

SWAFFHAM TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Finance and General Purposes meeting on Wednesday 28th March 2007 at 7.00p.m. in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Swaffham.

Present: Mayor Cllr S. Matthews (in the chair)

Councillors: - Mr D. Butters, Mrs P. Buxton, Mrs A. Greaves,
Mrs Lister, Cllr Sharpe.

Clerk:- Mr R. Bishop.
Deputy Clerk:- Mrs M. Meyrick

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.

1.1. Cllr Sherwood

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

2.1. Cllr Butters declared a personal interest on item ??

2.2. Cllr Lister declared a personal interest on item ??

3. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

3.1. The minutes of the Finance and General Purposes Committee of the 6th December 2006 were agreed and signed as a true record by Mayor.

4. QUARTERLY FINANCIAL REPORT

4.1. Councillors were given a copy of the Income and Expenditure report for 2006/07. The report has the income received recently and expenditure incurred since the Council meeting to go into the system. Some orders which are outstanding and various transfers from one cost centre to another, such as salaries for an example is not in the right slot. All of these will be done in the next couple of weeks as the Council look to complete the year end accounts. This has to be done to enable the correct balances to be brought forward into the 2007/08 accounts.

4.2. Internal Auditor Report.

The Internal Auditor Mr Clements is away at the present time, he would tell you though that he has not been able to conclude his investigation on the Museum Project finances do to the Town Clerk not having enough time. There are still two claims to go in yet. One up to 28th February and the other up to the end of March and then it will be a case of waiting for the grant money to come from Norfolk County Council. Then is money to come in from the Heritage Lottery Fund and from WREN. The Internal Auditor and the Clerk have set aside a couple of hours on Friday 13th April, as it is the aim to give a report to this Council before they leave office.

4.3. To receive interim report on end of year Accounts to 31st March 2007.

It is difficult even being three days away from the year end to still give an accurate assessment of where we are at the present time. Only this morning the Clerk had been informed that the land purchase papers for the Swimming Pool land are imminent. The contract with the third party is now signed,

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permission from Breckland Council regarding access is granted in writing to Landmatch. It is now a matter of days before an announcement can be made.

The year end accounts show a snapshot of where the Council is at 31st March 2007. All the ifs and buts need to be firmed up in the next week or so and then the Council will be able to see precisely where it is. At this moment in time despite having to cope with the Town Clock and other unforeseen expenses, the Council is not far off the projected budget figures which the Clerk gave to the Council in December. The Clerk will highlight any changes to this at the next meeting in July.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1. progress report of costs of Allotment clearance and preparation.

The costs committed so far as are follows:-

- Compensation claims for the Shoulder of Mutton - £250, estimated £2,000.
- Shoemakers Lane clearance £3,720.00
- Compensation claims Days Field - none received to date, estimated £2,500.
- Tumbler Hill clearance - £2,640.00

Further costs to consider:-

- Water supply for both sites - estimated £2,000.00
- Skips to remove rubbish - estimated £2,000.00
- Clearance of individual sites - estimated £1,500.00
- On-going clearance to upkeep the sites – estimated £2,000.00

TOTAL committed = £6,610.00

TOTAL estimated = £12,000.00

GRAND TOTAL = £18,610.00 plus contingency inflates to £20,000

The Town Clerk made a recommendation to carry out a consultation after the full Council has discussed what they wish to use some of the proceeds from the land sale. Working on the basis of £85,000 at one end of the scale and £6,000,000 at the other. It was discussed that the enhancement of the allotments will be done when the sale of the allotment land is complete i.e. to provide a shed, water butt, fencing etc.

It was agreed that the idea of a consultation must be placed on the next Town Council agenda for further discussion.

5.2. Early budget considerations for 2007/08.

One is cash-flow as the Council need to monitor the expenditure, as there is the need to receive £85,000 from the surplus allotment land before 31st March 2008. Two is expenditure for the allotments being paid up front, prior to receiving any sale. This could be as much as £20,000. Three is monitoring the reserves which were replenished in the budget, but conditional on the land

sale. It would be sensible to carefully monitor income in the first three quarters of the year, and release certain expenditure only when the income is **Page 323**

either in the bank or guaranteed as definite income to be received before 31st March next year. Four is having an open debate at full Council regarding the use of any money received from the sale of surplus allotment land. This is central to having an informed debate at the Annual Town Assembly. It could be coupled with carrying out some consultation on the options open to the Town Council. The issue of the short stay travellers sites was discussed and what it would mean for Swaffham.

It was agreed the Clerk would invite Graeme Parfitt who is the Gypsy Liaison Officer for Breckland to come to the Town Assembly. He would be asked to give a report on the consultation they will be carrying out.

6. Debate amalgamation of Finance & G.P. with the Open Spaces & Amenities Committee.

The new Council will need to review its Committee structure to accommodate the additional meetings required for the Town Group. The Open Spaces & Amenities Committee has begun to work fairly well now and some of the issues will be taken forward by the new Project Grant Support Officer in the coming months. With the Town Group now on the scene this is another set of meetings for officers to service in addition to extra meetings for at least six Councillors to attend.

It was agreed that this issue to be discussed when the new Council are elected in.

7. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

7.1. The next meeting will be on Wednesday 25th July 2007 at 7pm.

The meeting closed at 8.10p.m.

Chairman_____