

SWAFFHAM TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Finance & General Purposes Committee meeting held on Tuesday 5th April 2005 at 7.00pm in the Council Chamber at the Town Hall.

Present: Cllr. Pam Buxton (in the chair)

Cllr. P Darby, Cllr. L Wise, Cllr. A Greaves, Cllr. S Lister, Cllr. S Matthews, Cllr. J Sockdale, Cllr. I Sherwood.

Mr B Clements.

Town Clerk: Richard Bishop

Clerical Assistant: Rosie Noble

Public: 1

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.

1.1 Cllr D Butters & Cllr. D Cannon.

Cllr. P Buxton read out a letter from The Rt. Hon. Gillian Shephard M.P. regarding her retirement. Cllr. Buxton suggested she respond thanking Gillian Shephard for the letter and wishing her a happy retirement?

It was unanimously agreed for Cllr. Buxton to reply to Gillian Shephard thanking her for the support she has given the Town Council and wishing her a happy retirement.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST – for items included on the Agenda.

2.1. None.

3. MINUTES OF FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES MEETING on 8th Dec 2004.

3.1. The Minutes were agreed and signed as a true copy by the Chairman.

4. QUARTERLY FINANCIAL REPORT.

4.1. A copy of Receipts and Payments were circulated to all Councillors throughout the year. The Town Clerk stated that the final Accounts figure would be accurate for the Town Assembly Meeting. He went on to explain that it was expected that Market Trade would be down about £8,000 this year.

4.2. A report from Internal Auditor was received and circulated to Councillors.
(See appendix 1)

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4.3. The Town Clerk suggested it would simplify administration if Councilors would agree to BACS payments to be made where possible instead of some cheques following their approval at Council meetings. This would speed up the payment process and makes identification of the payment easier on the bank statement. The paperwork would still need to be countersigned by two Councillors just as it happens now. In certain circumstances the Town Clerk would need delegated authority to use BACS payments to pay some invoices in advance of meetings e.g. in August when there are invoices to pay but no Council meeting and on occasions when an urgent payment is required. Cllr. P Darby proposed and Cllr. B Emmerson seconded to make payments by BACS where possible and for the Town Clerk to have delegated authority to use BACS for payments which are urgent especially in August when there is no meeting..

It was unanimously agreed to make payments by BACS where possible and for the Town Clerk to have delegated authority to use BACS for payments which are urgent especially in August when there is no meeting.

4.4. The Town Clerk requested the Council consider opening a Capital Projects Bank Account. He has looked at the principle of opening a Capital Projects Account with the Internal Auditor Brian Clements. As at the 1st March there would have been £352,693.04 due to be in that account including the balance of Town Hall money, Museum grants, Icení grant, Match Funding budget, Recreation Ground Budget, Swimming Pool Land & Sports Fund. The Internal Auditor and Town Clerk have discussed how to separate the capital expenditure within the accounts, how to create an audit trail and whether as a result the Council would consider a policy change to accommodate this as follows:-

4.4.1. For 2006/07 as already agreed the Council's budget for the current year 2005/06:

4.4.2. It was recommended that the interest earned each year on the Capital Project Account should be automatically added to the match funding budget and should not be absorbed into general funds thus supporting general expenditure.

4.4.3. It was also recommended that the balance of interest earned each year on the Business Reserve & other accounts, less any bank charges paid should be added automatically to the General Reserves.

4.4.4. This policy to be taken into account when setting the budget in December.
Cllr. B Emmerson proposed and Cllr. P Darby seconded for the Town Clerk to open a Capital Projects Bank Account.

It was unanimously agreed for the Town Clerk to open a Capital Projects Bank Account using the interest as recommended.

5. DOG BINS – PEDLAR GREEN SITE

5.1. Estimates have been received for a dog bin to be placed on the Pedlars Green site. It was suggested that prior to purchasing a dog bin that the Council contact Taylor Woodrow to see if they would provide one, also to contact Sue Bloomfield at Breckland Council as she has been in negotiations with them.

It was unanimously agreed that if Taylor Woodrow would not provide one then the Council purchase a small one initially.

6. EXTRAORDINARY MEETING DATE

6.1. The Town Clerk suggested a date for a proposed extraordinary meeting to discuss issues relating to the churchyard mid to late May.

It was unanimously agreed for the Extraordinary Meeting to be held on 25th May 2005 following the Relief in Need Charity Meeting.

7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE FOLLOWING CIVIC RECOGNITION

7.1. Estimates have been received and brochures have been circulated for a Deputy Mayor Chain which ranged from approximately £300 to £600 and the velvet collar £140 to £200.

It was unanimously agreed for the Town Clerk to purchase a silver chain (C80 – brochure) and to use the existing Medallion on it.

8. RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL BOARD IN COUNCIL CHAMBER

8.1. A question was asked about the cost of a possible replacement for the Rural District Council board in the Council Chamber. The Town Clerk explained there is no budget for this and it is difficult to get prices unless you give guidelines to what you want. No one was in favor of replacing the Rural District Council Board in the Council Chamber.

9. PAST MAYOR BADGES

9.1. A discussion took place relating to Past Mayor Badges, the Town Clerk suggested they would cost about £25 each. It was suggested for a Past Mayors badge to come out of the Mayor's allowance and if past Mayor's wanted a badge that they purchase it themselves. It would act as a gesture of recognition and could be worn when on Council business.

