

**Sandwich Town Council  
Finance and Assets Working Group Meeting**




**Agenda**

Councillors: P Breen, D Carter, E Csuka, N Gray, C Wiles

Officer: K Palmer RFO

Members are hereby cordially invited to attend a Finance and Assets Working Group Meeting in the Council Chamber, Guildhall on 6<sup>th</sup> December 2023 at 15:30 to transact the business on the agenda below.

1	<b>Apologies for any absences received:</b>	
2	<b>Declarations of interest:</b> To receive any declarations of disclosable pecuniary interests from Members in respect of business to be transacted on the agenda.	
3	<b>To agree the minutes of the meeting held on 8<sup>th</sup> November 2023 and to review/update actions from the previous meeting.</b> Decision required.	Attach 1
4	<b>Public Participation</b> A 20-minute session to set aside for members of the public to make representations at the meeting in respect of the business on the agenda. Individual representations should not exceed five minutes. (Written notice of the desire to exercise the right to speak, together with the topic to be addressed, must be given to the Town Clerk prior to noon on the day of the meeting).	
5	<b>P Breen and D Carter to update the group on Workstream 1, including detail of the scope of their work and an outline delivery plan:</b> To undertake a financial analysis of budget streams, the assets finances, and Toll Bridge Fund income/draw-down [building on the work that P Breen has already started]. To develop a set of products that clearly explains these relationships.	
6	<b>C Wiles, N Gray and E Csuka to update the group on Workstream 2, including detail of the scope of their work and an outline delivery plan:</b> To review all assets owned by STC and STBF to ensure they are serving best interests of the town. This will include a review of asset titles, leases, rents, management requirements and a future strategy for any vacant properties.  The second stage will be to review the relationship between the Toll Bridge Fund and the Town Council and develop recommendations that might be put to the Town Council and the Toll Bridge Fund to consider.	
7	<b>Date, time, and place of next meeting: TBC</b>	

<p><b>Minutes of Sandwich Town Council Finance and Assets Working Group Meeting Held in the Council Chamber on: Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> November 2023 at 16:30</b></p>	
<p><b>Chair:</b> Meeting opened by C Wiles and then Chaired by E Csuka  <b>Councillors:</b> P Breen, D Carter, N Gray, C Wiles  <b>Officer:</b> K Palmer – Responsible Finance Officer</p>	
<p><b>FAWG.11.23.1 Election of Chair</b>  C Wiles opened the meeting and explained that the purpose of the Working Group was to take a deeper look at various topics that fall under the remit of the Finance and General Purposes Committee and develop proposals that can be taken back to the Finance and General Purposes Committee and the Town Council. The Working Group would run for up to six months, finishing its activity in April/ May 2024.</p> <p>Following a short discussion on who should Chair the working group, it was unanimously agreed that E Csuka would take this role.</p>	
<p><b>FAWG.11.23.2 Apologies for absence received:</b>  No apologies received.</p>	
<p><b>FAWG.11.23.3 Declarations of interest:</b>  No declarations of interest declared.</p>	
<p><b>FAWG.11.23.4 Public Participation:</b>  A 20-minute session is set aside for members of the public to make representations at the meeting in respect of the business on the agenda. Individual representations should not exceed 5 minutes. A maximum of 4 speakers can be accepted. (Written notice of the desire to exercise the right to speak, together with the topic to be addressed, must be given to the Town Clerk by 12noon on the day of the meeting).</p> <p>No requests received.</p>	
<p><b>FAWG.11.23.5 and FAWG.11.23.6 Terms of Reference/ Co-opted Members</b>  The working group was asked to note the Terms of Reference (ToR). C Wiles confirmed that these had been presented to both the Finance and General Purposes Committee and the Town Council.</p> <p>E Csuka advised that the version issued to the meeting did not reflect comments he had raised at the last meeting of the Town Council. In particular, that the minimum membership of the working group needs to be three councillors, not the two included in this version of the document, to ensure any meeting held is quorate.</p> <p><b>Action 1: K Palmer to ensure the ToR are updated to reflect the point that the minimum membership of the working group should be three councillors.</b></p> <p>The group gave approval for each meeting of the working group to include a 20-minute slot to allow public participation.</p>	

The working group discussed whether the working group should include any co-opted members. It was agreed that it would be helpful to include someone with a financial background in the public sector but that, at this point, no suitable person was identified. The working group did, however, agree that when an Assets Officer was recruited, they should be invited to join the group.

C Wiles asked for the ToR for this working group to be referred to the Toll bridge Fund for the trustees to note the scope of the working group and how this might lead to recommendations being made to the Toll Bridge Fund to consider. This was agreed by the working group.

