

SWAFFHAM TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the **FINANCE FULL COUNCIL** meeting held on **Monday 30th October 2017** at **6.30pm** in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Swaffham.

Present: Mayor Cllr J Skinner (in the Chair)

Councillors: Mrs W Bensley, Mrs J Buckley-Stevens, Mr P Darby, Mr C Houghton, Mrs S Lister, Mrs S Matthews, Mr L Scott, Mrs A Thorp.

Town Clerk: Mr R Bishop
Admin Assistant: Ms K Furnass

1. Apologies for Absence

- 1.1. Cllr R Bartram - Unwell
- 1.2. Cllr B Bowler – Vehicle malfunction
- 1.3. Cllr T Jennison – Unwell
- 1.4. Cllr S Allen - Unwell

2. Declarations of Interest

- 2.1. None declared.

3. Minutes of the previous Meeting

- 3.1. The minutes of the meeting held on Monday, 24th July 2017 were agreed and signed as a true and accurate record by the Chairman.

4. Finance Report

- 4.1. Accounts to 30th September 2017 for Income and Expenditure analysis 2017-18
The Income and expenditure analysis now shows the figures for the half-year from 1st April to 30th September 2017.

Code to code adjustments have been carried out prior to circulating the report. The following adjustments will be made shortly: -

Allotment Water Rates:

Code 4021 cost centre 303 £1,378.75 to be transferred to Code 4021 cost centre 304
Code 4021 cost centre 303 £216.54 to be transferred to Code 4021 cost centre 103

Mayors Allowance:

Code 4000 cost centre 104 £349.45 to be transferred to Code 4532 cost centre 307

Waste Collection/Clearance:

Code 4051 cost centre 104 £43.56 to be transferred to Code 4051 cost centre 103

Correct balances therefore after these adjustments are as follows: -

4021 (303) Allotment Water Rates = £446.88 (45% of budget) £473.00 to spend
4021 (304) Public Toilets Water Rates = £2,023.25 (10% over budget) £188.25 over budget

N.B. figures include 4 months of previous financial year, so budget was adjusted down giving a false impression of what was required.

4021 (103) Town Hall Water Rates = £368.54 (68.25% of budget) £171.46 to spend

4000 (104) Admin Salaries = £65,875.55 (44.87% of budget) £81,079.05 to spend

4532 (307) Mayors Allowance £582.50 (50% of budget) £582.50 to spend

4051 (104) Admin & Miscellaneous waste collection £0.00

4051 (103) Town Hall waste collection £276.49 (51.2%) £263.51 to spend

N.B. there are other adjustments which may be made throughout the year and particularly around the time of the budget, as we challenge the figures, the cost centres and the cost headings – we may create new headings where appropriate, to clarify or give more information.

In response to Cllrs questions to the Clerk:

Signature/Initials.....

- It was noted that Christmas Market expenses came from the entertainment budget.
- It was noted that there had been no expense this year on Pest Control.
- It was noted that a booking was paid in advance on Rec Ground fees.
- It was noted that the flower display was cheaper for this year.
- It was noted there had been a rise in income this year on allotment key deposit, this was due to the rise in the deposit amounts

4.2. To receive and consider notice of conclusion of the audit for the year ended 31st March 2017 and completion of Section 3 external auditor report and certificate.
 Mazars LLP have signed off the External Audit for the last time, passing over the responsibility to London based PKF Littlejohn LLP for the next five-year period, starting with the current year 2017-18.

Notice of conclusion of the audit is posted on the notice board and the Council's website.

The External auditor's report:

Except for the matters reported below based on our review of the annual return, in our opinion the information in the annual return is in accordance with proper practices and no other matters have come to our attention giving cause for concern that relative and regulatory requirements have not been met.

The Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2015 require that the period of public rights cover 30 working days including the first 10 working days of July. In 2016 this requirement was not met but the Council has answered yes to the assertion on public rights in the Annual Governance Statement, in future the Council needs to put in place arrangements to ensure that it can meet its statutory obligations in respect of public rights and answers no in the Annual Governance Statement where it has not been achieved.