10. HONORARY CITIZENS WITHIN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER

10.1. It was suggested that Honorary Citizens should be recognized in the Council Chamber, following a short discussion it was suggested a picture of each Honorary Citizen be placed in the Council Chamber. Cllr. I Sherwood proposed and Cllr. B Emmerson seconded that the Honorary Citizens are recognized in the Council Chamber.

It was unanimously agreed that to recognition of the Honorary Citizens of Swaffham a photograph of them be placed in the Council Chamber.

11. TWINNING PLAQUE FOR HEMMOOR

11.1. A discussion took place with regards to providing a plaque for Hemmoor to mark their 750th anniversary in May; the Town Clerk suggested the cost of providing a suitable plaque would be in the region of £150 to £175 depending on the detail required. Following a short discussion Cllr. B Emmerson proposed and Cllr. A Greaves seconded that a plaque with the Buttercross or Pedlar be purchased from the Twinning Budget.

It was unanimously agreed for the Town Clerk to purchase a plaque with the Buttercross or Pedlar for the 750th Hemmoor anniversary from the Twinning Budget.

12. PLANNING DECISIONS

12.1.

3PL/2005/0141/F Planning permission granted for the erection of a fence at Repton House, Oaks Drive. Mr. James D. Dean	3PL/2005/0036/LB and 3PL/2005/035/F Listed building consent and planning permission granted for alterations to form new guest bedroom including dormer link to rear of building. Mr. & Mrs. Scott. Strattons, 4 Ash Close.
3PL/2005/0181/LB and 3PL/2005/0180/F Listed building consent and planning permission granted to divide house into two units. Mr. R.B. and Mrs. B.A. Clarke, 8 Station Street.	3PL/2004/1992/LB and 3PL/2004/1991/F Listed building consent and planning permission granted for the change of use of rural buildings to 4 residential units. Within cartilage of listed building. Wood Farm, North Pickenham Road. Mrs. J. Taylor.
3PL/2005/0031/O Outline planning permission granted for a new dwelling at 11 Hickling Close. Mr. D.M. Bealey.	3PL/2005/0110/F Planning permission for the erection of one dwelling. Mill House, Tumbler Hill. Mr. & Mrs. M. Lucas
3PL/2005/0113/F Planning permission granted for an extension to the Paddocks. D. S. Kaushal	

12.2. PLANNING APPLICATIONS

3PL/2005/0372/O Erection of two storey residential care home and day care centre. Redundant Firework Factory, Greenway Ecotech Park. Dr. B.M. & K. Patel. No objections	3PL/2005/0373/O Erection of single storey childrens nursery. Redundant Fireworks Factory, Greenway Ecotech Park. Dr. B.M. & K. Patel. No objections
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13. ADMISSION TO MEETINGS ACT (PUBLIC BODIES) 1960 – following the exclusion of the public & press - To consider report from the Town Clerk re Town Hall extension, staffing for removal of bollards on Market Day and personnel issues.

13.1. The Town Clerk reported the builders are back on site from tomorrow for the next week; this is to complete the ventilation requirements in both the Council Chamber and the Museum Office. Contractors are fitting the shutters to the Reception Desk. There are various smaller issues that have been brought to the attention of the architect either within the access audit or direct, that are being attended to. E.g. the provision of a letter box. The workshop at the side of the building is due to be erected on site in the week commencing 18th April.

13.2. The Access Report was sent to the Architect for comment regarding the concerns and issues raised within the report that was presented to the Council on 9th March. It was recommended that Councillors take this away to digest and bring to the Council meeting next week to discuss above the line. In the report it states the building meets all our statutory requirements with regards to the Disability Discrimination Act DDA and Means of Escape in the Event of Fire MOE, and a compliance notice issued in respect of Building Regulations which encompasses a lot of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 Requirements.

Within the report there are some minor issues that have been picked up and attended to within the snagging to the building. Other issues are in excess of the minimum requirements under DDA regulations and therefore to take these to a higher level with incur a cost.

The Town Clerk was instructed to acknowledge receipt of letter and send the report with covering letter saying all requirements have been met. It was proposed to accept completely subject to building certificate, also to send a copy of the report to the press.

13.3. Staffing removal of bollards on Market Day

The Town Clerk reported this is an additional task for a member of staff every Saturday now. This will mean though that in using a member of staff in this way it will take them from another job elsewhere in the town. Cllr. I Sherwood proposed and Cllr. B Emmerson seconded that this should be taken from the overtime budget.

It was unanimously agreed for the Town Clerk to use the overtime budget for the removal of bollards on Market Day.

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13.4. Personnel Meeting – held on 22nd March

Dealt with two issues – 1st is a letter regarding various Town Council business. All the points were answered and there will be two actions arising from this, one is an action sheet that comes the day after each meeting. This could be modified to give information to the Council on a regular basis and second is in an effort to improve communication.

13.5. The other issue was to start discussions for the NALC/SLCC National Agreement on Salaries and Conditions of Service of Local Council Clerks due to be implemented from 1st April 2005. The discussions at present have centered around the profile for Swaffham devised under this new system, this in turn relates to pay rates and from the pay rates emerges the model contract of employment. There are a number of variations of how it can be implemented and if there are costs to take account of, then these have to come before the Council. Agreement with the employees is of course subject to the normal employment law procedures.

Meeting closed at 8.57 p.m.

Chairman.....