

**WIRKSWORTH TOWN COUNCIL – TOWN AND FINANCE COMMITTEE
MONDAY 8 MARCH 2010**

TF121/09 Present: Cllr A Clamp (Chairman), Cllrs D Haspel, A Pollock, I Ratcliffe, M Ratcliffe, C Whittall. In attendance – Cllrs F Bark, S Maskrey, Mrs J Walls (Town Clerk).

TF122/09 Apologies: Cllr K Frith.

TF123/09 Members' Interests in Agenda Items:

The following interests were declared:

<i>Cllr</i>	<i>Item</i>	<i>Personal/ Prejudicial</i>	<i>Reason if any</i>
A Clamp	12 Support for Farmers' Market	Prejudicial	

TF124/09 Minutes:

The minutes of the meeting of the Town and Finance Committee dated 8 February 2010 were confirmed as a correct record.

TF125/09 Monthly Balance Sheet & Bank Reconciliation:

The monthly balance sheet and bank reconciliation was circulated for information.

RECOMM: That this be noted.

TF126/09 Monthly Budget Balance:

The monthly budget balance was circulated for information.

RECOMM: That this be noted.

TF127/09 Planning & Environment Recommendations to Full Council:

None this month.

TF128/09 Request for Financial Support – Steeple Grange Light Railway:

A letter had been received, requesting financial support for the year 2010. In previous years, a donation of £75 has been made.

RECOMM: That a donation of £75 be made to Steeple Grange Light Railway this year.

TF129/09 Confirmation of Renewal of Membership of DALC:

The annual DALC Membership subscription was now due, in the sum of £704.26.

RECOMM: That Membership of DALC be renewed for a further year.

TF130/09 Town Hall/Memorial Hall Improvements – Update:

Cllr Clamp gave an update on the present position, and reported that it was necessary to trim the specification for the staging, lighting and curtaining. It was anticipated that the bulk of the work would now take place during July and August, when Town Hall bookings are low. The Committee were presented with an updated capital budget and asked to approve the total planned spend (part 1) in the sum of £88,000.

RECOMM: That the updated capital budget be approved, together with the total planned spend (part 1) in the sum of £88,000.

TF131/09 Concerns re Main Hall Floor, and report of new settlement cracks in building:

Attention had been drawn to the recent changes in level of the wooden floor in the Main Hall over recent months. A large area appeared to be sinking and another area is raised. Also, some settlement cracks had appeared over the last winter period.

RECOMM: That DCC be asked if they are able to give advice on the structural condition of the Main Hall floor.

TF132/09 Support for Farmers' Market :

Cllr Clamp reported that whilst the stalls are self-supporting, the cost of the organiser is causing a shortfall. A grant application has been submitted, but funding for promotion costs and entertainment provision is needed.

Cllr Clamp left the Council Chamber

A discussion took place on this matter and whilst the Town Council were happy to support the Farmers' Markets, they would like to see longer term plans in place to achieve self sufficiency. It was felt that the Farmers' Markets generated additional trade for businesses in the town, and in principle should be supported. The committee discussed the role it plays in the economic regeneration of the town, and suggested it might be helpful to produce a strategy in this connection.

RECOMM:

- a) That a donation of £500 be made to the Farmers' Market towards the running costs for the coming year;
- b) That the organisers be advised that the Town Council would be interested to see any details they might have to further enhance the self-sufficiency of the Markets, to see if the Town Council can assist in this connection.

Cllr Clamp returned to the Council Chamber

TF133/09 Lease of premises to DCC:

A meeting had now been held with representatives of Surestart and the DCC Estates Department, regarding the proposed lease of the Memorial Hall to DCC. A condition report had been prepared, highlighting areas where improvements/repairs would be needed, and DCC would therefore be proposing to invest a large capital sum on these works.

However, in view of this large investment, DCC were looking for a longer term lease than originally expected, and were seeking a 99 year or 125 year lease, in return for a peppercorn rent. Community use in the evenings and weekends could continue, with some negotiation over the suitability of the events.

A discussion took place on the feasibility of the proposals put forward by DCC and the Committee discussed the proposed use of the Hall, and its impact on the community. It was felt that there could be legal implications involved in the granting of a long term lease and the acceptance of a peppercorn rent, and that this would require further investigation. However, whilst the committee were not happy with the current proposals by DCC, they would wish to enter into negotiations, subject to compliance with legislation.

RECOMM:

- a) That the Clerk seeks advice from DALC and the Internal Auditor with regard to the legality of long term leases and negotiation of rental figures;
- b) That DCC be advised that the Town Council are seeking advice, as they understand they cannot lawfully accept DCC's proposals under the Local Government Act 1972, since any lease which exceeds a period of 7 years is classed as disposal, and disposal should be at market value;
- c) That DCC be advised that in the meantime the Town Council are happy for negotiations for a short term lease to be entered into;
- d) That the Town Council employs a professional body to value and negotiate the terms of a long term lease if this is thought acceptable;
- e) That a sum of £400 be authorised to cover the costs of such valuation and negotiation costs.

The meeting closed at 8.20 p.m

.....Chairman