The Council has stated in Section 1, item 5, that it has carried out a risk assessment and taken appropriate action to manage those risks. However, no financial risk review has been carried out during 2016-17, the review taking place in April 2017, as confirmed by the Internal Auditor. In future, the Council should ensure it carries out an annual risk assessment.

Audit signed off on 15th September 2017.

It was agreed the audit for the year ended 31st March 2017 and completion of Section 3 external auditor report and certificate.

4.3. **To receive an update from the Town Clerk on the following on-going issues:**

4.3.1. Legal issues being dealt with by Ward Gethin Archer in respect of land registry issues, Buttercross, Shambles, Town Pound etc.

Buttercross and Town Pound transfers should take place prior to Christmas.
 Shambles claim for adverse possession is still in progress.

4.3.2. CCTV at the Recreation Ground, meeting with Police Architectural Liaison Officer 28th July. CCTV quotes:

The report will be circulated with the Full Council meeting pack later this week.

4.3.3. Buttercross/Town Centre project timetable, HLF Grant Application and final specification/cost plan.

Update from JEREMY STACEY...

The revised cost plan received and circulated, now coming out at £169,300.00 + Vat which can be reclaimed.

C.J.M. Electrical Specialists Ltd (Electrical Advisor) - £2,240.00 + Vat
GC Baxter & Associates Ltd (Quantity Surveyor) - £4,393.96 + Vat

Jeremy Stacey – professional fees remaining from 2013 - £1,200.00 + Vat
- Site work visits (4 months) - £6,400.00 + Vat

N.B. Quantity Surveyors fees extra month £1,600.00 + Vat

TOTAL PROJECT & PROFESSIONAL COSTS = £185,133.96

The idea would be to apply for as close to £100,000 as possible, but the Town Council may have to fund what is regarded as revenue costs i.e. £16,800 repairs to the Buttercross. We will know more when we start talking seriously to the Heritage Lottery Fund. The idea would be to try and get as much grant money as possible, so that the section 106 funding can be reduced. The section 106 money can't be used for routine maintenance either. The aim would be to get the grant application in by Christmas or early in the new year, at the latest.

In response to Cllrs questions to the Clerk:

- It was noted that Jeremy Stacey had not been paid as the work was still to be done.
- BDC are looking into installing charges on the lamp posts so this may not have to be included in this project.

The Clerk asks if the Council are happy to go forward with the application.

It was agreed to go forward with the application.

4.3.4. Public Toilets re-discussion/estimated timetable.

Related to Section 106 discussions...

The amount of grant received will be determined by the heritage value. When the report from the Town Team is received this will be the time to hold discussions.

4.3.5. Review of Photocopier

The Town Council currently use Eastern Business Systems Ltd (EBS), the current lease agreement is half way through. EBS are offering an upgrade of two options, both have savings over the next four years of £2,430.89 + Vat and £2,610.80 + Vat respectively. There are advantages and disadvantages for each machine, savings of £600 to £650 per year as an obvious attraction.

The Town Clerk is asking the Council to delegate this decision to negotiate the best deal possible with EBS, or to go out to tender.

It was agreed for the Town Clerk to negotiate the best deal with EBS.

4.3.6. Table and Chair Hire

The 'Table and Chair Hire' pricing structure was circulated to Councillors this to either amend or approve.

It was agreed to approve the Table and Chair pricing structure.

4.3.7. Pest Control

The Town Clerk met with Natural England recently regarding Duck control. Current bird flu regulations prevent the Council from relocating the ducks. Two options were given to consider-

1. A programme starting early next year to oil the eggs, and as such humanely control the numbers in the breeding season. A licence is required for this from Natural England.
2. To apply for a licence to cull on-site, this would not be recommended, as this could cause a public outcry, it would also have to be done on site because of the bird flu controls.

It was decided that more information was needed before a decision was made.

The general pest control issues will go before the next Full Council, this is for the rats and moles throughout the year.

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

- 5.1. EH Policy (A) 002 Absence Management Policy & Procedure
This is a completely new policy drafted by the HR consultant.

Approved – (A) 002 Absence Management Policy & Procedure.

