

**DRAFT MINUTES OF THE ALDEBURGH TOWN COUNCIL
PROPERTY & FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING
HELD ON MONDAY NOVEMBER 26 2018 AT 8.50 pm**

Present: Cllr Jones took the chair

Committee Members Present:

Cllr Bond Cllr Cox
Cllr Digby Cllr Fox
Cllr Harris Cllr Kiff
Cllr Worster

There was one member of the public in attendance.

1. Apologies: Cllr Partel.

2. Approval of previous Minutes

Cllr Jones commended the draft Minutes of the Property and Finance Committee meeting held on Monday October 22 2018 which were **APPROVED** by a show of hands. The Minutes were duly signed.

3. Matters for Discussion

3.1 Finance

The Town Clerk announced that it had been her intention to hold an in-camera meeting of the Council at the end of the Property and Finance Committee to discuss budgets for the next financial year. However, in the interests of transparency, she had concluded that the budget should be discussed in open meeting where a robust debate could take place with members of the public in attendance. She asked Cllrs to approve this and they concurred. Cllr Cox requested a named vote, which Cllrs agreed to by a show of hands.

The 2019-20 draft budget had been circulated to all Cllrs in advance of last month's Council meeting, at which time Cllrs were asked for their thoughts and comments. Cllr Jones began the discussion by asking for observations from those present.

The majority of Cllrs spoke approvingly of the proposed budget, with a number offering congratulations to the Chair, Cllr Kiff and the Town Clerk for the preparation of the document. Cllr Kiff argued against increasing reserves, stating that the Town Council's finances were in a very healthy position and there was no reason to increase the town precept.

Cllr Fellowes praised all those who had contributed to the budget document and Cllr Worster said savings had been made during the previous year which had boosted the Council's financial position. He, too, felt there was no requirement to increase the precept.

However, Cllr Bond, argued very strongly for a reorganisation of the budget. She believed that insufficient funds had been set aside for completing major consultations - in particular Sizewell C, but also Scottish Power. In respect of Sizewell, she said the Council might need to employ extra resources and possibly consultants, together with a good PR team, to adequately represent the town's views. She felt that a ring-fenced fighting fund to deal with consultations should be established within the budget to enable the Town Council to fund the necessary expertise to respond to proposed infrastructure projects.

Cllr Fellowes pointed out that developers were obliged to help defray local councils' consultation fees and she suggested involving the SCDC in this matter.

Cllr Kiff assured Cllr Bond that there were sufficient reserves to meet most eventualities. He also pointed out that too much money in the reserves would lead to questions from auditors, particularly as the current level of reserves was close to the maximum permitted under Local Government rules.

The Town Clerk observed that contingency funds for the Sizewell consultation could be doubled if it became necessary during the next financial year.

Cllr Fox asked Cllr Bond why she had become uneasy about provisions within the budget. In response, Cllr Bond cited developments at Hinkley Point Power Station in Somerset. A village had been turned into a city, she said, and she was concerned this might happen at Sizewell. This Council should take very seriously the threat to the local environment and ATC must be seen to be doing something now, she declared.

At 9pm, Cllr Jones suspended Standing Orders.

Cllr Kiff said it was important that ATC took a balanced view of developments at Sizewell because there were many people in the town who were keen for the project to go ahead.

Cllr Bond did not disagree but argued that professional help was needed to present cogent arguments and that a specific area in the budget should be allocated for professional consultancy fees.

Cllr Osben asked if there were sufficient funds in the budget to fund consultancy costs in respect of Sizewell and Scottish Power. Cllr Jones assured her there were.

Cllr Worster reminded Cllrs that their principal role was to gather information about infrastructure projects and to then consider the pros and cons of every development.

The Town Clerk said ATC was in a position to fully-engage in forthcoming consultation processes. She invited Cllrs to either recommend the proposed budget or suggest amendments.

RESOLUTION to accept the draft budget for 2019-20 was **PROPOSED** by Cllr Harris and **SECONDED** by Cllr Kiff.

In favour 8

Cllr Bond	Cllr Cox
Cllr Digby	Cllr Fox
Cllr Harris	Cllr Jones
Cllr Kiff	Cllr Worster

Against 0

Abstentions 0

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

3.2 CIL (Community Infrastructure Levy)

Cllr Fellowes agreed to defer discussion of Community Infrastructure Levy Payments until the Committees Meeting in January. Cllr Jones said this would give everyone the opportunity of identifying prospective projects.

3.3 Sports

Cllr Jones briefed the meeting on a number of issues:

1. The Bowls Club reported a surplus of funds which would normally transfer to ATC. However, Cllr Jones believed this money would be better spent on redecorating the interior of the pavilion which has not been done for many years. She explained that in recent years the toilets and kitchen have both been replaced and so both these areas were decorated as part of these works, but the main area and upstairs are overdue. This work will take place during the winter in readiness for next season. This has been discussed with the Bowls club who are in favour. The cost is entirely covered by the surplus held by the Bowls club and a contribution from tennis earmarked funds She asked for Committee approval.

RESOLUTION to redecorate the interior of the bowls pavilion using surplus funds was **PROPOSED** by Cllr Digby and **SECONDED** by Cllr Worster.

In favour 7

Against 0

Abstentions 1

CARRIED

2. Signs encouraging players to 'pay before they play' would soon be installed at the tennis courts, said Cllr Jones. Contractors would be visiting the courts shortly to resolve outstanding matters.
3. The Rugby Club is seeking permission to install a 20ft storage unit to house their training equipment, said Cllr Jones. It would be clad in black feather-board and positioned adjacent to a neighbour's hedge, replacing an unsightly storage compound. No objections had been raised by the neighbour to the unit which would be temporary to comply with planning and lease requirements. Cllr Jones commented that it would be a vast visual improvement on the existing fenced area, which is currently not secure. The unit would be subject to their ground maintenance risk assessment and the Club would be responsible for insurance.

RESOLUTION to give permission to the Rugby Club for the installation of a black feather clad storage unit on the School Paying Field/Rugby Field. The unit must not be a permanent structure and will be the club's responsibility for risk assessments and insurance. **PROPOSED** by Cllr Digby and **SECONDED** by Cllr Harris.

In favour 8

Against 0

Abstentions 0

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

3.4 Management/Maintenance of Council Property and Land

Cllr Jones reported on a number of issues, including damp proofing at the Museum Office, re-constructing the slope by the Rugby Club at King's Field, groundworks by Norse, further work associated with the tree survey, repairs to the yacht pond, a RoSPA report on playground equipment and repairs to the road adjacent to the Community Centre.

Leases for Mint Fitness and Pet Perfection were ready for signing, she said, with the Community Centre lease requiring further work. She was also chasing the organisers of the Music by the Sea event for their accounts so she, with Cllr Kiff, could audit them.

4. New Property and Finance Business

(See above)

There was nothing further to discuss and the meeting ended at 9.35pm.