

SAWBRIDGEWORTH TOWN COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes

of the Meeting of Sawbridgeworth Town Council held at the Council Offices, Sayesbury Manor, Bell Street, Sawbridgeworth at 7.30 pm on **Monday 28 January 2013**.

Those present

Cllr Barry Hodges – The Mayor	
Cllr Angela Alder	Cllr Will Mortimer
Cllr Eric Buckmaster	Cllr Tom Reeks
Cllr Pat Coysten	Cllr Brian Rochester
Cllr Derek Filler	Cllr Joyce Vincent
Cllr Peter Mitchell	Cllr Andrew Wincott

In attendance:

County Cllr Roger Beeching	PCSO Paul Lillie - Herts Police
3 members of the public	Eleanor Patmore – H&E Observer
R Bowran - Town Clerk	Jo Kenny – Admin Officer

Welcome by the Mayor to the new Town Council location and to the Council Chamber; prayers were read by Cllr Angela Alder with a special mention of the new premises.

12/128 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received and accepted from
Cllr Jane Adams - unwell.

z12/129 PUBLIC FORUM

To receive representations from members of the public on matters within the remit of the Town Council. There were none.

12/130 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

To receive any Declarations of Pecuniary Interest by Members. Clerk confirmed that there was a general dispensation to allow members to debate the budget.

12/131 MINUTES

Resolved: To approve as a correct record the minutes of the meeting of the Town Council held on 26 November 2012 (M07) [*prop Cllr Alder; secd Cllr Vincent*]

To attend to any matters arising from these Minutes and not dealt with elsewhere on this Agenda.

12/132 PLANNING COMMITTEE

Received and Noted: The minutes of the Planning Committee Meetings held on:

- 26 November 2012 (P11)
- 10 December 2012 (P12)
- 07 January 2013 (P13)

12/133 FINANCE & POLICY COMMITTEE

Received and noted: The minutes of the Finance & Policy Committee Meeting held on:

- 10 December 2012 (F03)

Resolved: To approve the Recommendations made concerning staff reviews [*prop Cllr Alder; secd Cllr Filler*]

To consider the Recommendations made concerning a Budget for 2013-14. Chairman of the Finance and Policy Committee introduced the principle behind the proposed Budget to be debated at Item 12/142.

12/134 MAYOR'S CORRESPONDENCE/COMMUNICATIONS

To receive mayor's appointments and communications, the mayor visited:

- 04 January – Hailey Centre New Year's lunch at Hunters Meet
- 08 January – induction of Rev Francis Arnold as the new vicar at Great St Mary's church
- 26 January – performed the opening ceremony of the new scout hut in Reedings Way.

The mayor announced:

- 08 May – visit to Bry-sur-Marne for 40 year anniversary of twinning.

12/135 REPRESENTATIVES REPORTS

To receive representatives reports from:

- **County Councillor Roger Beeching** reported:
 - Reported pot holes were being given a temporary repair within 24 hours and a permanent repair within 24 hrs./7days/14days/20 working days depending on their categorisation.
- **District Councillor Eric Buckmaster** reported:
 - Meeting on 13 February to learn about changes in local government finance
 - Meeting on 21 February to learn about infrastructure changes – in particular policy for looking after people on cold nights.
 - Question about health and wellbeing boards. Response from County councillor who had a meeting on this subject on 30 January and District councillor with a meeting on 04 February.
- **District Councillor Will Mortimer** reported:
 - Attending the Audit Committee and advised of a new external auditor.
 - A complaint about district councillors' expenses has been upheld.
 - Auditors reported that the EHDC financial management was "good".
 - Question regarding the low take up of finance available for first time buyers. Response was that the entry threshold has now been lowered.
- **Hertfordshire Police PCSO Paul Lillie** reported:
 - Insp. Hunt was happy with their prospective new accommodation and was looking forward to moving in.
 - PC Russell Jones is now established as a

Sawbridgeworth officer

- Complaints about street lighting encouraging crime were not substantiated by the crime statistics. Operation Guardian now established to look after vulnerable people.
- Anti-social behaviour issues are at a low level.
- Recent bad weather has increased police work load.
 - Question regarding policing of the May Fayre. Response was that it would certainly be policed but at a lower level than in 2012.
- **Footpaths Officer Cllr Brian Rochester** reported:
 - That he had recently walked all of the parish footpaths and that they were mostly in good condition. He would carry on with his task.

12/136

CLERK'S REPORT

- **Farmers Market** The revised market that has resulted from the withdrawal of support by the District Council has proved to be a great success. We need to consider building on that success for the future.

