



# CHIPPING NORTON TOWN COUNCIL

THE GUILDHALL, CHIPPING NORTON, OXFORDSHIRE OX7 5NJ

TEL: 01608 642341

Email: townclerk@chippingnorton-tc.gov.uk

Office Hours: Mon – Fri 9am – 1pm

## Minutes of a Finance & Resources Committee meeting held on the 25<sup>th</sup> March 2024 at 6:30pm in the Council Chamber, Chipping Norton Town Hall

**PRESENT:** Cllrs Ian Finney (Chair), Athos Ritsperis, Sandra Coleman, Dom Rickard

**ALSO PRESENT:**

Luci Ashbourne, Town Clerk & CEO

Katherine Jang, Deputy Town Clerk and Estates Manager

Paolo Oliveri, General Maintenance Operative

<b>FR65</b>	<b>Apologies for absence</b> Apologies were received from Cllr Whitmill, Wheaton, and Cahill
<b>FR66</b>	<b>Declaration of interests</b> None received
<b>FR67</b>	<b>Minutes</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. <b>RESOLVED:</b> That the Chair signed and approved the minutes of the Finance and Resources Committee meeting held on the 5<sup>th</sup> February 2024.</li> <li>b. Members noted the minutes of the Staffing Sub-Committee held on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. 5<sup>th</sup> February 2024</li> <li>b. 15<sup>th</sup> February 2024</li> <li>c. 21<sup>st</sup> March 2024</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>FR68</b>	<b>Public Participation</b> None received.
<b>FR69</b>	<b>Committee Action Plan</b> Members noted the ongoing committee action plan. The committee action plan will be reviewed and updated in May 2024.
<b>FR70</b>	<b>Income and expenditure</b> Members received detailed current income and expenditure reports by budget heading. The Responsible Finance Officer (RFO) noted that further payments had been paid out for the emergency lighting for the Town Hall. Members queried the administration income – The Town Clerk reported that this is generated when charging the administration fees for the Welfare Charities and William Fowler Allotments at the end of March 2024. Members queried the variance in rent – The Town Clerk reported that the rent for the Guildhall was backdated which accounts for the variance between 2023/24. The Town Clerk also noted that the District Council is handing over responsibility of the Fire Alarm testing and Security Alarm to the Town Council in the next financial year.
<b>FR71</b>	<b>Schedule of payments for approval</b>



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	<p>Members received the schedule of payments. Members commented on the cost to hold the elections from the District Council despite them not going ahead.</p>
<p><b>FR72</b></p>	<p><b>Financial Reports</b></p> <p>a. Members received a debtors report from the Responsible Finance Officer and discussed next steps. The RFO noted that certain debts needed to be written off with council approval. Small underpayments for Town Hall hire, Ashes internments at the cemetery (£5), and routine hire of the Town Hall where the hirer unfortunately passed away. Members noted that the Council should consider having a payment and debtor policy, and thanked the RFO for her hard work as the debtor amount is insignificant. Cllr Finney proposed to write off the debtors as recorded by the RFO, seconded by Cllr Rickard. All in favour, motion carried. <b>RESOLVED:</b> That the Council writes off the total debt of £475.83 as recorded by the Responsible Finance Officer.</p> <p>b. Members received the balance sheet and ear-marked reserves report and discussed next steps. Current EMRs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 2135 – Skatepark Fund: £35,000</li> <li>- 2138 – Pool Meadow Project: £25,000</li> <li>- 2142 – Town Hall Restoration Fund: £163,874.52</li> </ul> <p>The following EMRs have been given for a specific purpose and therefore it is recommended that despite being a small amount, they remain as they are until spent:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 2139 – Defibrillators: £908.55</li> <li>- 2146 – Recreation Repairs: £226.37</li> </ul> <p>The remaining EMRs are there through decision by Council to ear mark them at the end of the previous financial year due to an underspend. The Town Clerk recommended that these are reviewed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 2152 – Professional Fees: £7,143.50</li> <li>- 2153 – Contingency: £7,352</li> <li>- 2154 – Town Hall Repairs: £5,819.51</li> </ul> <p>The Town Clerk reported that the balance of the EMR may not be the same as stated now by the end of this financial year. Cllr Coleman proposed to accept the recommendations as stated in the report, seconded by Cllr Rickard. All in favour, motion carried. <b>RESOLVED:</b> That the EMR for the following cost codes are treated as follows –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 2139 – Defibrillators: £908.55 remain until spent</li> <li>- 2146 – Recreation Repairs: £226.37 remain until spent</li> <li>- 2154 – Town Hall Repairs: £5,819.51 added to 2142 Town Hall Restoration Fund EMR</li> <li>- 2152 – Professional Fees: £7,143.50 that the cost of RW Consultancy Services (£2,597.50) is taken from this EMR and then the balance is returned to general reserves</li> <li>- 2153 – Contingency: £7,352.00 returned to general reserves</li> </ul>