- 5.2. EH Policy (A) 003 Adoption Leave Policy & Procedure
This is a replacement policy drafted by the HR consultant because of a change in legislation, the policy has been expanded considerably.

Approved – (A) 003 Adoption Leave Policy & Procedure.

- 5.3. TC Policy (C) 002 Community Engagement Strategy
There are minor changes recommended for this policy as follows: -

The word ‘safer’ inserted in front of neighbourhood policing team under the heading ‘The Community’

Under the heading ‘Opportunities for community Involvement’ the social media section has been expanded to include @SwaffhamNPlan twitter page and Swaffham Neighbourhood Plan Facebook Page and @SwaffhamClerk Facebook Profile.

Under the heading ‘Role of Council Members and Officers’ Swaffham Neighbourhood Plan has been added into Facebook Pages.

Under the section ‘Specific Areas for Community Involvement’ one additional sentence is added “It is hoped to conclude this process in 2018.”

Approved – (C) 002 Community Engagement Strategy.

- 5.4. EH Policy (C) 003 Complaints Procedure
There are some minor amendments recommended below: -

Under 1.2 the word below is deleted and replaced with overleaf.

Under 4.2 the words arrange a meeting are inserted into the first bullet point.

A new addition at Section 4.7 If the complaint involves the Town Clerk personally, and the complainant is another member of staff, then the complaint should be directed to the Personnel Committee Chairman (or an appropriate Personnel Committee member).

Approved – (C) 003 Complaints Procedure

- 5.5. EH Policy (C) 004 Confidentiality Policy
No changes recommended to the Confidentiality Policy.

Approved – (C) 004 Confidentiality Policy.

- 5.6. EH Policy (D) 001 Disciplinary Policy & Procedure
The disciplinary policy and procedure has been drafted by the HR consultant, to separate Disciplinary and Grievance, which previously had been grouped together. The policy has been updated to take account of the latest ACAS guidance.

Approved – (D) 001 Disciplinary Policy & Procedure.

- 5.7. EH Policy (E) 001 Equal Opportunities & Dignity at Work Policy

The Equal Opportunities & Dignity at Work Policy has been drafted by the HR consultant, replacing some ordinary text within the staff handbook.

Approved – Equal Opportunities & Dignity at Work Policy.

- 5.8. EH Policy (G) 001 Grievance Procedure
The new Grievance Procedure has been drafted by the HR consultant, as the other half of what used to be a Disciplinary and Grievance procedure. The two policies are now duly separated.

Approved – (G) 001 Grievance Procedure

- 5.9. EH Policy (H) 001 Health & Safety Policy
There are some changes listed below for the Health & Safety Policy: -

Under section 3 First Aid it was established that there are 7 first aid boxes as listed.

The appointed persons responsible for boxes now reads:
The Works Manager shall check the contents periodically and liaise with the Office Administrator for replenishment of supplies/contents.

Under section 4 Fire Safety. Our new company APF Safety Services Ltd is now listed.

Similarly, under section 6 General Advice our new H&S safety advisor Essential Safety and Environmental Solutions Ltd are listed.

Reporting of accidents is clarified who accidents should be reported to i.e. Town Clerk, Deputy Clerk and Works Manager, known also as Line Manager, who will record in the accident book.

Approved – (H) 001 Health & Safety Policy.

- 5.10. **EH Policy (M) 002 Member and Officer Protocol
Apologies this was not circulated in your pack, it was sent to you by e-mail. All Councillors have a hard copy in their Councillor file. There are no recommended changes following the review.

Approved – (M) 002 Member & Officer Protocol.

- 5.11. EH Policy (M) 004 Maternity Policy and Procedure
This is an expanded Policy drafted by the HR consultant, following legislation changes.

Approved – (M) 004 Maternity Policy & Procedure.

- 5.12. EH Policy (P) 001 Paternity Leave Policy & Procedure
This is an expanded Policy drafted by the HR consultant, following legislation changes, listed in the papers as 5.10.

Approved – (P) 001 Paternity Leave Policy & Procedure.

- 5.13. EH Policy (S) 003 Smoking Policy and Procedure
This is an expanded Policy drafted by the HR consultant, numbered incorrectly in your pack as

Approved – (S) 003 Smoking Policy & Procedure.

