

MARLBOROUGH TOWN COUNCIL

FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

Minutes of a Meeting of the **Finance and General Purposes Committee** held on
Monday, 28th November 2005 in the **Council Chamber, Town Hall, Marlborough** at **7.45pm**

PRESENT

Councillor D. L. Parker	Chairman
Councillor S. R. Dobson	
Councillor W. B. Cavill	
Councillor G. Francis	
Councillor Mrs. C. V. Jackson	
Mrs Pam Dobson	Town Clerk
Mrs. S. Fry	Office Manager
Mrs L Chapman	Civic Secretary
Mr Nigel Kerton	Wiltshire Gazette & Herald
1 Member of the public.	

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Mrs H. A. Cripps, Mrs P. Dow, A. Ross, B. Castle and N. Fogg.

330/05 **DECLARATION(S) OF INTEREST**

Agenda Item 11 The Town Clerk – Wishing to rent the property.

MINUTES

331/05 **RESOLVED:** That the Minutes of the meeting held on the 21st November 2005 be confirmed as a true record and signed by The Chairman.

CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman announced that Agenda item 6 would now be moved to Part 2 and become Agenda item 9 and Agenda item 11 would be moved out of Part 2 to become Agenda item 8.

The Chairman also announced that Councillor Mrs P. Dow's mother had died in the early hours of Monday morning and that felt sure that all Councillors would like to pass on their condolences.

BUDGETS – 2005/2006 – Month 6

(a) Income and Expenditure – the Town Clerk stated that she would suggest that a further report be issued at Month 9 and any unspent provisions be transferred into budget where

overspends have been necessary. Felt that she would have a better idea after month 9 and could review then.

- (b) The comparison of balances shows a decrease in the Town Councils overall balances for the same period of £14,000. The Town Council must be aware that an adequate working balance must be maintained and that the further depletion of reserves for budgeting expenditure will eventually lead to a situation where a working balance cannot be maintained. The Town Clerk suggested that we consider assessing what will be an adequate level of working balance during the next financial year, which can then be included in next year's budget process.

Proposed by Councillor G. Francis, seconded by Councillor C. Jackson and –

302/05

RECOMMENDED: that Marlborough Town Council agree with the Town Clerks suggestion.

BUDGETS 2006/2007

- (a) Estimates for the R & A – The Town Clerk asked Councillors to note add £10,000 to expenditure – add £6,000 to Town Hall income based on revised projection for this year (in respect of Chantry Lane to offset our own costs have we investigated offering other Parish Councils access to cleaning facilities and recharging our services to them). The reduction in reserves, which will be necessary for a replacement tractor, will have impact on the interest income, however if agreement is reached that the tractor should be replaced other methods of funding and/or the purchase of second hand equipment must be considered. At present I would estimate a budget of £16,000 would cover the purchase of a new machine and I would suggest that this be included at this stage.

A discussion took place to which the following points were raised –

- 4037 – Lift Maintenance – the lift life expectancy of a lift is approximately 10 years and considering the present lift has been about 6 years ago we should be putting funds aside every year from now on in case a replacement lift is needed. The maintenance costs appear to have risen dramatically the Town Clerk will look into the figures and report back.
- 4300 – Boiler Maintenance the increased as the Boiler and pipe work has never been checked now having some problems therefore need to increase the budget to cover this.
- 4303 – Fixing/Mounts/Scrolls – It was felt that the budget should be re-instated and to have to enable any necessary work to be carried out as soon as possible.

Proposed by Councillor G. Francis, and seconded by Councillor S. Dobson and –

303/05

RECOMMENDED: unanimously that Marlborough Town Council should re-instate the budget to £500 for this purpose.

- 4120 – Street Furnisher – it was suggested that more information sign posts were needed around the town. As these are quite an expensive item it was suggested that there could be the possibility of joint funding between MADT and Marlborough Town Council.

b) F & GP Estimates - There were no comments made.

c) The Town Clerk has circulated a revised summary budget. She stated that Councillors would appreciate the immediate requirement on her arrival to produce accurate estimates before having time to fully assess the Town Council's financial position. However she feels that the assessment should be made regardless of how unpalatable that it might be. In the summary budget various options have been suggested for the precept and in the short term this would seem the only solution, bearing in mind contractual obligations and responsibilities that the Town Council has taken on. If difficult decisions are not made this year they may become inevitable next year. Councillors are reminded that Band D precept current equates to just over 95p per week per household, if the precept is increased by 30% this will go up to £1.24. Even at this figure the residents of Marlborough are getting value for money from their Town Council. When compared with other Parish Councils.