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	<p>Members discussed the EMRs and provision for the Town Hall roof repairs. The Town Clerk noted that quotes are awaited for the repairs and once received, further information will follow. Members noted that there are certain cases where grant funding will exclude the Town Council should the general reserves be too high.</p>
	<p><b>Forward Work Programme</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Members received and reviewed the following policies:             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Document retention policy Members queried if this covers archiving documents with OCC. The Town Clerk noted that this is covered where the policy states “archived”. Members queried the controls for documents not kept in hard copy, eg. Electronic minutes and agendas. The Town Clerk reported that all agendas and minutes are uploaded to the Town Council website.</li> <li>b. Recording of meetings Members had no amendments or comments to make.</li> <li>c. Press and Media Members queried the policy for Councillors to receive prior approval from the Town Clerk before going to the press and media. The Town Clerk reported that this is only for factual statements and does not apply for differences in opinion.</li> <li>d. Cemetery Memorial Safety Members queried who had the ultimate responsibility for memorial safety – the Town Council or the deed holder? The Town Clerk reported that ultimately, should a person be harmed at the cemetery due to an unsafe memorial, the Town Council would be responsible. The Deputy Town Clerk noted that it is often impractical to consider contacting the families as the memorials that need fixing are often older ones 100+ years old, where families may have moved and there are no relevant contact details on file.</li> </ol> </li> <li>b. Members received and considered the draft Open Space Hire agreement. The Town Clerk reported that this is a new policy that would protect the Town Council in the case that there is unauthorised or inappropriate use of the open spaces that the Town Council owns. Members noted that there have been requests to use the New St rec area for yoga classes, and that the Council would be able to consider these applications. Members asked how the unauthorised events would be shut down – the Town Clerk confirmed this would be via police intervention. Members requested that the booking terms and conditions should be added to this policy.</li> </ol>
<p><b>FR74</b></p>	<p><b>Membership of OALC</b> Members considered the continued membership of Oxfordshire Association of Local Councils. Cllr Coleman proposed to accept the quote of £1,285.05 for the yearly membership of OALC, seconded by Cllr Ritsperis. All in favour, motion carried. <b>RESOLVED:</b> That the Council accepts the membership cost to OALC at £1,285.05 for 2024/2025.</p>
<p><b>FR75</b></p>	<p><b>Confidential Session</b></p>



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	<p><b>RESOLVED:</b> That the council moves into a Confidential Session to discuss Separate Business, pursuant to s.1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission of meetings) Act 1960. The press and public left the meeting.</p>
<b>FR76</b>	<p><b>Council Insurance Policy</b> Members received and considered insurance policy quotes for the Town Council. Cllr Finney proposed to accept the Clear Councils quote for 3 years, seconded by Cllr Rickard. All in favour, motion carried. <b>RESOLVED:</b> That the Council accepts the Clear Councils insurance quote at a cost of £10,120.56 per annum for 3 years.</p>
<b>FR77</b>	<p><b>Grounds Maintenance</b> Members received a confidential report and fee proposal regarding grounds maintenance service review. Members queried if other consultants were requested to undertake this piece of work – The Town Clerk reported that there are only a small number of consultants who would be able to undertake the review. The Town Clerk noted that because CNTC has external grounds maintenance contractors, the work scheduled in advance and undertaken without consideration of ground conditions. Cllr Finney proposed to accept the fee proposal for a grounds maintenance service review, seconded by Cllr Ritsperis. All in favour, motion carried. The Town Clerk suggested that this is taken from the Earmarked professional fees before they are returned to general reserves, all members in agreement. <b>RESOLVED:</b> That the Council agrees to have RW Consultancy Services undertake a full grounds maintenance service review, at a cost of £2,597.50.</p>
<b>FR78</b>	<p><b>Date of next meeting</b> Monday 8<sup>th</sup> July 2024</p>

The Chair closed the meeting at 8:00pm.