

SWAFFHAM TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Finance & General Purposes Committee meeting of the Town Council held on Wednesday 1st October 2008 at 7.00pm in the Town Hall, Swaffham.

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

Councillors:- Mr D. Butters, Mr P. Darby, Mr C. Gunner,
Mr D. Harman and Mr D. Wickerson.

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

Public: 0

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

- 1.1. Cllr Sherwood – work commitments.
- 1.2. Cllr Sharpe – holiday.
- 1.3. Mr. B. Clements, Internal Auditor – holiday.

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

- 2.1. Cllr Darby declared a personal interest on item 5.3 as he is an allotment holder.

3. MINUTES

3.1. The minutes of the Finance & General Purposes Committee of the 30th July 2008 were agreed by the Committee and signed as a true record by the Chairman.

4. QUARTERLY FINANCIAL REPORT

4.1. Report on Accounts to date (Income & expenditure 2008/09).

Due to staff sickness problems there is no Income and Expenditure report for this quarter. It is planned to circulate this prior to the Budget report, unless there is long term staff sick leave to deal with.

4.2. Report from Internal Auditor.

Unfortunately the staff sickness has also impacted on the Internal Audit, as the accounts are not ready to be internally audited. The internal audit is scheduled now for 21st and 23rd October.

4.3. Approved end of year Accounts to 31st March 2008.

The wonders of having a computer are that human beings have to input the data. The Town Clerk inadvertently left this item on the agenda from the last meeting (he blames the RFO).

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1. Draft lease for Cool Cabs.

The draft lease was circulated to Councillors for consideration and amendment. There were various issues discussed such as clauses to be included for the selling of items outside of the premises, whether it still meets with the planning uses criteria or if it needs to be changed. The committee were encouraged to take the document away and feed back any changes/amendments to the Town Clerk before the next Full Council meeting.

5.2. Tendering process for Public Toilets.

It is aimed to send out the tender documents on 10th October. The Clerk will circulate a draft of this by e-mail asap, as this needs to be resolved by the November meeting on 12th November, with tenders returned by Friday 7th November.

5.3. Progress report for cash-flow actual and projections 2008/09.

CASHFLOW REPORT	INCOME	EXPENDITURE
Capital Projects	<p>£3,6 million budgeted but to date none of this money has been received</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • £39,000 has been confirmed in writing under a Section 106 agreement • £145,000 has just been received as the commuted sum for the toilets, this was budgeted to be received in 2007/08 (last year) • £35,000 Public Works Loan receipt is awaited. This will trigger repayments from Swaffham Museum Ltd and repay three items already expended. 	<p>£3.7 million budgeted but £38,717 has already been paid out as follows:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • £10,000 for Bowls Club project • £5,000 for Northwell Pool project • £1,600 for War Memorial Plaque • £9,000 for Town Hall retention • £4,457 for Museum retention • £5,360 for Public Works Loan • £3,300 for Project Officer
Asset Management Fund	No income budgeted	<p>£14,650 budgeted but nothing spent to date.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council have committed to the Quantity Surveyor Robert Dale and expenditure will be due within the budgeted £5,000
Town Hall	<p>£4,900 budgeted as receipts for renting the offices and the Council Chamber. The income is currently on track for the first quarter.</p>	<p>£27,297 budgeted for expenditure. The expenditure is currently on track for the quarter.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There will be a cost saving of £1,500 on the installation of the microphone system, unless further improvements are necessary.
Admin & Miscellaneous	£2,000 budgeted and allocated as interest received	£143,111 budgeted and is starting to be spent. The

Page 445	from the bank. This will be reduced due to balances held being so low.	expenditure in this cost centre is funded mostly from the Precept and the first half of this has been received.
Market	£49,000 budgeted and it is too early to tell whether the downward trend is continuing. The income is coming in and recent adjustments to the layout have improved matters, but whether it has improved things financially only time will tell.	£37,563 is budgeted as expenditure attributed to the Market. The first quarter is showing no signs of over or under spending. This needs to be monitored in terms of cash-flow though as expenditure may have to be adjusted if the income does not continue to come in as predicted.
Northwell Pool	£2,000 budgeted via agency agreements. This figure will be reduced as only one agreement was reached with Anglian Water. An arrangement has been reached with Norfolk County Council but this will not yield any funds.	£3,000 is budgeted for Northwell Pool. This figure will be reduced accordingly as there is only an agreement with Anglian Water.
Youth Council	No income budgeted	£5,000 is budgeted and the Youth Council are only just getting to grips with incurring expense. So at least 90% of this money remains unspent at the present time.
Allotments	£3,500 budgeted but very little of this has been received. The annual allotment bills go out in the Autumn and received in the third quarter of the year.	£11,937 budgeted and expenditure will be greater during the summer months. So 75% will be spent in the first two quarters of the financial year. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allotment advance expenditure to be reimbursed on receipt of funds from the sale of surplus allotments has been brought forward from 2007/08. The sum currently stands at approximately £70,000
Recreation Ground	£350 budgeted which is for one visit of a travelling circus. To date none are booked, so income is nil.	£11,950 budgeted which includes £3,600 held on account for the skatepark. The expenditure is greater during the summer months.
Toilets & TIC	£17,550 budgeted but other than the first quarter of rent received for letting out the	£13,400 budgeted which is on the low side. The cleaning and maintenance costs are being

