

**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 24th January 2024 at 16:30 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 6<sup>th</sup> December 2023 and to review/update any actions from the previous meeting.</b> Decision required.	<b>Attach 1</b>
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 activity.</b>  <i>SCOPE: 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.</i>	
6	<b>C Wiles, N Gray and E Csuka to update the group on Workstream 2 activity.</b>  <i>SCOPE: 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.</i>  <i>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.</i>	
7	<b>Date, time, and place of next meeting: TBC</b>	

**Minutes of Sandwich Town Council Finance and Assets Working Group Meeting  
Held in the Council Chamber on: Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> December 2023 at 15:30**



Chair: E Csuka  
Councillors: P Breen, N Gray, C Wiles, D Carter (who joined part-way through the meeting)  
Officer: K Palmer – Responsible Finance Officer

**FAWG.12.23.1 Apologies for absence received:**

No apologies received.

**FAWG.12.23.2 Declarations of interest:**

No declarations of interest declared.

**FAWG.12.23.3**

The minutes of the previous meeting, held on 8<sup>th</sup> November were approved without any changes. The working group reviewed and updated the actions from the previous meeting.

**FAWG.12.23.4 Public Participation:**

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).

No requests received.

**FAWG.12.23.5 – Update from Workstream 1**

P Breen updated the Working Group on his work with D Carter on Workstream 1.

A supporting report was provided and is included below:

**Scope:**

Analysis of various cost centres (STC/STBF/Museum/Guildhall/Monks Wall/ Maddox) to present clear management accounts with respect to Income, expenditure, assets, and loans.

**Tasks:**

Task description	Meeting discussion
1. Adopt latest budget information as a basis of the analysis.	KP to issue excel file after F&GP meeting on 11 <sup>th</sup> Dec 23
2. Develop, in agreement with the RFO, a set of code of accounts that can be used on the new finance system.	KP to check with Town Clerk if other Councils have a code that could be adopted.
3. Contribute to an Asset Data / Fact Sheet that included: a. Legal overview which set out obligations. b. Financial overview i.e. cost/book value; current value; liabilities / loans; Income / revenue; Annual maintenance & running	PB to develop template and share with Assets workstream. EC to share their thoughts so far.  <b>New action agreed in meeting: Peter Breen agreed to draft an Assets Factsheet, created in Excel.</b>

costs; provision for major works; Income v Cost. c. Maintenance / dilapidations / major works descriptions d. Options for Asset going forward. e. Recommendations to Council.	
4. Agree deployment of staff against cost centres	KP advised that one already exists but model to be agreed at future meeting
5. Establish budget for museum, Monks Wall, and Maddox.	Accepted as part of the workstream output

#### Timescale

Dependant on receipt of input from others – but 6 months' timeframe seems achievable.

#### FAWG.12.23.6 – Update from Workstream 2

C Wiles informed the group that work had started to gather the various Title and Lease documents for both the STC and the STBF assets. It is quite clear that from the searches undertaken, so far, that there are many gaps in the documentation held by the council. As these documents are critical items for the council, it is exposing a significant lack of good governance over many years.

E Csuka said that this exercise provided the opportunity to address this long-standing problem and put in place a set of knowledge management that would help the council better manage its assets in the future. Priority assets had been identified and the focus was on making sure these were tackled first, starting with the Sandwich Agreement, which includes the Guildhall, and The Sandwich Agreement.

Colin informed the group that the Guildhall Lease was complicated. It was a lease between Sandwich Town Council, the Sandwich Toll Bridge Fund and Dover District Council. Sandwich Town Council and the Sandwich Toll Bridge Fund were jointly and severely responsible as leaseholders. The lease was signed in 1974 for 99 years, so has 50 years still to run. There are several inconsistencies in the Guildhall lease which will probably require a discussion with Dover District Council on clarifications and changes to the lease.

E Csuka confirmed to the group that Workstream 2 had a clearly defined scope for the work, which is the list of STC and STBF assets. The information will be produced to populate the assets fact sheets that P Breen will develop, which will require obtaining copies of all key relevant documents.

C Wiles suggested that once the Assets Officer was appointed the working group should arrange to visit all the assets to understand what the key issues are for STC or STBF in managing them and, where appropriate, identifying potential opportunities for the future use of any underutilised asset.

#### FAWG.12.23.7

**Date, time, and place of next meeting: to be arranged post the Christmas break.**

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	Update provided at 6 <sup>th</sup> December meeting: The ToR have been updated to include the requested change. <b>ACTION CLOSED</b>
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	Update provided at 6 <sup>th</sup> December meeting: No immediate co-optees identified but will remain an option

			for the group to review in the future. <b>ACTION OPEN</b>
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	Update provided at 6 <sup>th</sup> December meeting: An invitation will be extended to the new Assets Officer, when appointed. <b>ACTION CLOSED</b>
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 this might link into a similar set of activities undertaken under the control of STBF.	E Csuka	Update provided at 6 <sup>th</sup> December meeting: A report has been included for discussion at STBF 11 <sup>th</sup> December 2023. <b>ACTION CLOSED</b>
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	Update provided at 6 <sup>th</sup> December meeting: The various documents were shared by P Breen following the last meeting. <b>ACTION CLOSED</b>
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	Update provided at 6 <sup>th</sup> December meeting: Progress on developing a work plan and scope for each of the two workstreams is included as an agenda item for the meeting. <b>ACTION CLOSED</b>
FAWG.12.23.AP1	<b>P Breen to create a first attempt at an Assets Factsheet, created in Excel.</b>	P Breen	

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