

SAWBRIDGEWORTH 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 8.30 pm on **Monday 15 June 2015**.

Those present

Cllr Sotirios Adamopoulos
Cllr Angela Alder
Cllr Eric Buckmaster

Cllr Tom Reeks
Cllr Heather Riches

In attendance:

Cllr David Royle
R Bowran - Town Clerk

Cllr Don Hall
Ms Joanne Sargent – Town Projects Manager

F 15/01 ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN & VICE CHAIRMAN

To elect a Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Committee

Resolved: That Cllr Eric Buckmaster is Chairman of the Committee for the year 2014/15. [*prop Cllr Alder; secd Cllr Reeks*]

Resolved: That Cllr Angela Alder is Vice Chairman of the Committee for the year 2014/15. [*prop Cllr Reeks; secd Cllr Adamopoulos*]

F 15/02 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

To receive any apologies for absence.
Cllr Mike Shaw was absent.

F 15/03 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

To receive Declarations of Interest by Members. There were none

F 15/04 MINUTES

Resolved: To approve as a correct record the minutes of the Finance and Policy Committee held on 09 March 2015 (F05) [*prop Cllr Alder; secd Cllr Reeks*]

Matter Arising: First Aid training. Clerk and Projects manager were now Level 2 qualified first aiders, all other staff had attended a one day "Emergencies at Work" training.

F 15/05 STAFF MATTERS

To consider any matters relating to members of staff.

- Administration Officers.
Clerk reported the continuing absence of the admin officer for planning and cemeteries and no prospect of a date for return. Other staff members had co-operated with changes in roles to cover this. The subject of continuing with increased hours for the finance officer was raised; the clerk was required to present a proposition to the Appointments and Appraisals committee. The receptionist who is on a six month fixed term contract had been offered a three month extension with a charge of duties to create a jo-share with

the returning community bus driver.

- **Community Bus Drivers**
The returning driver, after a ten week absence through medical reasons is being reintroduced to work by a job sharing scheme which will take account of her present condition. Our longest serving community bus driver has now reached the age of 65 and has advised his imminent retirement. We have employed a retired coach driver on a casual basis to help through this period.
- **Grounds Staff**
Are very busy and are not helped by several machinery breakdowns and the use of the groundsman for relief bus driving duties.
- **Pensions Provision**
Clerk advised that four members of staff wished to take up the option of joining a pension scheme. He advised the high employer's contribution that membership of the LGPS involved. He advised the availability two alternative schemes, NEST and Pensions for People, which were less expensive but provided less benefit. There is an issue of potential discrimination between existing pension scheme members and those wishing to join. Clerk was required to investigate further and report to the F&P committee.

F 15/06 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 12 June 2015 and presented a summary of her audit notes together with the Clerk's recommendations on four points.
Resolved: That these be accepted.
[Prop Cllr Alder; Secd Cllr Reeks]
- Clerk advised members of the Annual Return for 2014/15.
Recommended: that they be adopted by full council.
[Prop Cllr Alder; Secd Cllr Reeks]
- To consider future banking arrangements. Clerk advised that after contacting Nationwide, Barclays and Unity Trust banks, there was no significant advantage in transferring the current account to any of them and proposed retaining the status quo. This was agreed.
- To advise members of investments made since March 2014 and to consider investment policy for 2014/15. Clerk advised that Saffron Building Society had closed the Bond Account that we have held and the residual investment now earned 0.75% pa interest. It was agreed that further researches should be carried out.

F 14/07 POLICY MATTERS

To consider any matters relating to Policy for the future

development of Town Council services to the community.

- To receive a report on advice received from Hedleys Solicitors regarding the legal issues surrounding trading activities.
Clerk advised that all current activities could be considered as ancillary to those that can be carried out under the General Power of Competence and that there was no advantage for STC to create a trading company with the additional administrative and legal burdens that would entail.
- To seek approval for the use of the Council Chamber for activities ancillary to activities of the council.
Members were given a reassurance that the activity was for secular events. Clerk was instructed to ask staff whether they had an issue with the proposed use and to present a paper to the next F&P committee for consideration.
- To report on negotiations with EHDC concerning the development of Bell Street public conveniences.
Clerk reported on a significantly different approach being proposed by EHDC from the original minimal maintenance scheme proposed by STC in October 2013. A detailed proposal would be put before council at the first meeting in September.
- To report on progress towards development of the Town Green as a public space.
Clerk reported that a tree survey had been commissioned but that EHDC did not as yet recognise this as a project.

Meeting Closed at 21.55

The next scheduled meeting of the Committee is on Monday 14 September 2015.