

## SWAFFHAM TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the **FINANCE FULL COUNCIL** meeting held on **Monday 22nd January 2018** at **6.30pm** in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Swaffham.

Present: Mayor Cllr J Skinner (in the Chair)

Councillors: Mr S Allen, Mrs W Bensley, Mrs B Bowler, Mr P Darby, Mrs T Jennison, Mrs S Matthews, Mr L Scott, Mrs A Thorp, Mrs J Buckley-Stevens (from 6.47pm)

Town Clerk: Mr R Bishop

Deputy Town Clerk: Mrs C Smith

### 1. **Apologies for Absence**

- 1.1. Cllr C Houghton – Holiday.
- 1.2. Cllr S Lister – family commitments.
- 1.3. Cllr R Bartam – Illness.
- 1.4. Cllr J Buckley-Stevens apologised as she would be late due to family commitments.

### 2. **Declarations of Interest**

- 2.1. There were no declarations of interest.

### 3. **Minutes of the previous Meeting**

- 3.1. The minutes of the meeting held on Monday, 28<sup>th</sup> November 2016 were agreed and signed as a true and accurate record by the Chairman.

### 4. **Finance Report**

#### 4.1. **Accounts to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2016 for Income and Expenditure analysis 2017- 2018**

The clerk reported that accounts for December had been completed and the vat return had been completed. Councillors noted the accounts and bank reconciliation as at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2017.

**It was agreed to accept the balances report and transfers.**

#### 4.2. **Replacement of polycarbonate panels in the bus shelter**

Cllrs agreed that the panels needed replacement and that the same quality of 8mm would be re-ordered as these had lasted around 12 years previously. The quote from Swaffham glass included fitting and Cllrs agreed to accept this quote and order the work.

**It was agreed to accept the quote from Swaffham Glass at £200 per panel (8mm thickness).**

#### 4.3. **Replacement of damaged panel of tourist sign near the Buttercross**

The panel was damaged beyond repair and replacement costs were £314 +vat. As the insurance excess was £250 it was decided not to claim for this incident. Cllrs agreed that this was the best way forward.

**It was agreed that an insurance claim would not be made for the panel.**

#### 4.4. **Iceni rural writers grant request**

Cllrs discussed the request for a grant of £225 from the group to put on an event.

**Cllrs considered the breakdown of costs and agreed to offer the group a grant of £225.**

#### 4.5. **Plowright Place grant request**

Cllr Allen declared an interest in the item and left the room for the discussion. Cllrs discussed the request for a grant of £950 towards events over the year in Plowright Place. It was agreed in principle to support the events in Plowright Place as the ad hoc feedback had been positive.

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In order to finalise the level of support and Cllrs asked the clerk to request a report on how last years grant had been used and a clear breakdown of projected costs for this year's event. This request would then be added to the February Town Council Agenda for consideration.

**It was agreed to support the events in principle with the final amount to be agreed at the February meeting following receipt of further information.**

## 5. Policy Review

### 5.1. Employers Pension Policy – Exercise of Discretionary Powers.

**It was agreed that in the event of no changes to current legislation the policy would be extended for a further three years. The Town Clerk would only bring this back for discussion if the law changed and it became a necessity.**

### 5.2. (M)003 Members Allowance Policy

Cllrs noted that the policy allowed for withholding payment although no qualifying threshold of when to implement this had been detailed. Cllrs discussed the technicalities of joining the payroll. Cllrs noted the attendance register that had been circulated. Following discussion of whether to take the payments Cllrs agreed this was the decision of the individual Cllrs. The policy was reviewed, and it was agreed to accept the policy in place from last year.

**It was agreed to accept the Members Allowance Policy without amendment.**

### 5.3. (C) 005 Code of Conduct

**It was agreed to accept the Code of Conduct Policy with no changes**

### 5.4. Freedom of Information – Model Publication Scheme

**It was agreed to accept the Freedom of Information – Model Publication Scheme with no amendments.**

## 6. Budget Presentation

6.1. The Town Clerk introduced the budget documents that had been circulated. Some Cllrs had previously discussed ideas at an informal meeting and forwarded comments to the clerk, these had been considered when preparing the draft budget.

6.2. The Town Clerk then introduced the budget. Each cost centre was reviewed individually, and 27 recommendations considered.

6.3. **Un-earmarked capital reserves R1** – To approve the un-earmarked capital reserves budget for 2018-19 of £151,158

**It was agreed to accept R1 un-earmarked Capital Reserve expenditure budget of £151,158**

6.4. **Un-earmarked capital reserves R2** – To approve minimum un-earmarked capital reserve income for 2018-19 of £150,000. Cllrs noted that capital income could not be used as general reserves and that the sum would be received in the coming fiscal year.

**It was agreed to accept R2 un-earmarked capital reserve income budget of £150,000**

6.5. **Earmarked Capital Reserves R3** Expenditure £298,941. – Cllrs noted that if capital monies did not come in as expected the expenditure would be found from general reserves or not be spent at all.

**It was agreed to accept R3 earmarked Capital Reserve budget of £298,941.**

6.6. **Earmarked Capital Reserves** Capital projects income - £250,750; **R4** to receive S106 as it becomes available to draw down the remaining £193,107 from Tesco/Milngate. **R5** - Museum Loan, Councillors noted that £1,393 would be re-paid by the museum in 2018-19. **R6** – It

was recommended that a grant application to the HLF be prepared for £50,000 for the Town Centre project.

