

Minutes of the **SPECIAL MEETING** of the Council held
at the Town Hall, Swanage on **MONDAY, 22nd JANUARY**
2018 at 7.00 p.m.

PRESENT:- Councillor M. Bonfield (Mayor) – Chairman.

Councillor J. Bishop
Councillor C. Finch
Councillor G. Green
Councillor G. Marsh
Councillor T. Morris
Councillor S. Poultney
Councillor W. Trite
Councillor M. Whitwam

Also in attendance:-

Dr M. Ayres – Town Clerk
Miss A. Spencer – Finance Manager

There were two members of the public present at the meeting.

191. **APOLOGIES**

Apologies for their inability to attend the Meeting were received from Councillors Harris and Lejeune.

192. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Members were invited to declare their interests and consider any requests for Grants of Dispensations in accordance with paragraphs 9 – 13 of the Council’s Code of Conduct and regulations made under chapter 7 of the Localism Act 2011.

There were no declarations to record on this occasion.

The dispensation granted to Councillor Green in respect of cemetery matters was noted.

The dispensation granted to the eleven Councillors resident in Swanage to participate in setting the precept until May 2019 was also noted.

193. **POLICY, FINANCE AND PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE**

Proposed by Councillor Green, seconded by the Town Mayor, and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-

That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Policy, Finance and Performance Management Committee held on 15th January 2018 be approved as a correct record and signed.

194. **ADDITIONAL ITEMS OF EXPENDITURE-2017/18 FINANCIAL YEAR**

(a) **Additional Resurfacing, Main Beach Car Park**

Consideration was given to a briefing note issued by the Operations Manager seeking additional funds to finance repairs to the surface at Main Beach Car Park. During the debate some concern was expressed as to whether there could be any unforeseen costs in relation to ground conditions, although it was noted that this issue could only really be explored further by the drilling of bore holes which would in itself prove to be a costly exercise. An assurance was also sought that the estimated cost represented best value, and it was noted that as the

figure was in excess of £25,000 an appropriate procurement process would have to have been followed.

It was proposed by Councillor Marsh, seconded by Councillor Bishop, and
RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:

To authorise the repairing works and approve
the additional expenditure at Main Beach Car
Park, at a cost of up to £35,140.

(b) **Replacement blinds/curtains, Town Hall**

Consideration was given to a further briefing note provided by the Operations Manager with regards to the replacement of the blinds in the Town Hall Chamber, which were in a very poor condition. It was noted that the option for either blinds or curtains had been given.

A discussion ensued as to whether curtains or blinds would be preferable, during which some concern was expressed as to the cost of curtains. However, it was argued that the Town Hall was a heritage building and curtains were more appropriate. It was also noted that curtains would provide better soundproofing and aid the acoustics.

Following further discussion it was proposed by Councillor Bishop and seconded by Councillor Green:

That curtains be installed in the Council Chamber, quote 2a on the briefing note being approved, at a cost of £4,812.

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

Further discussion ensued as to the colour of the curtains. It was proposed by Councillor Green and seconded by Councillor Bishop:

That the curtains should be heritage green in colour.

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.

195. **TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY STATEMENT AND INVESTMENT STRATEGY 2018/19 to 2020/21**

Further to Minute No. 5 of the Policy, Finance and Performance Management Committee meeting held on 15th January 2018, consideration was given to the Treasury Management Strategy Statement 2018/19 to 2020/21 and the Annual Investment Strategy for 2018/19.

Following a brief discussion, it was proposed by Councillor Finch, seconded by Councillor Bishop, and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-

To receive and adopt the Treasury Management Strategy Statement and Investment Strategy 2018/19 to 2020/21.

196. **SCALE OF CHARGES 2018/19**

Further to Minute No. 6 of the Policy, Finance and Performance Management Committee meeting held on 15th January 2018, consideration was given to the proposed

Scale of Charges for 2018/19. The Town Clerk stated that the individual committees had recommended the charges and highlighted the significant changes being:

- Reduced winter charges in the long-stay car parks
- Removal of the 7pm to 10pm charge in the short stay car parks
- A reduction in the Exclusive Rights fee and a waiving of a fee for interments in the children's section in Godlingston Cemetery, to be effective from 1st January 2018.
- The removal of a fee for the use of the Heritage and North Beach toilets.

It was noted that the toilet fees were included in the draft document and that these would be removed prior to adoption. A discussion arose with regards to the removal of the fee for the use of North Beach toilets. It was highlighted that this was the only way to secure the toilets, otherwise the lock would be removed and there would be access at all times. Given this technicality it was noted that the fee for the use of North Beach toilets should remain until such time as the works to install a new toilet facility had been completed.

