

## NORTHSTOWE TOWN COUNCIL - FINANCE AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

MINUTES of the meeting held on 9<sup>th</sup> APRIL 2024

at The Cabin, Northstowe

**MEMBERS:** 6: Cllr Castelino (Chair); Cllr Benedicic (Vice-Chair); Cllr Greef; Cllr Littlemore; Cllr Owen; Cllr Panvekar.

**QUORUM:** 3 Members.

**Present:** 4 Members: Cllr Benedicic; Cllr Castelino; Cllr Littlemore; Cllr Owen.

Town Clerk.

2 Members of the public.

Apologies: Cllr Greef; Cllr Panvekar.

Absent: N/A.

The meeting was started at 19:10 pm. Cllr Castelino took the Chair.

### 01/24-25 APOLOGIES (Standing item)

a) *To receive any apologies for absence received prior to the meeting.*

Apologies were received, and accepted, from: Cllr Greef; Cllr Panvekar.

### 02/24-25 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (Standing item)

a) *Councillors to declare any pecuniary or personal interest in any items on the agenda.*

b) *Councillors to declare any prejudicial interest in any items on the agenda and to inform the Chair if they wish to speak on the matter during public participation.*

There were no interests declared.

### 03/24-25 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (Standing item)

a) *To adjourn the meeting for up to 15 mins. to allow members of the public, or Councillors declaring a prejudicial interest, to address the meeting in relation to business to be transacted at this meeting.*

b) *To reconvene the meeting.*

A resident addressed the Committee in relation to item 05/24-25 on the agenda; they expressed their support for Northstowe News and their grant application. They highlighted that Northstowe News is run by two dedicated volunteers who have made a range of cost savings already and that they would recommend to the Town Council to provide financial support from the Town Council towards their important work in disseminating information to and engaging with the Northstowe Community.

The Chair thanked the resident for their contribution. The Chair reconvened the meeting.

### 04/24-25 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS COMMITTEE MEETINGS (Standing Item)

1) *To approve the minutes of the meeting of the Finance and Governance Committee held on 12<sup>th</sup> March 2024 as a true record of that meeting (attached).*

It was noted that the draft minutes erroneously listed Cllr Benedicic as having chaired that meeting; this was Cllr Castelino; it was agreed to have this amended.

It was proposed by Cllr Owen, seconded by Cllr Littlemore and **RESOLVED**, unanimously, **to approve the minutes of the Finance and Governance Committee meeting held on 12<sup>th</sup> March 2024 as a true record of that meeting, as amended.**

### 05/24-25 GRANT APPLICATION

1) *To receive and discuss a grant application received from Northstowe News, for a grant request of £2,000 (application and associated documentation shared with Cllrs.). The applicant is aiming to be present at the meeting to answer any questions.*

The Secretary of Northstowe News was present; They introduced the application, highlighting that currently each issue costs around £1,400 in production and distribution, whereas advertising revenues have reduced with both production and distribution costs having gone up and which has led to a deficit since late 2023. The applicant highlighted that they regularly review their procurement and that they believe further costs savings are currently not possible. Other organisations (SCDC; Homes England; Northstowe Hub) have kindly pledged funding following a recent Northstowe-wide call-out for financial support, but further funds are still

needed. Although Northstowe News would welcome the Town Council considering to also provide a regular contribution towards Northstowe News, it is now first applying through its grant scheme, to help sustain Northstowe News for the near future: the £2,000 asked for would cover the deficit of about two future issues. Northstowe News wishes to keep a flexible business model and is open to alternative ideas to secure a viable future.

In a discussion, the Council expressed its wish to support Northstowe News as a well-established and vital source of information for residents, with the magazine considered to be of 'good quality'.

A number of key points were raised, and discussed with the applicant, in relation to developing a longer-term, sustainable financial model;

- Applicant to consider a different model of leaving NN in public spaces instead of door-to-door.
- Applicant to consider contacting Cambourne to understand better their business model.
- In response to the applicant suggesting this, consideration to be given to paid-for Town Council space in Northstowe News (columns; events; activities) and to have similar organisations pay for their columns as well. With this, it was raised that it would be important that there is a clear, transparent pricing schedule available and adhered to.
- In response to the applicant raising this, there was agreement that groups that get promotion in Northstowe News for free yet get obtain grants for those activities they are promoting through the magazine, should consider including advertising costs with Northstowe News in their grant application budgets.
- Applicant to ensure that Northstowe News is to remain editorially independent at all times. It was highlighted that, were the Town Council to start contributing financially this editorial independence will still need to remain at all times.
- Applicant to consider 'economies of scale' to further reduce costs for Northstowe News production & distribution - e.g. considering approaching e.g. SCDC or CCC who print their own magazines/leaflets.

2) *To decide whether to approve the grant as requested.*

It was proposed by Cllr Littlemore, seconded by Cllr Owen and **RESOLVED**, unanimously, **to award Northstowe News with a Council Community Grant of £2,000, as requested.**

The Council expressed its wish to work closely with Northstowe News in its endeavours towards developing a viable long-term business plan.

## **06/24-25 FINANCE** (Standing Item)

### **1) BANK STATEMENTS & BALANCES**

i) *To receive the bank statement for 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024 (shared with Cllrs).*

Noted.