We carried out a survey at the Farmers Market held on 18 December 2012. The questions we put to the market traders and a selection of visitors to the market were: how often and on which days did they want us to hold a market. The response was emphatically (90%+) that the market should be held once a month on a Saturday morning. We have therefore applied for a licence to hold the market with that frequency. We have not yet received a response from EHDC. If granted we have the option to hold the market with that frequency if it is the will of Members to do so.
- **Sawbobus** We have now been operating the Sawbobus community transport service for three years. Hertfordshire County Council acknowledges our competence at this task and is encouraging us to expand our service in an initiative conjunction with CVS and BSMT. We have obtained funding for a next stage which we shall call "Sawbobus 2". The coordinated scheme involves timetabled minibuses, a volunteer car scheme and "dial-a-ride" minibuses. Sawbobus 2 would fall in the last category and run some services in a revised timetable to outlying villages and be available upon demand for trips to PAH and other destinations. I will be asking Members if it is their will that we proceed along these lines which will involve the acquisition of a suitable vehicle and another part time driver.
- **"All About Sawbridgeworth"** This initiative has been set up as a joint venture between the council and a group of retailers and businesses in Sawbridgeworth. The two meetings held so far have been attended by a significant number of retailers and businesses. A number of new ideas and initiatives are coming to the fore and represents an enthusiastic force to promote the economic well-being of the town. Support has been shown for the Bell Street car park scheme, participation at the Farmers Market and an expansion of the Christmas lights event including additional shopping evenings.
- **Christmas Lights 2012** At the end of last year the expanded event was acknowledged as a great success attracting around 3,000 participants. In addition to the switching on of the lights and the accompanying carols, funfair ride and the visit from Santa Claus, there was for the first time a Street Fayre in Bell Street. This will be expanded and repeated in 2013. The event has been acknowledged as a significant community event.
- **Bell Street car park trial** The scheme has now been running for five months. It has met with almost universal approval from the retailers, businesses and parishioners of the town. The statistics for the period to December indicate that the subsidy due from the town council is now £9.5k – roughly on budget. It is quite clear that there is a desire to continue the scheme into next year. The financial implication is that a subsidy of around £22k will be required. This is most likely to come principally from the precept but maybe also by a contribution from businesses. Alternative suggestions are to stop the trial as it is currently organised and replace it with a rebate scheme paid for by businesses. This would be difficult to manage equitably.
- **The Manor and The Cottage** The council has now removed to the new centre at Sayesbury Manor. In overall terms the project has been a success and is being achieved within budget. However Members will have noticed that the project is

currently seven weeks late and that there are still a number of significant issues still to be resolved. These mainly surround the lack of communications to be delivered on time. We have taken a number of steps, all at the expense of the contractors to minimize the impact of this. Interest has already been shown by several organisations to rent the facility. This is encouraging and will produce some income for the council to supplement its other entrepreneurial efforts. We expect to sign a lease with Herts police shortly for them to use the first floor suite of the building.

12/137 CIVIC CENTRE

1. Progress relating to the refurbishment and extensions to the premises at Sayesbury Manor and at The Cottage continues. Staff members are in occupation although there are several more weeks work needed from the contractors. The biggest single issue is the failure of BT to provide the necessary telephone lines to the new location.
2. The date for the Official Opening of the facility was agreed at 8pm on Wednesday 20 March 2013
3. The date for an Open Day for members of the public was agreed at 10am to 1pm on Saturday 23 March 2013.

12/138 CHRISTMAS LIGHTS 2012

1. The Christmas Lights and Street Fayre event held on Friday 30 November 2012 was a great success with an estimate of between 3,000 and 4,000 people attending. The innovation of a Street Fayre will be expanded in 2013. Some confusion about the entrance of Santa Claus. Clerk and projects manager were thanked for making the event happen so successfully.
2. The Lights of Love event, under the umbrella of the Isabel Hospice, held on Saturday 01 December 2012 was also regarded as being a success.

12/139 FARMERS MARKET

1. Farmers Market on Sunday 18 December 2012 was a success although it was noted that there was a perception that the new layout made it seem smaller than earlier markets. A survey amongst traders and customers has indicated the consensus that the market should still be held on a Saturday but the frequency increased to monthly.
2. **Resolved:** That the frequency of Farmers Markets should be increased to one a month from April 2013. [*prop Cllr Alder; secd Cllr Coysten*]

12/140 GRANT REQUESTS

To consider grant requests made by the following:

1. Sawbridgeworth Memorial Hall - £500
Agreed: To defer this request to July and in the meantime refer it back to the Friends of the Memorial Hall for validation if no other funds are available.
2. Mayor's War Memorial Fund - £2,000
Resolved: To meet this request in full. Funds to be transferred to specific reserve for this purpose [*prop Cllr Alder; secd Cllr Buckmaster*]
3. East Herts Citizens Advice Service - £4,034
Resolved: To meet this request in full, to be reviewed in future years if the EHCAS take up the use of the facility offered in The Manor [*prop Cllr Alder; secd Cllr Filler*]

12/141 COMMUNITY TRANSPORT

The Clerk reported on current steps to plan the expansion of the Sawbridgeworth Community Transport scheme. (Sawbobus 2). First year of operation funded by Herts County Council with monies currently held by the Bishops Stortford Minibus Trust.

Service routes to be determined by agreement with the steering group which will next meet on 28 February. There was some discussion about charging rates, as yet to be determined and about the need to find more volunteer drivers for the CVS car service scheme.

Resolved: That the Clerk should proceed to initiate the service by acquiring a vehicle and staff using the funds earmarked for the purpose. [*prop Cllr Mitchell; secd Cllr Rochester*]

12/142 BUDGET 2013-14 & DETERMINATION OF PRECEPT

1. **Resolved:** To approve the Recommendation of the Finance & Policy Committee and adopt the Budget for 2013-14 [*prop Cllr Buckmaster; secd Cllr Alder*]
2. **Resolved:** To determine the Precept for 2013-14 in the sum of £187,500 and instruct the principal authority accordingly. [*prop Cllr Buckmaster; secd Cllr Alder*]

12/143 DEPOSIT & CONSULTATION DOCUMENTS

None received

12/144 FINANCIAL REPORT

Noted: The current Financial Report

12/145 ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT

Noted and approved: Accounts for payment

Meeting was closed at 20:45

The next meeting of the Town Council will be held at 7.30 pm on Monday 25 February 2013 in the Council Offices at Sayesbury Manor, Bell Street, Sawbridgeworth.