**It was agreed to accept R4 to receive Section 106 money as it becomes available. It was agreed to accept R5 Swaffham Museum will repay £1,393 from their loan. It was agreed to accept R6 grants received (HLF Grant pending) £56,250.**

- 6.7. Earmarked Revenue Reserves** Expenditure £114,054; **R7** Councillors noted the Land and property fund within this cost centre was topped back up to £40,000.

**It was agreed to accept R7 Earmarked revenue reserves totalling £114,054.**

- 6.8 Town Hall** Expenditure **R8** £27,745 Councillors discussed the maintenance of the building and agreed to accept R8.

**It was agreed to accept R8 expenditure for the Town Hall of £27,745.**

- 6.9 Town Hall** Income £7,050 **R9** All hiring fees for offices and Council Chamber to be increased by 2% for 2018-19 to cover a rise in overhead costs. It was noted that it was possible this income may not be achieved if Breckland Council no longer rent the office.

**It was agreed to accept R9 all hiring fees to be increased by 2% for the Town Hall giving projected income of £7,050.**

- 6.10 Administration and Misc.** Expenditure £197,176 **R10** this includes a contingency for elections expenses any balance at the end of the year goes back into Council Reserves.

**It was agreed to accept R10 Admin & Miscellaneous expenditure of £197,176.**

- 6.11 Administration and Misc.** Income £9,327 **R10** it is expected that this would reduce as the Council Tax Support Grant is reduced.

**It was agreed to accept R9 Admin & Miscellaneous income of £9,327.**

- 6.12 Market** Expenditure £25,327 **R12** Cllrs discussed the budget for promotion and advertising, this had not been used. The clerk reported that this budget may be used as the business plan develops and an advertising strategy identified.

**It was agreed to accept R10 Market expenditure of £25,327**

- 6.13 Market** Income £24,200 **R13** market rate levels would be frozen as the market still appeared to be struggling. There were some positives as the number of stalls was steady, although the amount of space taken had reduced. It was unclear the effect the discounts at the beginning of the year had had on the income.

**It was agreed to accept R13 Market income of £24,200.**

- 6.14 Market 800** – It was noted that this cost centre had been wound up as the project had been completed.

- 6.15 Northwell Pool** Expenditure £2,175 **R14**, Income £1,436 **R15**. It was noted that this area is maintained by the Town Council. Anglian Water contributes to these costs and the invoicing would be caught up with in the coming year.

**It was agreed to accept R14 expenditure of £2,175 and R15 and income of £1,436.**

- 6.17 Allotments** Expenditure £9,788 **R16**, Income £7,520 **R17**. In order to get closer to a balanced budget it was recommended that rents go up by approximately 10% bringing rents to £50 for the largest plots. It was noted that the costs of clearing allotments had risen, and these costs may continue to be high as there is more asbestos to be cleared.

**It was agreed to accept R16 expenditure for the allotments of £9,788 and R17 projected income for the allotments of £7,520 based on an increase of 10%.**

- 6.18 Public Toilets** Expenditure £20,032 **R18** Cllrs discussed the high cost of utilities at this site and agreed that this needed to be looked at afresh by a small working group. This would be added to the February agenda.

**It was agreed to accept R18 public toilets overall expenditure £20,032.**

- 6.19 Cemetery and Churchyard** Expenditure £38,968 **R19**, Income £25,300 **R20** it was recommended that burial fees and chapel hire prices increase by 2%.

**It was agreed to accept R19 expenditure for the Cemetery & Churchyard of £43,829 and R20 projected income for Cemetery and Churchyard £20,600.**

- 6.20 Open Spaces** Expenditure £95,449 **R21**, this cost centre now contained the Recreation Ground income and expenditure, Income £500 **R22** – Recreation Ground fees.

**It was agreed to accept R21 expenditure for Open Spaces of £95,449 and R22 income £500.**

- 6.21 Amenities, Agency and Civic** Expenditure £47,735 **R23**,

**Christmas Lights expenditure** – Cllrs discussed the contract commitments for the final year of the contract. Concern was expressed that the STA would not be able to make a donation for the lights. The Town Clerk would make contact and establish the position.

**It was agreed to accept R23 expenditure £47,735**

- 6.22 Amenities, Agency and Civic.** Income £13,569 **R24,25,26**

**Declaration of Interest** – Cllrs Darby, Matthews, Jennison and Buckley-Stevens declared an interest as Relief in Need Trustees. Relief in Need administration costs – Cllrs discussed the costs and noted that the Town Council were currently subsidising the administration for the charity.

**It was agreed to accept R24 Relief in Need income £1495 + vat.**

**It was agreed to accept R25 Income £5,690 Annual Rent of former TIC – It was agreed to increase the rent by 2% to £5,690 + vat for the coming year.**

**It was agreed to accept R26 Grant towards Christmas Lights £6,000 – it was noted that this might not come to fruition. The Town Clerk would try to obtain a realistic figure.**

- 6.23 Precept** – In the light of all the previous considerations, Councillors discussed the recommendation to increase the precept by £35,895 for 2018-19 to £393,500; an increase of 5.6% in Council Tax - £8.21 for a Band D house taking that bill to £154.99. **R27**

Cllr Buckley-Stevens, seconded by Cllr Bowler, proposed to keep the budget to a 5% increase this was defeated by 7 votes to 3.

It was proposed by Cllr Thorp, seconded by Cllr Bensley to accept the recommendation and increase the precept by 5.6%. This was carried in a vote by 7 votes to 2 with 1 abstention.

**It was agreed to accept R27 to set a Precept of £393,500 for the year 2018-19**

## **7 Date of the Next Full Finance Meeting**

The next Full Finance meeting was scheduled for 16<sup>th</sup> April 2018 at 6.30pm.

Meeting closed 9.52pm

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