

Minutes of the **SPECIAL MEETING** of the Swanage  
Town Council held at the Town Hall, Swanage on  
**MONDAY, 1<sup>st</sup> FEBRUARY 2008** at 9.30 a.m.

PRESENT:-

Councillor G.M. Suttle (Town Mayor) – Chairman

Councillor B.J. Audley

Councillor Mrs. C. Gainsborough JP

Councillor L. Gloyn-Cox

Councillor Mrs. G.A. Marsh

Councillor Mrs. A. Patrick

Councillor M.W. Pratt

Councillor S. Poultney

Councillor W.S. Trite

Councillor M. Whitwam

**Public Participation Time**

In addition to Members of the Council and officers, 2 members of the public attended the Meeting.

135. **APOLOGIES**

Apologies for their inability to attend the Meeting were received from Councillors Bright and Hadley.

136. **ANNUAL ESTIMATES REPORT**

1) **Grants and Donations**

a) **Citizens' Advice Bureau**

Before consideration of this item, Councillor Pratt declared a personal interest under the Model Code of Conduct and remained in the Meeting during the debate.

Consideration was given to a request received from the Manager of the Citizens' Advice Bureau seeking funding to support additional CAB sessions at Herston. The sum required to provide this service for six months from January to June 2008 was £1,300.

During the ensuing discussion, Members acknowledged that the services provided by the CAB were well used, but were concerned at the cost of providing this additional service as office facilities etc. were already made available to the CAB at the Town Hall.

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

That the matter be deferred to enable further information to be obtained.

b) **Vitalise**

Consideration was given to a request received from "Vitalise" seeking funding towards the provision of holidays for disabled people and breaks for carers.

Following discussion, it was proposed by Councillor Gloyn-Cox, seconded by Councillor Mrs. Marsh, and RESOLVED:-

That having regard to the limited resources available the Town Council adheres to its existing policy to support local charities.

c) Swanage Regatta & Carnival Association

Consideration was given to a request received for a contribution towards the 2008 Regatta and Carnival.

Following discussion, it was proposed by Councillor Mrs. Gainsborough and seconded by Councillor Mrs. Patrick:-

That the sum of £500 be contributed towards the cost of staging events during the 2008 Swanage Regatta & Carnival.

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

d) Swanage Blues Festival 2008

It was noted that a contribution of £200 had been agreed towards the cost of staging the 2008 Swanage Blues Festival (see Minute No. 4 of the Council Meeting held on 19<sup>th</sup> March 2007).

e) Swanage Library

Further to Minute No. 4 of the Council Meeting held on 4<sup>th</sup> January 2008, consideration was again given to the request for the provision of funding towards the retention of the Swanage Library services.

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

That the request be refused, as it was considered that the provision of the Swanage Library service was the responsibility of Dorset County Council and no additional expense should be levied through the Town Council on Council Tax payers of Swanage for the provision of this Service.

2) Estimates 2008/09

The Clerk presented the Estimates for 2008/09, 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 referred to the Council's revenue balances and highlighted the need to increase these in order to reduce the "risk" factor in carrying out the business of the Town Council.

A lengthy discussion ensued regarding the provision of the Council's services, the condition of Council-owned buildings and the urgent need for capital investment to maintain these and other assets.

The impact of Health and Safety legislation and Fire Risk Assessments was also considered in assessing the Council's overall position and its future financial strategy.

In considering the Estimates for 2008/09, the following matters were highlighted:-

Car Parks - It was noted that the taxi permits had not yet been assessed. This matter was scheduled to be considered at the next meeting of the Transport Committee.

Public Conveniences Further to Minute No. 9 i) of the General Operations Committee Meeting held on 14<sup>th</sup> November 2007, it was reported that the additional cost of extending the toilet opening hours was estimated to be £17,277. It was proposed by Councillor Gloyn-Cox, seconded by the Town Mayor, and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:- That the proposal to extend the opening hours of the public conveniences be not implemented, and that the possibility of progressing the community toilet scheme operated by Richmond upon Thames Borough Council be investigated.

Beach Gardens - It was reported that no provision had been made in the Estimates for the opening of Beach Gardens at Easter 2008. It was proposed by Councillor Pratt, and AGREED:- To adhere to the Council's existing policy of providing leisure facilities at Beach Gardens during the Easter period.

Detailed scrutiny of the Estimates continued, during which some possible savings regarding the provision of services were identified.

It was proposed by Councillor Pratt, seconded by Councillor Trite, and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-

That the Town Council terminates its agency agreement for the cash collection, and undertakes to provide this service through its own resources.

Further discussion ensued regarding the level of Precept to be levied, following which, it was proposed by Councillor Poultney and seconded by Councillor Audley:-

That the Precept to be levied for 2008/09 be £465,000 – an increase of 34.1%.

An AMENDMENT was moved by the Town Mayor and seconded by Councillor Pratt:-

That the Precept to be levied for 2008/09 be £412,500 – an increase of 18.9%.

