

Minutes of the **SPECIAL MEETING** of the Swanage Town Council held at the Town Hall, Swanage on **FRIDAY, 27th JUNE 2008** at 9.30 a.m.

PRESENT:-

Councillor M.W. Pratt - Chairman

Councillor C.R. Bright

Councillor Mrs. C. Gainsborough

Councillor Mrs. G.A. Marsh

Councillor Mrs. A. Patrick

Councillor S. Poultney

Councillor W.S. Trite

Councillor M. Whitwam

Public Participation Time

There was one member of the public present at the meeting.

MS. JANE LOWSON referred to her previous request for consideration to be given to the installation of a foot shower in the vicinity of the Mowlem, and enquired whether any progress had been made in the matter. She was given an assurance by the **TOWN CLERK** that further enquiries would be made in this regard.

MS. LOWSON then expressed her concern at the speed of traffic through the town centre during the evenings, and enquired whether consideration could be given to the introduction of traffic calming measures. She was informed that this matter had been highlighted on several occasions and the possibility of introducing a 20 mph speed limit in certain areas had been mooted. The matter had been held in abeyance pending further discussions with the Swanage Town and Community Partnership and Dorset County Council.

MS. LOWSON drew attention to the unsightly litter that was deposited in the streets and recreation grounds, and, although understanding of the problem, enquired whether this could be addressed earlier in the day.

1. **APOLOGIES**

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

2. **STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS 2007/08**

The Town Clerk presented the Statement of Accounts for 2007/08 and gave a summary of the information contained therein.

He highlighted the sections headed "Financial Review" and "Post Balance Sheet Events" and explained that these sections provided an assessment of the principal activities during the year and/or current issues yet to be resolved.

Following a consultative meeting with Poole Borough Council, a small number of technical amendments had been made to the accounts, and the Annual Governance Statement (approved at the Policy and Planning Meeting held on 23rd June 2008) would be incorporated within the final document.

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

That the Statement of Accounts 2007/08 be approved.

In accepting the Statement of Accounts 2007/08, Members wished to record their appreciation of the sterling work undertaken by the Town Clerk and his staff in completing the Accounts within the statutory deadline.

3. **INTERIM CORPORATE PERFORMANCE PLAN 2008/09**

Following the introduction of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007, the requirement to prepare a Best Value Performance Plan by a statutory deadline of 30th June had been removed. The Clerk advised that the Town Council still had an obligation to have in place measures to ensure continuous improvement through a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness. In order to fulfil that obligation, an Interim Corporate Performance Plan had been prepared for the forthcoming year.

Omitted from the major priorities identified within the draft document was any mention of the proposals in relation to household waste facilities. The Town Clerk highlighted the urgent priority and the need to give consideration to the possible withdrawal of the household recycling centre in Swanage.

It was reported that it now appeared unlikely that the household recycling centre would be re-located from the existing Town Council-owned site at Panorama Road to the proposed new Prospect Business Park, due to prohibitive costs. It was agreed that every endeavour should be made to retain this facility in Swanage.

During the ensuing discussion, reference was made to Minute No. 9 (b) of the Finance and Performance Management Committee Meeting held on 10th March 2008, and the options for the future management of the land south of the Caravan Park.

It was proposed by the Town Mayor, seconded by Councillor Mrs. Patrick, and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-

To offer the land south of the Caravan Park (currently valued at £175,000) to Dorset County Council as a capital contribution towards the cost of providing recycling facilities in Swanage.

The Assistant Town Clerk highlighted some minor amendments to the draft document, following which, it was proposed by the Town Mayor, seconded by Councillor Poultney, and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-

That, subject to the minor amendments being incorporated within the document, the Swanage Town Council Interim Corporate Performance Plan 2008/09 be approved.

It was then proposed by the Town Mayor, seconded by Councillor Mrs. Patrick, and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-

That the methodology and timescale for revising the document be approved and adopted.

4. **AUDIT PLAN – 2007/08 ANNUAL ACCOUNTS**

Further to Minute No. 2 of the Finance and Performance Management Committee Meeting held on 21st April 2008, the Draft Audit Plan 2007/08

(produced by the Audit Commission dated 19th June 2008) was submitted for consideration.

The Clerk highlighted corrections in respect of paragraph 20, and a general discussion ensued regarding the lack of recognition to the substantial improvements made by the Council in the preparation of the Annual Statement of Accounts and other matters generally concerning governance.

The principal matters of concern related to the legality issues surrounding caravan sales activities.

During the ensuing discussion, it was noted that some matters referred to as “inaccuracies” were still unresolved, although the District Auditor and his Counsel had met with legal and other representatives of the Town Council.

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

That the Draft Audit Plan 2007/08 be accepted, and that delegated authority to discuss some contentious issues with the District Auditor be given to the Mayor, Deputy Mayor, Councillor Suttle and the Town Clerk.

5. **EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

Proposed by the Town Mayor, seconded by Councillor Mrs. Gainsborough, and RESOLVED:-

That, under Standing Order No. 67, it is envisaged that in view of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted, it is advisable in the public interest that the press and public be excluded from the Meeting during consideration of the following matters.

6. **LEGAL CHALLENGE – AUDIT COMMISSION**

The Clerk updated Members on matters relating to the legal challenge by the Audit Commission.

The Clerk then reported that, following consultation with the District Auditor, Terms of Reference had been agreed in respect of the Options Appraisal to be undertaken by the specialist consultants, Charles F. Jones.

The meeting concluded at 10.55 a.m.

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