**Action 2: Working group members to consider any suitable co-optees that could be invited to join the working group.**

**Action 3: K Palmer to ensure that the newly recruited Asset Officer, when in post, should be invited to join the working group.**

**Action 4: E Csuka to refer the ToR to the STBF to give visibility of the scope of work that this working group will be undertaking and how this might link into a similar set of activities undertaken under the control of STBF.**

**Decision: The working group approved the ToR presented, subject to the comments raised through the discussion being addressed.**

#### **FAWG.11.23.7**

##### **Summary / Overview of Sandwich Town Council and Sandwich Toll Bridge Fund Finances**

C Wiles explained that he had discussed with K Palmer, prior to the meeting, the need for a visual representation of how monies moved between Sandwich Town Council and the Sandwich Toll Bridge Fund.

K Palmer worked through each part of the visual that she had produced to detail how the finances for both the Town Council and the Sandwich Toll Bridge Fund were constructed, including how monies moved within and between accounts.

The working group then discussed each of the component parts in the visual and P Breen asked if there was either a legal or accounting document available which detailed the relationship between the Town Council and the Sandwich Toll Bridge Fund. K Palmer advised the group that the arrangements applied were formed out of previous Town Council discussions, possibly four years ago, and would be captured in meeting minutes.

Questions were asked about the lease for The Guildhall and how decisions had been made in the past that made the Toll Bridge Fund responsible for related costs. It was agreed by the group that the arrangements were particularly complex, and attempts should be made to simplify these arrangements, if possible.

P Breen presented:

- His provisional workings on budget streams that he has been developing with the help of K Palmer. These workings included incomes and expenditure for the Town Council, The Guildhall, The Museum and the Toll Bridge Fund;
- The work that he has been undertaking to document the component parts of owning and managing the assets. As part of this discussion, K Palmer highlighted that the Town Council and the Toll Bridge Fund may need to undertake a revaluation exercise for the owned assets as this information was not up to date; and

- His work on the income and draw-down for the Toll Bridge Fund since its inception.

The discussion continued on the assets owned by the Town Council and the Toll Bridge Fund, and the working group recognised the need to undertake a full review that encompassed the titles, the leases, the rents, the management requirements and a future strategy for any vacant properties.

The working group agreed that this review of assets should form one of the workstreams within the work programme.

**Action 5: P Breen to share with members of the working group the budget streams, the assets, and Toll Bridge Fund income/draw-down documents that he has been developing.**

It was agreed that the working group should, as a priority, undertake the following workstreams, using the ToR as a starting point to develop a delivery plan:

**Workstream 1:** To undertake a financial analysis of budget streams, the assets finances, and Toll Bridge Fund income/draw-down [building on the work that P Breen has already started]. To develop a set of products that clearly explains these relationships.

This workstream will be taken forward by P Breen and D Carter.

**Workstream 2:** To review all assets owned by STC and STBF to ensure they are serving best interests of the town. This will include a review of asset titles, leases, rents, management requirements and a future strategy for any vacant properties. The second stage will be to review the relationship between the Toll Bridge Fund and the Town Council and develop recommendations that might be put to the Town Council and the Toll Bridge Fund to consider.

This workstream will be taken forward by E Csuka C Wiles N Gray

**Action 6:** Both workstream teams should provide to the next meeting of the working group a description of the scope of their work and an outline delivery plan which details the steps that will be undertaken and timescales.

**FAWG.11.23.8**

**Date, time, and place of next meeting: 6<sup>th</sup> December at 16.30 in the Council Chamber.**

Ref No.	Action	Owner	Update
FAWG.11.23.AP1	K Palmer to ensure the ToR are updated to reflect the point that the minimum membership of the working group should be three councillors.	K Palmer	
FAWG.11.23.AP2	Action 2: Working group members to consider any suitable co-optees that could be invited to join the working group.	All	
FAWG.11.23.AP3	K Palmer to ensure that the newly recruited Asset Officer, when in post, should be invited to join the working group.	K Palmer	
FAWG.11.23.AP4	E Csuka to refer the ToR to the STBF to give visibility of the scope of work that this working group will be undertaking and how	E Csuka	

	this might link into a similar set of activities undertaken under the control of STBF.		
FAWG.11.23.AP5	P Breen to share with members of the working group the budget streams, the assets, and Toll Bridge Fund income/draw-down documents that he has been developing.	P Breen	
FAWG.11.23.AP6	Both workstream teams should provide to the next meeting of the working group a description of the scope of their work and an outline delivery plan which details the steps that will be undertaken and timescales.	All	

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