

# BRIDLINGTON TOWN COUNCIL

## Minutes of the Finance & General Purposes Committee held on 11<sup>th</sup> December 2007 in the Bridlington Community Resource Centre 4-8 Victoria Road, Bridlington

**Present:** Councillors R Allerston, P Austin, L Chambers, M Charlesworth, S Finlay (Chairman), and C Marsburg  
Councillor A Charlesworth attended as an observer; plus one member of the public.  
The Clerk recorded the minutes.

### 47/07 Apologies for absence:

An apology for absence was received from Councillor A Padwick.

### 48/07 Code of Conduct declarations of interest in items on the agenda:

There were no declarations of interest in items on the agenda.

### 49/07 The month eight budget report:

The Clerk presented a detailed budget report for the end of month eight, which highlighted a number of costs centres that were either running hot or by the end of the year will have exceeded their allotted budget. In particular, the Clerk commented that the stationery, telephone and Internet charges, postage and photocopying figures were indicative of the pressure of work that the Council's administration was experiencing.

**RESOLVED:** *In future, when five or more cost centres reach 90% of their budgets this will automatically trigger the calling of an extraordinary meeting of the Committee.*

### 50/07 The report and quotation from RBS Software Solutions:

The Responsible Financial Officer currently utilises RBS Software Solutions' 'Alpha' package to run the Council's accounts. Following a meeting with the managing director of RBS attended by the RFO and the Gasworx Manager a recommendation and quotation to upgrade to RBS' 'Omega' package was presented. RBS quoted £750 for the upgrade and hotline telephone support plus £590 for two-day's training and the prices included the complimentary use of the software by the Gasworx on the basis that the Skatepark will operate as an autonomous accounting centre with its accounts being incorporated into the Council's at the end of the accounting year. The company also offered a bespoke payroll software package at £615 to include installation, training and maintenance.

**RESOLVED:** *To decline the offer of upgrading the Council's accounts software and the complimentary use of the software by the Gasworx Manager and for a further report to be presented on the feasibility of outsourcing the payroll.*

### 51/07 Budget report on the 2007 Christmas Festival:

The Clerk had been charged with organising the 2007 Christmas Festival in a timescale of less than five weeks. The Committee was critical of the Clerk's report of the costs, which had exceeded the budget by £1,049.

**RESOLVED:** *It is imperative that when a budget is agreed, it is adhered to.*

### 52/07 Additional information from the Passenger Services Manager regarding bus shelters located on Bempton Lane and Church Lane:

The Committee resolved at its meeting held on 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2007 to consider the adoption of additional bus shelters as part of the Council's 2008-09 budget.

**RECOMMENDATION:** *The offer of accepting legal ownership and a £1,000 maintenance grant per location for bus shelters sited on Bempton Lane, Bridlington and Church Lane, Sewerby is declined.*

**53/07 RESOLVED:** *In accordance with the power granted by the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the Public and Media be excluded from the meeting on the grounds that confidential matters will be discussed.*

**54/07 Chains of Office:**

**RESOLVED:** *Whenever it is practical, the Mayor and Mayoress' chains of office should be returned to the Council's Office for depositing in the Council's safe.*

*A further report will be submitted on the civic insignia protocol adopted by other councils.*

**55/07 The Clerk's report on office accommodation:**

On the 30<sup>th</sup> October the Clerk was authorised to continue his investigation of office accommodation and to report back. In order to assess the viability and potential of the building in question the Clerk considered it would be prudent to engage professional advice in the form of a preliminary report and dimensional survey from a firm of architects and surveyors. The main issue was whether the building could be made fit-for-use including adequate provision in the form of a main lift and secondary platform lifts for the use of disabled persons. Neither the agent nor the vendor was able to provide detailed plans of the building to facilitate an accurate assessment of the potential market value of the office accommodation, which might be surplus to the Council's requirements.

**RESOLVED:** *A further report be presented on the terms of the sale or lease.*

**56/07 The valuation of No. 8 Victoria Road:**

The Clerk was authorised by the Council to commission a valuation of No. 8 Victoria Road and to report the findings to the F&GP Committee. The firm of chartered surveyors, Ulyott & Butler, was commissioned to conduct a valuation of No. 8 Victoria Road. Mr Atkin's report drew the Council's attention to a list of defects and unfinished work. The Committee was advised that the recorded vote taken at the Council's meeting on the 4<sup>th</sup> December 2007 to rescind the second paragraph of the 9<sup>th</sup> October 2007 resolution (Min. 111/07) referring to the instigation of legal action was deemed to be illegal because it contravened Standing Order No. 37 (the six month rule).

The Clerk produced a draft budget projection for No. 8 Victoria Road that included the repayment of a Public Works Loan Board mortgage and the annual operating costs, less the income of the sitting tenants' leases.

**RECOMMENDATION:** (i) *The Council does not proceed with the purchase of No. 8 Victoria Road.*

(ii) *The Clerk and Councillor Marsburg are requested to meet with the Council's legal advisers to progress the matter.*

**57/07 The draft Budget 2008/09:**

**RECOMMENDATION:** *The Council considers the proposed budget and a Precept of £172,368 is requested, representing a 2.6% year on year increase.*

**58/07 2007 Christmas Lights Contract:**

The Clerk presented a comprehensive report detailing the performance of the Council's festive lights contractor. The Committee was minded to request the contractor to remove the festive lighting, which had been installed and for the three-year lease contract to be cancelled.

**RESOLVED:** *To seek legal advice on the most prudent course of action.*

Signed: *Raymond Allerston*

Date: 15<sup>th</sup> January 2008

**Mayor of Bridlington**