It was highlighted that ensuring that the Council would be able to open business saving accounts to start earning interest on its reserves would need to be given priority. The RFO responded that this is indeed high priority but that a number of other high priority work streams has continued to take precedent lately.

ii) *To approve, and for the Chair to sign, the bank reconciliation for 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024 (attached).*

It was proposed by Cllr Littlemore, seconded by Cllr Owen, and **RESOLVED**, unanimously, **to approve and for the Chair to sign the bank reconciliation for 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024.**

### **2) RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS REPORTS**

i) *To receive the Receipts and Payments report, dated to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024 (attached).*

Noted.

ii) *To receive a Quarterly Flexed budget report, for quarter 4 of '23-'24 (attached).*

Noted.

### **3) INCOME**

i) *To note income as received. See **Supporting document A** for overview of income received (attached).*

Noted.

ii) *To receive a monthly report with overview of outstanding payments from market traders (shared with Cllrs.).*

In a discussion it was noted that the one trader with most outstanding debt is to be struck off soon as shown on Companies House online. Options considered to recover the substantial debt included filing an enforcement notice against the company.

The **RFO was tasked** to continue discussing with the market manager options towards a debt recovery strategy for the Council, and to bring options back to the committee for its consideration.

**4) EXPENDITURE**

i) *To approve retrospective and new payments; see **Supporting document A** for payments overview (attached).*

It was proposed by Cllr Owen, seconded by Cllr Littlemore and **RESOLVED**, unanimously, **to approve the retrospective and new payments as listed in Supporting document A.**

ii) *To allocate 2 Councillors to sign paperwork for afore-mentioned payments and to carry out bank authorisation.*

Cllr Benedicic and Cllr Owen were allocated to sign paperwork for afore-mentioned payments and to carry out online bank counter-authorisations.

**07/24-25 DATES OF NEXT MEETINGS** (Standing item)

a) *Finance and Governance Committee: Tue 14<sup>th</sup> May 2024, 8-9 pm; The Cabin, Northstowe. [Final versions of motions & papers to be received by 28/03 at the latest].*

b) *Full Council meeting: Tue 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2024 (7-9 pm); venue: The Cabin, Northstowe. [Final versions of motions & papers to be received by 13/04 at the latest]*

• *For all Council meetings and annual meeting schedule, see [www.northstowetowncouncil.gov.uk](http://www.northstowetowncouncil.gov.uk)*  
Noted.

The meeting was closed at 19:52 pm.

Signed.....  
Chair of the Finance & Governance Committee

Date.....

## Supporting Document A

### INCOME [Details for item 06/24-25(3)]:

- **Income – Market stall fees:**

Company	Reason	Market date(s)	Date received in account	Paid In
Cambridge luxury Bakes	Trader Stall fees	Jan. '24	18/03/'24	£53.00
Mill Blossom Flowers	Trader Stall fees	Jan. '24	18/03/'24	£15.00
Kokoraki Deli & more	Trader Stall fees	Jan. '24	18/03/'24	£15.00
Kokoraki Deli & more	Trader Stall fees	Feb. '24	18/03/'24	£15.00
Clare's Refill Station	Trader Stall fees	Jan. '24	28/03/'24	£15.00
Clare's Refill Station	Trader Stall fees	Feb. '24	25/03/'24	£15.00
Butterfly Legacy Project	Trader Stall fees	Feb. '24	18/03/'24	£25.00
Meadow and Woodland Livestock	Trader Stall fees	Feb. '24	19/03/'24	£23.00
Granola Queen	Trader Stall fees	Feb. '24	19/03/'24	£15.00
Sammy's Pet Treats	Trader Stall fees	Feb. '24	25/03/'24	£15.00
Kezza's Chocolate Creations	Trader Stall fees	Mar. '24	25/03/'24	£15.00

### EXPENDITURE [Details for item 06/24-25(4)]:

#### RETROSPECTIVE PAYMENTS – DIRECT DEBIT:

i)	Unity Trust – Bank charges. Quarterly fee (cashd 31/03/'24)	£18.00
ii)	CF Corporate Finance Ltd - Quarterly lease photocopier, 3rd quarter (cashd 27/03/'24)	£153.60
iii)	EE Limited - Mobile phones staff - Mar. '24 (cashd 18/03/'24)	£45.73
iv)	Lloyds Bank, Credit card - period: Feb. '24 (Laptop; monitor; IT and phone accessories; keys; Community Lounge refreshments & materials; bank fees) (cashd 18/03/'24)	£848.60

#### NEW PAYMENTS:

v)	Staff salaries (Clerk; Deputy Clerk; Market Manager)- Apr. '24 (payment date 24/04/'24)	Confidential
vi)	HMRC – period 1, 6 Apr. – 5 May 2024	Confidential
vii)	CAPALC affiliation fee [Approved at Full Council 26 <sup>th</sup> Mar. '24, item 260/23-24(2)]	£767.92
viii)	SLCC – training Community Engagement, Feb. 2024 (Deputy Clerk)	£78.00
ix)	South Cambs DC - Rent NTC office – Apr. 2024	£250.00
x)	South Cambs DC - Hire Assembly Room, The Cabin, Council meetings in Apr. '24	£130.50
xi)	South Cambs DC - Hire Assembly Rooms, The Cabin, Annual Town Meeting, Apr. '24	£105.00
xii)	South Cambs DC - Hire Assembly Room, The Cabin, Community Lounge, Apr. '24	£120.00
xiii)	South Cambs DC - Hire Assembly Room(s), for markets – Apr. '24	£78.00
xiv)	CBS Office Solutions – Printing costs Mar. '24	£16.22