Upon being put to the Meeting, SIX Members voted IN FAVOUR of the Amendment and FOUR against, WHEREUPON THE Amendment was declared CARRIED.

The AMENDMENT was then put as a SUBSTANTIVE MOTION and declared CARRIED with SIX Members voting IN FAVOUR of the Motion and FOUR AGAINST.

Having agreed the level of Precept to be levied for 2008/09, it was proposed by the Town Mayor, seconded by Councillor Pratt, and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-

That the Estimates 2008/09 be accepted.

138. **CAPITAL WORKS PROGRAMME**

The Clerk submitted details of the Capital Works Programme and explained the following revised procedure:-

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| “Approved Schemes”-   | Inclusion of projects in the approved capital works programme infers authority to spend that budget to deliver the project.  |
| “Un-approved Schemes” | Inclusion of projects in the un-approved capital works programme are presented to the Council for consideration and are deemed to have received approval “in principle”, thus allowing the development of a detailed project proposal. The proposal then has to be agreed by the Council before authority to undertake the project is given. |

It was noted that this criteria would ensure that all projects are properly managed and controlled. Regular budget monitoring reports would be presented to the General Operations Committee.

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

To formally adopt the revised procedure relating to the Capital Works Programme.

Following consideration of the “Approved” Capital Works Programme (Appendix B), it was proposed by the Town Mayor, seconded by Councillor Pratt, and  
**RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-**

That the “Approved” Capital Works Programme be accepted.

Consideration was then given to the “Un-approved” Capital Works Programme, and it was proposed by Councillor Pratt, seconded by the Town Mayor, and  
**RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-**

That the “Un-approved” Capital Works Programme be accepted.

139. **LOAN SANCTION**

Further to Minute No. 79 (a) of the Council Meeting held on 29<sup>th</sup> October 2007 at which approval was given for the purchase of three vehicles, consideration was given to the method of financing this purchase.

It was proposed by the Town Mayor, seconded by Councillor Gloyn-Cox, and  
**RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-**

That the Clerk be authorised to apply for loan sanction to borrow the sum of £47,500 for the purchase of the vehicles.

140. **OPTIONS APPRAISALS**

The Clerk submitted details of the Options Appraisals to be undertaken, and the need to review and prioritise the options was highlighted.

Consideration was given to arrangements for centralising administration and introducing a central purchasing system. Although supportive of the proposals in principle, Councillor Gloyn-Cox expressed concern at the timescale for the implementation of a new system at the present time.

That the introduction of a central purchasing system

be approved in principle, but implementation be deferred until other matters had been determined.

The Clerk reported on an approach received regarding the possible introduction of a new tourist attraction based on an Enid Blyton theme.

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

To explore the opportunity of a new family tourist attraction and to delegate responsibility to the Tourism Committee.

The Clerk updated Members on matters relating to Beach Gardens and the Boat Park, and it was **AGREED:-**

To explore opportunities relating to the future operational arrangements of Beach Gardens and the Boat Park.

It was **AGREED:-**

That a Special Meeting of the Council be held on Wednesday, 13<sup>th</sup> February 2008 to consider and determine the Council's long-term strategy.

The Clerk reported on matters relating to the job evaluation and staffing review process, and it was proposed by the Town Mayor, seconded by Councillor Pratt, and **RESOLVED:-**

That the South West Employers Association be appointed to undertake the job evaluation process.

It was further proposed by the Town Mayor, seconded by Councillor Mrs. Marsh, and **RESOLVED:-**

That on receipt of the South West Employers Association Report, the matter be referred to the Council for consideration.

141. **EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

Proposed by Councillor Pratt, seconded by Councillor Mrs. Gainsborough, and **RESOLVED:-**

That, as publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted, the public be excluded from the Meeting during consideration of the following matters.

142. **LAND SOUTH OF CARAVAN PARK – REVIEW OF DELEGATION**

Under the Model Code of Conduct Councillor Audley declared a personal interest in this item and did not vote on the matter.

Further to Minute ... of the Meeting held on ... Members considered letters, e-mails and a management schedule sent to the Town Council by the current occupier of the grazing fields south of the Holiday Park. In response to this correspondence Councillor Audley offered to stand down from the Council's delegated Working Party, but Members insisted that he should retain that position. Concern was expressed at the tone of recent communication and it was noted that initial enquiries had been made as to whether Durlston Country Park would wish to take over the management of the land in question. It was noted that the Estates Management Team at Dorset County Council had considerable expertise in managing agricultural tenancies if the land were to be let to a third party. After further consideration it was proposed by the Town Mayor and seconded by Councillor Mrs Marsh:

That formal dialogue be opened with Dorset County Council in respect of the future management arrangements for the grazing fields south of Swanage Bay View Holiday Park.

It was noted that if the land were to be disposed of to Dorset County Council the Town Council should be given first refusal prior to any future sale.