to internal section - Extreme weather conditions are assessed by the Town Clerk / Deputy Clerk at the latest possible opportunity and cancellations are very rare in advance of Market Day, thus minimising any potential loss of income to the Council.

Add in (on the day) to the next paragraph under the same section.

Add in 'extreme' and 'conditions' to the external section.

It was agreed to accept the TC (F) 001-009 Financial Risk Assessments Policy with recommended amendments

5.4. EH (T) 002 Training Statement and Development Policy

Page 3 (j) remove either with or independently from the Norfolk Training Partnership.

It was agreed to accept the EH (T) 002 Training Statement and Development Policy with recommended amendments.

5.5. EH (F) 011 Fire Emergency Evacuation Plan – Town Hall

There are minor changes to confirm in the contact section, these are unconfirmed from the Museum at the current time and remove former Councillor Steve Allen.

It was agreed to accept the updated EH (F) 011 Fire Emergency Evacuation Plan – Town Hall.

5.6. EH (F) 012 Fire Emergency Evacuation Plan – Cemetery Chapel

It was agreed to accept EH (F) 012 Fire Emergency Evacuation Plan – Cemetery Chapel with no changes

5.7. EH (C) 001 Child Protection Policy

No changes were recommended to the Policy.

It was agreed to accept the EH (C) 001 Child Protection Policy without amendment.

5.8. TC (G) 003 Grants Policy

No changes were recommended to the Policy.

It was agreed to accept TG (G) 003 Grants Policy without amendment.

- 5.9. TC (A) 001 Asset Management Register Policy
An updated Asset Register giving a total asset value of £4,715,716.91 was reviewed.

It was agreed to accept the TC (A) 001 Asset Management Register Policy.

- 5.10. TC (A) 001 Alcohol and Drug Abuse Policy

It was agreed to accept TC (A) 001 Alcohol and Drug Abuse Policy without amendment

- 5.11. EH (A) 004 Anti Bribery Policy

It was agreed to accept EH (A) 004 Anti Bribery Policy without amendment.

- 5.12. EH (F) 001 Flexible Working Policy

It was agreed to accept EH (F) 001 Flexible Working Policy without amendment.

- 5.13. EH (S) 009 Staff Travel & Expenses Policy

It was agreed to accept EH (S) 009 Staff Travel & Expenses Policy without amendment.

- 5.14. EH (W) 001 Whistleblowing Policy

It was agreed to accept the EH (W) 001 Whistleblowing Policy.

- 5.15. Review of Terms of Reference for Personnel Committee
Recommended changes put forward by the Personnel Committee as follows: -
Under ALL COMMITTEES 3. and 8. Add (with the exception of the Personnel Committee)
Under introductory paragraph to Personnel Committee Add (and two substitute members)
Under 12. Add for information only (not for debate, unless an issue is referred to full Council for a decision). Also Add (by Appointment)
Under 26. Add Data Protection Policy
Under 29. Add (currently bi-monthly) and Personnel Committee
Under 31. Remove as Data Protection Officer DPO and insert Town Clerk where DPO was previously listed.

It was agreed to accept the changes in the terms of reference for the Personnel Committee

6. **To receive and consider a cashflow and budget report regarding the financial year 2017-18.**

There were no specific questions raised. The only was the s106 payment but this should be remedied in the near future.

7. **Date of the next Full Council Finance meeting - Monday 22rd July 2019 at 6.30pm.**

Meeting closed 8.30pm

Chairman.....

Initials.....

Appendix 1

Mr Ian Pilcher asked how far the Council had progressed in gaining permission from the Secretary of State to apply for a loan to build out a housing project on Days Field. It was confirmed that the Council would be eligible to apply for a loan. However, this application was not taken any further by the current Council as it was decided to defer any further actions to the new Council.

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