Following a lengthy discussion it was –

Proposed by Councillor S. Dobson, seconded by Councillor C. Jackson and –

304/05 RECOMMENDED: by 4 votes for with 1 abstention (Councillor G. Francis requested that his abstention should be recorded.

SCHEDULE OF ACCOUNTS

305/05 RECOMMENDED: That the Schedule of Accounts for October 2005 in the sum of £21,604.36 including reimbursement to the No 2 Account in the sum of £6,590.42 be Received and signed by The Chairman.

DRAFT PROPOSAL FOR MARLBOROUGH & MANTON FLOOD PLAN

The Town Clerk apologised on Councillor B. Castles Behalf for not being able to attend this meeting and put forward the plan personally.

This was discussed with the following points raised –

- At this time Councillor B. Castle is the only Flood Warden for the entire Marlborough/Manton area.
- Another Flood Warden is needed as soon as possible to cover Manton.
- It was felt that 2 flood wardens (1 for Marlborough & 1 for Manton) was totally unacceptable. There should be a minimum of 3 for Marlborough and 5 for Manton to cover holidays sickness etc.

Proposed by Councillor D. Parker, seconded by Councillor G. Francis and

306/05 RECOMMENDED: unanimously that the Flood Plan is approved in principle and taken forward to the next Full Town Council meeting for adoption.

1 – 2 KINGSBURY STREET

The Town Council has been served with a discontinuance notice from Oxfam for the lease on the Kingsbury Street shop. This is despite every effort to progress the new lease. The Town Clerk stated that coming into the office with new views, I feel that the current office accommodation is seriously lacking when it comes to raising the profile of the Town Council. I would suggest that the Town Council should explore the possibility of transferring the Council Offices 1-2 Kingsbury Street and letting 5 High Street as office accommodation. Long term there may be scope for the use of the Town Hall but in short term this would give a high profile high visibility presence in the town. Informal inquiries indicate that the income may not totally off set the current rental income and having informally explored the planning position although under policy ED 18 there is a reluctance to grant permission for a change of use within the prime shopping areas for anything other than retail, however criteria a) may apply “that the development would have a positive contribution to the vitality and viability of the centre”.

Following a discussion it was agreed that this would not be viable and that we should wait until we can gain access to the Town Hall toilets. Perhaps the Town Clerk could investigate as to whether we could apply for a grant towards the alterations.

- 307/05 RECOMMENDED: that Marlborough Town Council instruct the Town Clerk to go ahead and advertise the premises with view to letting with view to letting as soon as possible.

PART 2

RESOLVED that under the Local Government Act 1972 the Public and Press be asked to leave the meeting, due to the fact that legal and confidential matters were to be discussed.

SHARED ACCESS TO FLATS AT KINGSBURY STREET

A letter has been received from Sarsen Housing Association stating that they had no objection to the owner’s plans to create a new access to his property.

Proposed by Councillor D. Parker, seconded by Councillor G. Francis and –

- 308/05 RECOMMENDED: unanimously that the Town Clerk writes to the applicant explaining the Town Councils decision.

EMPLOYMENT OF HEALTH & SAFETY OFFICER

The contract for the post of Health and Safety Officer was discussed.

Proposed by Councillor G. Francis, seconded by Councillor C. Jackson and –

- 309/05 RECOMMENDED: unanimously that the post of Health and Safety Officer will be renewed until April 30th 2006 and the Town Clerk prepare a report for F & GP purposes on the long term visibility of the Town Council employing a Health and Safety Officer.

The Town Clerk Declared Interest and left the room at 9.00pm

NO 1 RECREATION GROUND COTTAGE

The Chairman stated that the Town Clerk had made a request to take up the tenancy of No 1 Recreation Ground

Proposed by Councillor C. Jackson, seconded by Councillor G. Francis and –

310/05 RECOMMENDED: unanimously that the Town Clerk should be offered the tenancy of no 1 Recreation Cottage from 1st January 2006.

The meeting ended at 9.25pm