

Minutes of the **SPECIAL MEETING** of the Swanage
Town Council held at the Town Hall, Swanage on
FRIDAY, 23rd JANUARY 2009 at 9.30 a.m.

PRESENT:-

Councillor M.W. Pratt (Town Mayor) – Chairman

Councillor C.R. Bright

Councillor Mrs. C. Gainsborough JP

Councillor L. Gloyn-Cox

Councillor Mrs. G.A. Marsh

Councillor Mrs. A. Patrick (until 11.50 am)

Councillor S. Poultney

Councillor W.S. Trite

Councillor M. Whitwam

Public Participation Time

In addition to Members of the Council and officers, 1 member of the public attended the Meeting.

Before the commencement of the Meeting, Councillor Bright suggested that consideration be given to Agenda Item 4 – Scale of Charges 2009/10 prior to the review of the Estimates 2009/10 (Item 2).

Following a brief discussion, it was AGREED:-

That as any proposed changes to the Scale of Charges 2009/10 were unlikely to have a significant impact on the Estimates 2009/10, this item be deferred for consideration at meetings of the appropriate Committees to be convened within the next two weeks.

1. **APOLOGIES**

Apologies for their inability to attend the Meeting were received from Councillors Audley, Hadley and Suttle.

2. **ANNUAL ESTIMATES REPORT**

Before consideration of the grants and donations, the Town Clerk explained that, in many instances, although a direct financial contribution is not made, the Council supports local organisations by the provision of facilities and services. A meeting is scheduled to be held with event organisers on 3rd February 2009.

Swanage Jazz Festival

The Clerk reported on a request received from the organisers of the Swanage Jazz Festival requesting permission to erect a marquee on the former tennis courts area of the Downs in order to hold events during the 2009 Festival.

It was proposed by Councillor Bright and seconded by Councillor Mrs. Patrick:-

That the request be granted.

Upon being put to the Meeting, EIGHT Members voted IN FAVOUR of the Proposition and there was ONE ABSTENTION, whereupon the Proposition was declared CARRIED.

1) **Grants and Donations**

Consideration was given to the following requests for funding, as contained in Appendix C of the Estimates Report.

a) **Swanage Blues Festival (March)**

It was proposed by Councillor Mrs. Patrick, seconded by Councillor Poultney, and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-

That the sum of £250 be contributed towards the cost of staging the Swanage Blues Festival in March 2009 and that the sum of £250 be contributed towards the cost of staging the Swanage Blues Festival in March 2010.

In agreeing the above contributions, it was acknowledged that the Swanage Blues Festival was an added tourist attraction for the town in the shoulder months of the year, and it was suggested that the organiser of the event approach the Swanage & Purbeck Holiday Accommodation Association with regard to a possible donation from that organisation.

b) **Swanage Town & Community Partnership**

Consideration was given to the level of contribution to be made to the Swanage Town and Community Partnership for 2009/10.

Following discussion, it was proposed by the Town Mayor, seconded by Councillor Mrs. Marsh, and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-

That, having regard to the limited resources available, a contribution of £500 be made to the Swanage Town and Community Partnership for 2009/10.

c) **Swanage Blues and Roots Festival (October)**

Consideration was given to a request received for a contribution towards staging the 2009 Swanage Blues and Roots Festival.

It was proposed by Councillor Mrs. Patrick, seconded by Councillor Poultney, and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-

That the sum of £500 be contributed towards the cost of staging the Swanage Blues and Roots Festival in October 2009.

d) **Dorset Blind Association**

Consideration was given to a request received for a financial contribution from the Dorset Blind Association. During the ensuing discussion, Members acknowledged the sterling work of the Association, but, in view of the limited resources available, were mindful of the Council's policy to support causes that were specifically for the benefit of local residents.

It was proposed by the Town Mayor, seconded by Councillor Poultney, and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-

That the matter be deferred to enable further enquiries to be made as to whether the Association has proposals for projects to support Swanage residents.

Lions Club of Swanage

A letter dated 19th January 2009 was submitted from the Lions Club of Swanage requesting the use of a bungalow on Shore Road at a reduced hire charge for a six week period from 30th May to 11th July 2009.

During the ensuing discussion, it was noted that the bungalows allocated to some organisations were well-used by local residents, and it was suggested that a scheme be drawn up whereby local organisations could apply for the use of a bungalow at a favourable rental during quiet periods in the early and late season.

It was proposed by Councillor Bright, seconded by Councillor Mrs. Patrick, and RESOLVED:-

That a scheme be agreed in principle, subject to further details being submitted to a future meeting of the Council.

2) Estimates 2009/10

The Clerk presented the Estimates for 2009/10, together with a comprehensive Report covering the following issues (copies had been circulated to all Members prior to the Meeting).

1. Overview and Summary of Major Issues.
2. Budget Monitoring and Financial Control.
3. Income and Expenditure.
4. Accounting Policies and Pricing.
5. Section 137, Grants and Donations.
6. Scale of Charges.
7. Capital Works Programme.

In presenting the Report, the Clerk emphasised the importance for Members to consider the Council's overall financial position, namely a projected Net Deficit for 2008/09 of £104,310 which when added to a brought forward deficit balance of £50,335 gave rise to an overall Revenue Reserve deficit balance of £154,645.

A lengthy discussion ensued regarding this projected deficit and the influence that the actions of the District Auditor had had on the Council's overall financial position i.e. reduced income from caravan sales, and increased expenditure on legal and audit fees.

This deficit balance would be reflected in the level of precept to be levied for the forthcoming year. The urgent need to give detailed consideration to the services provided by the Council, and the cost of delivering these services, was acknowledged.

It was proposed by the Town Mayor, seconded by Councillor Bright, and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-

That the matter be deferred for consideration at the meeting of the Finance and Performance Management Committee to be held on 2nd February 2009.

3) Precept 2009/10

Discussion ensued regarding the increased level of precept that may be necessary to be levied for 2009/10, and it was considered to be of paramount importance that the public be informed of the circumstances that had resulted in this unprecedented situation.

It was proposed by Councillor Bright:-

That a public presentation be given, at which the extraordinary circumstances be explained.

This Proposition failed to secure a seconder.

On the basis that there was in principle agreement to this idea, it was then proposed by Councillor Trite and seconded by Councillor Mrs. Marsh:-

That details of the Council's financial position be explained in "Swanage Matters" (the Council's Newsletter) and that a follow-up public meeting be held.

Upon being put to the Meeting, SEVEN Members voted IN FAVOUR of the Proposition and there were TWO ABSTENTIONS, whereupon the Proposition was declared CARRIED.

The meeting concluded at 12.35 pm.
