

SWAFFHAM TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Finance & General Purposes Committee meeting of the Town Council held on Wednesday 7th September 2011 at 7.00pm in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Swaffham.

Present:- Cllr. I Sherwood (in the chair).

Councillors: - Mr S Bell, Mr P Darby, Mrs T Jennison and Mrs S Matthews.

(Non-Committee Cllrs Mr C Gunner, Miss A Head, Mrs A Tigue, Mrs P Wade and Mr D Wickerson).

Town Clerk:- Mr R Bishop.

Deputy Town Clerk:- Mrs D Turner.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.

1.1. Cllr. M Edwards - personal reasons.

1.2. Cllr S Lister - personal reasons.

1.3. Cllr J Skinner - personal reasons.

1.4. Christine Wright - Late apologies as she had not received the Agenda.

Cllr I Sherwood extended a warm welcome to all non committee members attending this evening.

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

2.1. Cllr I Sherwood declared an interest in item 4 as he is an allotment holder.

3. MINUTES

3.1. The Minutes of 22nd June 2011 were agreed by the Committee and signed as a true record by the Chairman.

4. Reports from Committees, representatives or outside bodies:-

4.1. **SCALGA report on allotments by Christine Wright.**

4.1.a. Christine Wright was not present to give a report.

4.2. Appeal received from Mr. Dean Claxton in respect of an allotment at 45 Tumbler Hill.

The Town Clerk reported that the Committee had received details of an appeal by Mr. Dean Claxton regarding one of his allotments at Tumbler Hill being taken back. Over the past three years there has been correspondence for various reasons including a similar exchange of e-mails following inspections which resulted in improvements being made and subsequent inspections were then satisfactory.

The current position is that two recent inspections of the allotments have failed, therefore he has again been put under notice that the Council will take vacant possession on 12th September. Mr. Claxton is one of five allotment holders put under notice. A discussion took place whether to uphold the appeal or continue with taking back one of Mr. Claxton's two allotments as previously notified. Cllr S Matthews proposed, seconded by Cllr I Sherwood that one allotment would be taken back leaving Mr Claxton one allotment, providing he maintained and cultivated the remaining plot to an appropriate standard in line with the current Allotment Term and Conditions.

It was unanimously agreed to take back one allotment plot and to allow Mr Claxton to keep the remaining allotment plot.

4.3. General allotment report from the Town Clerk

The Town Clerk updated the Council in respect of allotments:-

Shouldham Lane – 78 Plots + 17 which Mrs Nash has for horses

Magazine Field – 11½ Plots

Four Acres Field – 17 Plots

Tumbler Hill – 46 Plots

Vacant Allotment Plots:

Shouldham Lane – 2½

Magazine Field – 2

Four Acres Field – 0

Tumbler Hill – 4 (A tenancy agreement will be sent out for one of these this week).

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An inspection was carried out by Rosie Noble (Assistant Town Clerk) and Roger Trowell (SCALGA) on 13th July and letters were sent to 16 allotment holders with regards to their allotments being in poor condition.

A follow up inspection took place on 10th August and 5 allotment holders were then put under one months notice, with the Town Council taking vacant possession of these on 12th September. The remaining allotments had been improved, with letters sent to the tenant informing them no further action would be taken at this time.

The Annual Invoices will be sent out during October.

The inspections have taken note of various items being stored at some allotment plots which have nothing to do with cultivating allotments, but then end up in the skip with other non-allotment or household waste. This is not a statutory duty or requirement for allotment holders and is clearly not being self-policed. It is therefore recommended that in view of the abuse of allotment holders filling up skips with non-allotment or household rubbish to withdraw the twice yearly supply of skips to each allotment site with immediate effect. This would be a saving on the current year of £380 and approximately £800 in next years budget. Cllr I Sherwood proposed, seconded by Cllr P Darby not to hire a skip either this year or next year as the rubbish deposited is not all allotment rubbish.

It was unanimously agreed not to hire a skip this year or next year due to the lack of self-policing of the rubbish that is deposited in the skip as it is not all allotment rubbish.

4.4. Internal Auditors' report from Tony Lawlor.

4.4.a. Mr T Lawlor was not present to give his report however a printed copy of the Internal Auditors report was circulated at the meeting. (see appendix 1).

5. FINANCIAL REPORT from the RFO:

5.1. Accounts to 30th June 2011 (Trial Balance 1st quarter 2011/12) Income & Expenditure.

The Town Clerk reported on the Income and Expenditure accounts to 30th June 2011. The report for the Imprest system had previously been given for the middle of the month rather than the end of the month where the transfer of monies would have replenished the account.

6. BUDGET WORKSHOP 2011/12.

6.1. The Town Clerk reported that an informal workshop on the Budget was held on 25th July and with tonight's workshop session this will put the budget into perspective for this coming year in the formal arena. The Town Clerk reported that all Councillors will be set various tasks to assist with the budget process as together work towards the draft budget can be completed, ready for circulation by 25th November and debated fully on 7th December. After lengthy discussion Cllr I Sherwood stated that by having such an involvement at this stage of the discussions it allows all councillors to take ownership of the budget.

7. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

7.1. The date for the next meeting is Wednesday 26th October 2011 at 7p.m. **This will be the last Finance meeting before the Budget Meeting.**

The next date scheduled for the Budget Working Group Meeting is Wednesday 21st September 2011 at 7p.m.

Meeting closed at 8.21 p.m.

Chairman