

SWAFFHAM TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the **Finance Full Council** meeting on **Wednesday 26th January 2022** at **6.30pm** in the Council Chamber.

Present: Mayor Cllr J Anscombe (in the Chair),
Cllrs N Bass, L Beech, S Bell, W Bensley, P Darby, C Houghton, S Matthews, K Oliver, I Pilcher, J Skinner

Town Clerk: R Bishop
Minute Taker: C Smith (Deputy Town Clerk)

1. Apologies for Absence

Cllr L Scott – work commitments
Cllr G Edwards – away

2. Declarations of Interest

2.1. None declared

3. Urgent Items at the Chairman's Discretion

None

4. Minutes of the previous Meeting

4.1. The minutes of 21st December 2021 were agreed as accurate records of the meetings and were signed by the chairman.

5. Report on outstanding actions agreed at the last meeting

No issues were identified.

6. Finance Report

6.1. Income and Expenditure to 31st December 2021

Cllrs noted the accounts up to the end of month 9.

6.2. Digitalisation of Cemetery records

Cllrs noted that there was no recommendation for either of the software packages reviewed by staff. It was thought that any new package needed to link in with existing accounting and allotment software. It was proposed that office admin software be reviewed as soon as possible, and a recommendation brought back to council.

It was agreed that the administration software be reviewed as soon as possible, so that any new system was efficient and linked across the asset and finance functions.

6.3. Investment in hybrid technology

It was suggested that further investigation would be carried out, Cllr Oliver would provide some information on a conferencing system. These ideas would then be put together as a project so that grant funding could be pursued.

It was agreed that a project to update systems would be put together and grants to fund the investment pursued.

6.4. Investment in upgraded IT equipment

Cllrs considered the upgrade of IT equipment to enable best use of hybrid technology. It was proposed that screens and laptops be upgraded.

It was agreed that screens and laptops be upgraded in the current year.

- 6.5. Bus stop in Lynn Rd
Cllrs considered costs to improve the bus stop in Lynn rd.

It was agreed to accept a quote of £2828 to improve the bus stop.

- 6.6. Information and costs relating to the vandalism at the toilets.
Councillors noted the initial feedback from the Police recommending CCTV that is independent of the town centre system. The crime prevention officer did not recommend any special new ceiling as he felt CCTV and stronger maglocks would solve the problem. It was proposed that this issue be dealt with by the Assets and Open Spaces Committee when the full report from the Police was available.

Cllrs considered the quote to replace the ceiling like for like and agreed to pursue this with the insurance company. Other costs to secure the area with a stronger maglock and CCTV would be investigated and dealt with by the Assets and Open Spaces committee.

It was agreed that the ceiling would be replaced on a like for like basis with costs recovered from the insurance. Extra security measures and costs would be investigated by the Assets and Open Spaces Committee.

7. **Review of General Policies –**

Cllrs agreed to accept the following policies

Policy (C) 023 Community Engagement Strategy
Policy (F) 010 Financial Regulations
Policy (M) 001 Mayor and Deputy Mayor Protocol and Guidance
Policy (G) 003 Grants, Match Funding, Sponsorship and Donations
Policy (I) 001 Internal Audit Terms of Reference & Effectiveness of Internal Controls
Policy (M) 003 Members Allowances
Policy (I) 002 Investment Strategy
Policy (P) Procurement Policy & Procedure
Policy (F) 012 Freedom of Information (FOI) Model Publication Scheme

Policy (F) 001-009 Financial Risk Assessments - It was agreed that the Financial risk assessment needed amending, Cllr Anscombe and the clerk would work on this to be presented at a future meeting.

Policy (C) 005 Code of Conduct - It was agreed to adopt the model local government association recommended code of conduct.

8. **Draft Budget and Budget report for 2022-23 including setting the precept**

Councillors discussed each of the budget headings and 34 recommendations, all recommendations were accepted with the following variation, notes and agreements.

- R6 The budget figures for the barn were discussed and it was accepted that these would not impact on the precept it was proposed that the budgeted figures remain in the budget for next year as an indication.

It was agreed that the figures for the barn remain in the budget.

- R12 It was noted that the lease for the shop would expire in May. It was proposed to offer the current incumbent a lease on a rolling yearly basis from May 2022. The rent would be increased RPI

It was agreed to offer a rolling yearly lease from May 2022, with a yearly rent review increase based on RPI

Cllr Pilcher left the meeting.

- R14 Cllrs discussed the Xmas lights element of the budget, it was noted that there would be further expenditure to appear in this year's budget as lights were replaced and the cost of putting them up and down was accounted for.

It was noted that the cost of running streetlights was considerable and it was suggested that this be reviewed.

The Town Centre Wi-Fi was discussed, and it was noted that some people were unaware that it was available.

The Town Clerk agreed to highlight the Wi-Fi in the next newsletter article

R15 It was agreed to increase casual market fees to £16 for a pitch with £1 per foot thereafter. Licensed trader fees would increase by 2.5%, gazebo rent would be increase to £8

R16 It was agreed to set the Market Promotion budget at £1k

R26 It was agreed to increase allotment rents by 2.5%

R29 It was agreed to increase cemetery fees by 2.5% it was agreed not to include painting the chapel in the budget

R24 It was agreed to adjust maintenance costs to £10k and CCTV to £4330, expenditure in cost centre 103 would then total £40327

- R18 Cllrs discussed the ongoing costs and essential maintenance needed for the Barn and how these related to capital and revenue expenditure. It was proposed that until sufficient capital finance was available and the project advanced, expenditure would be on essential maintenance only. £25k would be budgeted to get this essential work done in the next 2 quarters.

It was agreed that £25k be budgeted for essential maintenance in the next two quarters.

R9 Cllrs discussed the impact of the budget as set out in the report and that general reserves would be below recommended levels if there was no increase. It was proposed to increase the precept to £448,500. This would mean that at band D there would be a 3% increase to residents.

It was agreed by 9 votes to 1 to increase the precept to £448,500, an increase of 3% at band D.

Meeting closed at 9.20pm

Chairman.....

DRAFT

Initials.....