A question was raised regarding the large increase in the tennis racket hire fee at Beach Gardens. It was noted that the Manager would be purchasing new rackets and as such recommended a higher fee. The fee for the hire of the Pavilion was also questioned, and whether this would undercut other local facilities such as the Youth Centre. It was noted that this would be reviewed by Officers, under delegated authority.

Due to Councillor Green's dispensation regarding cemetery matters not extending to the approval of the relevant fees and charges, as set out in section 13, it was proposed by Councillor Bishop, seconded by Councillor Finch, and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-

That the Scale of Charges for 2018/19, sections 1 to 12 and 14 be approved and adopted, subject to the removal of the charge for Heritage toilets and a review of the rental charges of the Pavilion at Beach Gardens. The fee for the North Beach toilets would be removed once the new toilet had been installed.

It was further proposed by the Town Mayor and seconded by Councillor Poultney:-

That the Scale of Charges for 2018/19, section 13 be approved and adopted, with the charges for the Children's section being implemented with effect from 1st January 2018.

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.

A copy of the agreed Scale of Charges for 2018/19 is attached at the end of these Minutes.

197. **ESTIMATES 2018/19**

The Town Clerk outlined the key points from the budget report which had been circulated prior to the meeting. The context of the current financial year was noted as being one with an increase in income and stable levels of expenditure. Moving forward to 2018/19 the Council's largest costs were expected to rise by 12.2%, largely due to high levels of one-off expenditure, increased employees' costs and inflationary

pressure. The Council's largest sources of income were anticipated to decrease by 2.5%, with a reduction in some car parking fees and the removal of toilet revenue from the budget. Investment interest was also budgeted to decrease, with lower levels of reserves available for investment due to expenditure on the capital programme.

Over the forthcoming financial year, the General Fund Balance was expected to decrease by £186,000. However, this was mainly due to £150,000 being placed in earmarked reserves to finance future planned expenditure. It was noted that the majority of the Council's capital programme would be financed from the Usable Capital Receipts Reserve. The Town Clerk highlighted that the DCLG, in its deferral of the referendum principles to Town and Parish Councils for a further three years, remarked that reserves should be utilised to mitigate increases in council tax and it was acknowledged that the Council was acting within these guidelines. It was further noted that the Council would be reviewing its corporate and financial strategy in the forthcoming months.

A question was raised as to the robustness of the Council's reserves to counter any potential recession. The Town Clerk highlighted the financial risk assessment that had been produced (Appendix E to the report), which showed that a total of £309,000 was assessed as being potentially at risk in the next financial year. However, with a current General Fund Balance of over £800,000 the Council should be able to withstand any financial shocks. It was further highlighted that should a recession be lengthy then discretionary expenditure would need to be curtailed.

(a) **Capital Programme**

Further to Minute No. 6 of the Policy, Finance and Performance Management Committee meeting held on 15th January 2018, consideration was given to the Schedule of Estimated Capital Expenditure for 2018/19.

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

That the Schedule of Estimated Capital Expenditure 2018/19, incorporating projections up to 2020/21, be approved and adopted.

(b) **Revenue Budgets 2018/19**

Further to Minute No. 6 of the Policy, Finance and Performance Management Committee meeting held on 15th January 2018, detailed consideration was given to the Estimates Book for 2018/19.

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

That the Estimates Book for 2018/19 be approved and adopted.

(c) **Precept 2018/19**

Further to Minute No. 6 of the Policy, Finance and Performance Management Committee meeting held on 15th January 2018, and having given detailed consideration to the Estimates Book (Minute No. 197 (b) above), the level of precept to be set for 2018/19 was considered, with a 2% increase having been recommended by the Committee.

It was noted that the tax base had marginally decreased from 2017/18, which would result in a 2.01% increase on a Band D council tax bill. It was proposed by Councillor Trite, seconded by Councillor Morris and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-

That the level of precept to be levied for 2018/19 be increased by 2% to £718,030.

198. RESERVES AND BALANCES POLICY

Further to Minute No. 6 of the Policy, Finance and Performance Management Committee meeting held on 15th January 2018, the Finance Manager outlined the amendments that had been made to the Reserves and Balances Policy previously revised and adopted on 23rd January 2017. It was noted that these were:

- the renaming of the Repairs & Renewals Reserve to the Seafront Enhancement Reserve; and
- the use of the Insurance & Contingency Reserve to be amended to read, “to hold funds to cover one-off costs that may result from Local Government Re-organisation.”

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

To receive and adopt the revised Policy on Reserves and Balances as recommended by the Policy, Finance and Performance Management Committee.

199. GRANTS AND DONATIONS 2018/19

It was noted that an annual budget of £10,000 had been allocated to the grants and donations budget which was available to local charities and voluntary groups. A list of grant applications received to date for the 2018/19 financial year had been distributed for consideration, totalling £4,690.

