



# CHIPPING NORTON TOWN COUNCIL

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Office Hours: Mon – Fri 9am – 1pm

Minutes of the **Finance and Resources Committee** held in Chipping Norton Town Hall on **Wednesday 26th May 2021 at 7:15pm**

The following members were present:

CLlr Coleman (Chair)

CLlr R Fisher

CLlr R Poole

Also in attendance:

Luci Ashbourne, Town Clerk

Sonia Murgia, Finance Officer

## **FR1. Election of Chair**

Nominations were received for Chair. CLlr Poole nominated CLlr Coleman, CLlr Fisher seconded.

**RESOLVED:** CLlr Coleman is elected Chair of the Finance and Resources Committee for the municipal year 2021/22.

## **FR2. Election of Vice-Chair**

Nominations were received for Vice-Chair. CLlr Coleman nominated CLlr Holmes, CLlr Poole seconded.

**RESOLVED:** CLlr Holmes is elected Vice-Chair of the Finance and Resources Committee for the municipal year 2021/22.

## **FR3. Apologies for absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs Holmes and Mazower

## **FR4. Declaration of interests.**

There were no declarations.

## **FR5. Minutes**

**RESOLVED:** That the minutes of the last meeting held on 12th May 2021 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

## **FR6. Public Participation**

No members of the public asked to participate

## **FR7. Clerk's Report**

The Town Clerk gave the committee a verbal update of information related to the committee. The committee were informed that the Council are now using Paypal as a method of payment,

which will reduce the need to rely on members of staff using their personal bank accounts to pay for Council items and subscriptions. Cllr Coleman enquired about signing off and what the process is. The Finance officer confirmed that using Paypal would be no different to other payment methods. Cllr Coleman asked why Cllrs need to sign to approve cheques but not all electronic payments. The Finance Officer explained that this is for audit purposes, and that the destination of electronic payments are clearly marked on the accounts by nature of the transaction.

The Clerk informed members that the new website is well underway, as are the gov.uk email accounts.

The Clerk shared that the workload had been very intense/reactive since starting in post, and asked that Committee afford staff the opportunity to deliver on work in progress before setting any other projects. The Committee expressed an understanding and mindfulness of this.

**FR8. Income and Expenditure, balance sheets and supporting notes for year ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021**

- a. The Committee received detailed income and expenditure reports by budget heading. The finance officer noted variances in budget vs spend for the year ending March 2021 and explained the reasons for them, which were largely due to the impact of Covid-19 and needing to employ a Locum Clerk. Members reviewed the list of bodies that the Council pays a subscription to be a member of and agreed it would be prudent of Council to know what the different organisations offer and make use of the services.

**RESOLVED:** That the Finance Officer will circulate the subscription list with the committee.

*The meeting was adjourned at 19:46pm while Cllr Poole had to deal with a family matter  
Meeting resumed at 20:17pm*

- b. The Committee received that balance sheet for year ending March 2021. The Chair and the Responsible Finance Officer (Town Clerk) signed the balance sheet. The Finance officer explained that now the Council have moved to Unity that a savings account or investments should be explored.

**RESOLVED:** That advice is sought regarding ethical investments and brought back to a future committee meeting

**FR9. Income and Expenditure for April 2021**

Members received and noted income and expenditure for April 2021.

**FR10. Schedule of Payments for approval**

Members received and approved payments from 24th March to 18th May 2021.

**FR11. Forward Work Programme**

- a. The Town Clerk went through items that are currently in process. The staff hand-book is now with staff for consultation, and the new website is underway, as is gov.uk email accounts for Cllrs and Staff. The priority is health and safety compliance.
- b. Members received the report and recommendations following an external health and safety audit conducted on 20<sup>th</sup> May 2021. The Committee noted that as well as ongoing professional health and safety support in terms of introducing or bringing current policies up to date, there were several issues that needed resolving by employing professional services (such as drawing up a fire risk assessment for The Town Hall), purchasing equipment such as fire extinguishers, and ensuring staff receive appropriate training.

**RESOLVED:** That a budget of £5700 is agreed to ensure the Town Council can meet it's statutory Health and Safety duties and responsibilities within the next 3-5 months. This will include professional fees of £2500 to employ GH Safety to support the Council in terms of introducing and bringing current policies and risk assessments up to date. Other items included:

Staff training: £750

Purchase of equipment: £300

Other Professional and legal fees: £2150, including a fire risk assessment for the town hall to be completely as a priority.

**RESOLVED:** That the Health and Safety issue regarding unstable headstones in the Cemetery be referred to Community Committee to resolve.

Clr Fisher raised that a member of the public may be cutting down the tops of trees in the closed cemetery.

**RESOLVED:** The Clerk to raise the issue with GH Safety with a view to mitigate any potential risk to the Council and the individual concerned.

#### **FR12. Confidential Session**

**RESOLVED:** In view of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted, the press and public be excluded from the meeting in accordance with s.1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960.

#### **FR13. Christmas Lights**

Committee received the Clerk's report and recommendations on Christmas lights, including initial cost and design examples of using a professional contractor to deliver Christmas Lights. Members discussed the pros and cons of tendering a multi-year contract, versus obtaining quotes for one year in the first instance.

**RESOLVED:** That the Clerk obtain quotes and designs for a lights display for 2021 with a maximum budget of £22,500. Quotations and designs will be brought to Full Council on July 19th for consideration.

*At this point it was noted that two hours had elapsed and the meeting agree to suspend standing orders in order to allow the meeting to continue for another 30 minutes*

#### **FR14. Minutes**

Committee noted the Minutes of the Staffing Sub-Committee meeting held on 26<sup>th</sup> April 2021. No comments or amendments were raised.

#### **FR15. Date of next meeting**

Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> September 2021, 7:15pm.

The Chair closed the meeting at 9:31pm.

Signed as a correct record:

Chair.....

Date.....