

SAWBRIDGECWORTH TOWN COUNCIL

FINANCE AND POLICY COMMITTEE

Minutes

of the meeting of the Finance and Policy Committee held at the Council Offices, Sayesbury Manor, Bell Street, Sawbridgeworth at 8.10 pm on **Monday 06 June 2016**.

Those present

Cllr Angela Alder	Cllr Will Mortimer
Cllr Eric Buckmaster	Cllr Heather Riches
<i>Cllr R Buckmaster – ex officio</i>	Cllr David Royle

In attendance:

R Bowran - Town Clerk	Joanne Sargant – Town Projects Manager
	Lisa Dale – Finance Officer

F 16/01 ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

To elect a Chairman of the Committee

Resolved: That Cllr Eric Buckmaster is Chairman of the Committee for the year 2016/17. [*prop Cllr Alder; secd Cllr Riches*]

F 16/02 ELECTION OF VICE CHAIRMAN

To elect a Vice Chairman of the Committee

Resolved: That Cllr Angela Alder is Vice Chairman of the Committee for the year 2016/17. [*prop Cllr Mortimer; secd Cllr Royle*]

F 16/03 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence received from Cllr Mike Shaw - unwell.

F 16/04 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

To receive Declarations of Interest by Members. There were none

F 16/05 MINUTES

Resolved: To approve as a correct record the minutes of the Finance and Policy Committee held on 14 March 2016 (F04) [*prop Cllr Riches; secd Cllr Alder*]

F15/24. Cllr Riches asked for an update on the internal auditor's interim report. Clerk responded that this would be addressed at agenda item F16/08.

F16/06 COMMUNICATIONS WORKING PARTY

Received and Noted: The notes of the Communications Working Party held on 29 April 2016.

F 16/07 STAFF MATTERS

To consider any matters relating to members of staff.

- Administration Officers:
 - Arrangements for Officer on return from maternity leave. Clerk advised that Laura Carter would be returning at the beginning of October for 3 days per week. As a consequence of her return a number of tasks will be

- reassigned. These will include allotment administration and website maintenance in 2016 and mayor's administration in 2017 passing to Laura Carter.
 - Officer request to reduce hours. Clerk advised that Karen Ashton had reduced her hours to 26 per week. He proposed to offer her a rolling quarterly contract of 14 hours per week to complete Reception cover from the end of her maternity cover contract. This was agreed.
- Community Bus Drivers
 - Saturday arrangements. Clerk advised that a rota had been established at an annual direct cost of £2,050.
- Grounds Staff
 - Resignation of General Hand. Clerk advised that Terry Wilson had resigned from his position in the council.
 - Summer hours for Ranger. The Town Ranger had commenced summer hours of working to facilitate the watering of the floral displays.
 - Student providing cover for summer period. Clerk advised that a student has been engaged as a contractor for 14 hours per week.
- National Pay Award
 - Clerk advised the NALC/SLCC agreement on a national award of 1% for 2016/17 back dated to 01 April 2016 and 1% for 2017/18 effective 01 April 2017.

F 16/08 FINANCE MATTERS

To consider any matters relating to the finances and year end arrangements of the Council

- Clerk advised members of the visit of the Internal Auditor on 03 June 2016
 - All matters mentioned in the interim internal audit had been addressed to the auditor's satisfaction. She noted that an amendment to FR's would be needed as a result of a change in EU legislation relating to tenders.
 - Some reconciliation still needed due to the manual transition to the new RBS software.
 - Internal Auditor has now retired but will continue to carry our payroll tasks. It is proposed to appoint SAIS (Shared Internal Audit Systems) as the council's internal auditor.
- To advise members of the Annual Return for 2015/16 and to make a recommendation for adoption by full council
 - Clerk explained that Internal Auditor had defined that Operational salaries should be combined with Administration salaries. Clerk has complied but disagrees with the inconsistency of treatment compared with previous years.
 - Internal Auditor had also defined that a record of petty cash be separated from Current Account balances. Clerk has complied but disagrees as above.
 - **Recommended:** That the Annual Return be adopted by Council [*prop Cllr Mortimer; secd Cllr Alder*]

- To consider £250 to be the *de minimus* sum for accruals and pre-payments.
 - Clerk explained
 - **Resolved:** That the *de minimus* sum should be £250. [*prop Cllr Mortimer; secd Cllr Alder*]

- To consider some virements to the budget for 2016/17 in the light of information received since the resolution to approve was made in January 2016.
 - Clerk explained the need to vire sums from the redundant car park subsidy budget of £18,000 to other areas of council activity.
 - Sawbobus drivers £2,000
 - Clerk's salary £2,500
 - Lordship of the Manor £13,500. Clerk advised that after several years of research it appears that the Lordship of the Manor is for sale. Considerable discussion on the merits and demerits of such a purchase. On balance members were in favour of the proposition being taken to full council for decision.
 - **Recommended:** That the virements be made if the purchase of the Lordship of the Manor is agreed by council.

F 16/09 POLICY MATTERS

To consider any matters relating to Policy for the future development of Town Council services to the community.

- To report on the town council's response to the Draft Parish Councils' Bill
 - Clerk explained that the council had been asked to respond to the HAPTC County Officer, who was to lobby Members of Parliament on 06 June concerning the draft parish Councils Bill which was aimed at promulgating courtesy consultation into a statutory requirement.
 - **Recommended:** That the action taken by the Clerk to support the lobby is endorsed.

- To consider a licence agreement to enable the Town Council to grant permissive rights of access to land to the north of High Wych Road.
 - Clerk explained that the landowner of the site containing the Rivers Orchard, the Kick-About area and the Meadow wished to formalise the current co-operative agreement for the council to manage the permitted rights to the site.
 - **Recommended:** That the licence agreement be taken to council at the appropriate time for a Resolution to sign and seal the document.

- To consider a variation in the policy for charges to be made for the hire of the council chamber.
 - Discussion on the pros and cons of making an exception to the council's policy for hire charges in specific circumstances.

- **Resolved:** That the Local History Group of the U3A should be granted the use of the council chamber at no cost, except for consumables, when the business is related to the history of Sawbridgeworth. [*prop Cllr Mortimer; secd Cllr R Buckmaster*]

Meeting Closed at 21.35

The next scheduled meeting of the Committee is on Monday 12 September 2016.

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