A lengthy discussion arose as to the Council’s grant policy and the criteria used for assessing eligibility for grants and donations. The Town Clerk highlighted the guidelines which were stated on the application form, which had been approved by the Council in August 2016 as a framework for evaluating grant requests. The possibility of creating a grant funding panel to make recommendations to full Council was mooted.

Consideration was given to the submission by Swanage and Purbeck Rotary for a grant of £750 as a contribution towards the costs of holding a Pirate Festival. It was proposed by Councillor Morris, seconded by Councillor Finch and **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:**

That the sum of £500 be donated towards the cost of the Pirate Festival.

Consideration was also given to the submission by the Purbeck International Chamber Music Festival for £990. It was clarified that the grant request was to fund three masterclasses in the town for local children with musicians of international renown.

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

That the sum of £990 be donated towards the costs of the Purbeck International Chamber Music Festival.

Consideration was also given to a number of other requests for grants and donations. It was proposed by Councillor Poultney, seconded by Councillor Finch, and **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-**

That the following grants be issued:

- Dorset Blind Association - £300
- Life Education Wessex - £550
- Purbeck Art Weeks (PAW) Festival - £500
- Purbeck Citizens’ Advice Bureau - £1,000
- Swanage Blues Festivals - £600 (2 x £300)

EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

Proposed by Councillor Green, seconded by Councillor Poultney and
RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-

That, under Standing Order No. 1 c), in the public interest, the press and public be excluded from the Meeting in view of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted under items 10 and 11 by reason of professional and commercial confidentiality.

200. **PROPOSED RELOCATION OF TOWN COUNCIL DEPOT – TO CONSIDER THE ACQUISITION OF UNITS AT THE ANVIL CENTRE, PROSPECT BUSINESS PARK**

Further to Minute 190 of the Extraordinary Meeting held on 8th January 2018, consideration was given to a detailed briefing note prepared by the Town Clerk, together with a valuation report dated 10th January 2018. It was noted that the Depot Relocation Working Party had met with the owner of Units 5 and 8 of the Anvil Centre on Prospect Business Park, and had agreed draft terms for the acquisition of this property. This included alterations to the property that the owner was willing to make in order to adapt the site for Town Council use. The Town Council was now being asked to agree the purchase of the site, subject to contract and the satisfactory resolution of all legal and planning matters prior to completion.

In making its recommendation, the Working Party had given due consideration to both operational requirements and the need to achieve best value in terms of the use of public funds. It was noted that a number of alternative locations had been explored, the Working Party having reported back to full Council on five occasions since July 2017.

It was proposed by Councillor Bishop, seconded by Councillor Green and
RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:

That, under the General Power of Competence, Swanage Town Council agrees, subject to contract, to purchase Units 5 and 8, Anvil Centre, Prospect Business Park, for use as a maintenance depot and related purposes, at the agreed price, in line with the valuation report dated 10th January 2018.

It was FURTHER RESOLVED:

That the acquisition is subject to the property being improved in line with the agreed specification prior to completion, the grant of planning permission for the appropriate use class and completion of any necessary variation of covenants.

That delegated authority be granted to the Town Clerk to instruct solicitors accordingly.

That delegated authority be granted to the Operations Manager to agree with the owner of the property the detailed specification of the alterations to be made to the property prior to completion.

That the Town Council agrees a budget of £35,000 for additional alterations/fitting-out and that the

Operations Manager be instructed to draw up a specification for such works and report to a future Council meeting.

201. **SWANAGE MARKET - 2018 SEASON OPERATIONAL TERMS**

The Town Clerk outlined correspondence between the Council and the current market operator and highlighted a decline in income over recent years. A significant reduction in the base fee had been requested for the 2018 season.

During the discussion it was noted that the current agreement was in its final year and that there was little time to put alternative arrangements in place prior to the opening of the market at Easter. It was suggested that any reduction in the licence fee should be mirrored by a reduction in the area of Main Beach Car Park available for the market.

It was noted that options for the future of Swanage Market would need to be assessed in coming months, in order to prepare for a tender process over autumn/winter 2018/19. It was proposed by Councillor Bonfield, seconded by Councillor Poultney and

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:

That a reduction of £5,000 in the base fee charged to the current operator of Swanage Market be agreed, and that the Town Clerk, in consultation with the Mayor, Deputy Mayor and the Chairman of the Tourism Committee, be given delegated authority to meet with the current market operator to negotiate any turnover payment or other changes to the licence agreement for the 2018 season.

202. **ITEMS OF INFORMATION AND MATTERS FOR FORTHCOMING AGENDAS**

The Town Clerk informed Members of a briefing to be given to Town and Parish Councils regarding the forthcoming Local Plan Consultation at the offices of Purbeck District Council on Tuesday 30th January 2018 from 6 pm to 9 pm.

The meeting concluded at 8.30 p.m.