5.13(a) Senior Management -out of office procedure (in your pack, not listed on the agenda)
This has been circulated for information, as this Policy has been agreed with the Personnel Committee and the staff. It is a moving object at the present time, and will be reviewed as needed.

- 5.14. EH Policy (S) 008 Shared Parental Leave Policy and Procedure
This is a new policy drafted by the HR consultant.

Approved – (S) 008 Shared Parental Leave Policy & Procedure.

- 5.15. Information security Policy – early draft.
Circulated by e-mail – hard copy circulated at meeting, this is something we need for our card payments. It is a starting point, so that we comply with World Pay regulations.

Approved – Information Security Policy.

- 5.16. Draft Terms of Reference for Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group.
This draft terms of reference have previously been circulated to Councillors by e-mail

Approved – Terms of Reference for Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group.

- 5.17. Draft terms of reference for meetings with Watton Town Council, Wayland Partnership and Icen Partnership.
The purpose of meeting with Watton is to identify areas of common interest where we can work in collaboration and for mutual benefit.

Approved – Terms of Reference for Watton & Swaffham Focus Group.

6. To receive and consider cashflow for 2017-2018 and early budgetary issues to flag up for the forthcoming financial year 2018-19.

- 6.1. Un-earmarked Capital Reserves
- 6.2. Earmarked Capital Reserves
We need to have confirmation on section 106 money owed, and if the HLF grant is successful. Then there are decisions to be made with the Town Centre, the Public Toilets and any capital coming in from Days Field project.
- 6.3. Earmarked Revenue Reserves
The Land and Property Fund and Town Events Fund will need to be replenished, with a further sum to come from the Christmas Light Switch-On, on the later.
- 6.4. Town Hall
- 6.5. Administration & Miscellaneous
- 6.6. Market
The Market continues to be a long-term concern, therefore little or no increase in the foreseeable future.
- 6.7. Market 800
This Cost Centre will be lost as soon as the income expenditure for the previous year drops to zero.
- 6.8. Northwell Pool
- 6.9. Allotments
The policy moving forward on all allotment sites is to half any vacant sites where possible, so the Council meet the needs of a growing Town. An issue emerging out of the Neighbourhood Plan is the possibility of acquiring agricultural land in order to extend their allotment provision, if required.
- 6.10. Recreation Ground

6.11. Toilets & TIC

6.12. Cemetery & Churchyard

For Information: There is an on-going dispute in progress which is proving difficult to resolve but it is hoped mediation may prove more successful.

Decision required: Interment of ashes – request from the daughter of a former resident for parishioner’s status regarding burial price.

It was agreed to allow parishioner’s status regarding burial price.

6.13. Open Spaces

The unknown quantity in this Cost Centre is still the issue of when the Play Areas and Open Spaces are passed to the Town Council from the new developments at Redland Park and Swans Nest.

6.14. Amenity & Agency

There are two unknowns in this Cost Centre: -

Street Lights: It is not known yet whether the Town Council or Breckland Council will be responsible toward the cost of the aging street lighting stock, this is to be resolved in this financial year. This could take up a substantial portion of reserves for the Town Council.

Christmas Lights: The second unknown is the matter of Christmas Lights, there are many issues to deal with as we approach a second Christmas under this three-year partnership arrangement.

In response to Cllrs questions to the Clerk:

- The council will need assurances before the Budget meeting.
- A meeting to be arranged before the Christmas office closure.

6.15. Precept

7. Admissions to meetings Act (public Bodies) 1960: Confidential business following the exclusion of the public and press

7.1. To receive and consider heads of terms for Days Field; also, to receive and consider dates for forthcoming meeting with Newbury New Homes Ltd.

The negotiations over the heads of terms is underway between Howes Percival, Savills and Newbury New Homes. Recommendation’s will then be put to the Town Council and the Working Group. Then back to the Town Council for approval.

Four dates have been put to Newbury New Homes as potential meeting dates, to be confirmed shortly.

8. Date of the Next Full Finance Meeting

8.1. The next Full Council Finance meeting was scheduled for Monday 22nd January 2018

Meeting closed 8.20 pm