Page 446	<p>old TIC building no other income has been received.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The slot meters are still not available to the toilet doors so no income has been generated to date. • The commuted sum for the toilets was only received at the end of last week. No interest has been earned to date. • With regard to the commuted sum, this will be required to assist the cash-flow situation during the next 6 to 12 months so no interest should be budgeted for in the short term. 	<p>paid out. In addition costs are unknown for Business Rates, Water Rates and Electricity.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is recommended to allow a contingency of £5,000 for additional expenditure related to the toilets.
Cemetery & Churchyard	<p>£5,000 budgeted for, but this is the hardest item of all to predict. The old saying that people are just dying to get to the Cemetery is just a fact. How many though is just a guess, but it is fact that there are more burials during the winter months.</p>	<p>£32,835 budgeted but the majority of the expense is during the summer months.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outside equipment repairs and/or replacement can wait until the cutting season is over. • Health & Safety issues such as headstone safety cannot be put off forever.
Open Spaces	<p>No budgeted income</p>	<p>£24,228 budgeted with the majority of expenditure incurred during the summer months.</p>
Amenities & Agency	<p>£10,101 budgeted and apart from the Museum Loan repayments which will account for £1,800 this income should be in during the first half of the financial year.</p>	<p>£38,256 budgeted and fairly evenly spread over the four quarters of the year.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Museum have been advanced a loan of £20,000
Precept	<p>The first half year of Precept has been received of £81,276</p>	

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<u>OTHER ISSUES</u> Vat Reserves Breckland Council		The Reserves are currently nil New Play Equipment to the tune of £50,000 is being bankrolled by Breckland Council
<u>SUMMARY</u> Income 139,315 Expenditure 128,717 TOTAL = 268,032 PWLB – Loan due 35,000 Overdraft 150,000 BALANCE 63,717	Income -£85,000 land sale 2007/08 -£35,000 public works loan -Vat is owed to the Council but not sure how much at this point due to the accounts not being ready -BALANCE in Abbey Current Account £10,148.74 -BALANCE in Abbey deposit Account £180,594.65 -So we are currently not using the overdraft facility.	Expenditure <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • £20,000 loan to the Museum • £10,000 for Bowls Club project • £5,000 for Northwell Pool project • £1,600 for War Memorial Plaque • £9,000 for Town Hall retention • £4,457 for Museum retention • £5,360 for Public Works Loan • £3,300 for Project Officer • £70,000 for Allotments

5.4. Early budget considerations for 2009/10.

- a) Cllr Jill Skinner wants the Council to consider paying for two or three allotments for Hamond's School to use.
It was thought that the school would need to be asked if they wish to have any allotments before a decision is made.

- b) She wants the Council to consider increasing their match funding budget and consider having a match funding Committee.

- c) She wants the Council to tackle social issues

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- d) Cllr Paul Darby would like the Council to consider a Business in Bloom Competition and to put money aside for sponsoring this.

The idea to bring the Business in Bloom Competition was discussed and it was agreed to look at this issue in more detail. Cllr Gunner stated that he will be attending a meeting to find out more information and bring to a future council meeting.

- e) The Market Committee would like to recommend no increase in site rent for licensed traders this next year given the current economic climate.

It was agreed that a recommendation will go to full council not to increase the market rents for 2009/2010.

The Budget this year will be a reality check which could be presented in one of two ways. The first would be to put in everything we need or would like and to recommend a large increase in the Precept well above the RPI rate. The second would be to prepare an interim budget in the knowledge that a sum of money will be arriving at some point from the sale of the allotment land. This budget would put that to one side and plot a path from where we are now to the point where that windfall arrives. It is intended to prepare the latter budget.

The budget this year will be prepared as if we were not going to receive any funds at all, on completion of that a second part of the budget will be prepared in preparation for when a sum of money arrives. Finally to look at the cost of getting the council from (a) to (b) in terms of any additional costings or loss of income. The target as always is to offer value for money to the Council Tax payer.

5.5. Timetable for 2009/10 budget.

The timetable is as follows:-

Final day to get budget ideas or requests to the Town Clerk Friday 31st October

Draft budget to Finance Committee Friday 14th November

Draft budget to Full Council Friday 21st November

ALL Councillors are encouraged to book an appointment with the Town Clerk prior to the budget meeting after reading through the draft, this will allow both an understanding of the budget and an informed response if further information is required or to make amendments and correct errors.

6. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

6.1. The next Finance Committee meeting is on 3rd December 2008.

The meeting closed at 8.03 p.m.

_____ Chairman.