

NORTHSTOWE TOWN COUNCIL - Finance and Governance Committee

Minutes of the meeting of the Finance and Governance Committee Held on 20th October 2021 at 7PM in The Wing, Pathfinder School, Northstowe.

Members: Cllr Castelino (Chair), Cllr Benedicic (Vice-Chair), Cllr Gamon, Cllr Harrison, Cllr Owen, Cllr Pokala.

Present: 4 Members: Cllr Benedicic, Cllr Castelino, Cllr Owen, Cllr Gamon.
One member of the public.

Quorum: 4 Members

Apologies: Cllr Harrison; Cllr Pokala.

Absent: N/A

Meeting started at 7:04pm.
Cllr Castelino took the Chair.

17/21-22 To receive apologies for absence

Apologies were received and have been accepted from: Cllr Harrison and Cllr Pokala, with a note that Cllr Harrison resigned from this Committee a few days earlier.

18/21-22 Declarations of interest

None were declared.

19/21-22 Public participation

No member of the public wished to speak.

20/21-22 Minutes of the Committee meetings of 7th July and 15th September 2021

It was proposed by Cllr Owen, seconded by Cllr Benedicic and **RESOLVED, with two Members voting for and two abstaining, to approve the minutes of the meeting of 7th July 2021 as a true record of that meeting.**

It was proposed by Cllr Owen, seconded by Cllr Benedicic and **RESOLVED, with two Members voting for and two abstaining, to approve the minutes of the meeting of 15th September 2021 as a true record of that meeting.**

21/21-22 (1) Finance - To approve Bank statements and bank balances

It was proposed by Cllr Benedicic, seconded by Cllr Gamon and **RESOLVED unanimously to approve the bank statement for 30th September 2021, with a correction of the date '31st' as this appeared on the agenda to be changed into '30th' as per the bank reconciliation.**

21/21-22 (2) Finance - To approve expenditure

The Chair asked the Clerk to provide further information. The Clerk informed the Committee that Cllr Owen and Cllr Benedicic had previously signed the cheque for the Poppy Appeal, hence this appeared as a retrospective payment.

It was proposed by Cllr Owen, seconded by Cllr Gamon and **RESOLVED unanimously to approve the following payments, with the following correction: salary payment of £2,511.10, not £2,510.90 as stated erroneously on the agenda, reflecting the actual payment made:**

Retrospective approval - Direct Debits

i)	Unity Trust Bank – Service Charge	£18.00
Retrospective approval – Cheque		
i)	Poppy Appeal – for purchase of wreath	£20.00
October 2021 – Payments to be approved:		
i)	Salary payment – Town Clerk – October 2021	£2,511.10
ii)	HMRC - PAYE (Income Tax; Employer’s NICs; Employees’ NI deductions), Period 6 Aug – 5 Sep 2021	£846.84
iii)	CAPALC – Training: ‘Clerks: The Knowledge’, 2 days, Sep. ‘21	£250.00
iv)	CAPALC – Training: ‘CiLCA’, 5 sessions, Sep – Dec ‘21	£400.00
v)	SLCC Enterprises - Training: Operation London Bridge	£36.00
vi)	The Christmas Decorators, 50% Deposit for installation of 18’ tree, Lights and accessories in The Square	£1,500.00

Councillors Owen and Benedicic counter-signed the above invoices.

The Clerk was asked the following questions:

- Why no pension payments had been made yet. The Clerk explained that these are to appear with retrospective payments once the employer’s pension scheme application process has been finalised, which may take a few more weeks.
- What the frequency of the bank service charges was. The Clerk responded that he would look into this and get back to Councillors on this after the meeting.

21/21-22 (3) Finance - To receive Summary of Receipts and Payments report

Noted.

The Clerk was asked the following questions:

- It was noted that the Receipts and Payments report indicated that the second instalment of the 2021-22 precept payments had been received. The Clerk confirmed that this is indeed the case.
- The Clerk was asked after the precept. He explained that preliminary information about the precept for 2022-23 has now been received from South Cambridgeshire District Council, and this is being considered in light of budget development.

22/21-22 Financial Governance – procedures for checks

1) *To discuss and decide on procedures for monthly and quarterly financial checks.*

The Chair invited the Clerk to speak. The Clerk informed the Committee that:

- According to the Town Council’s Financial Regulations 2.2 and 4.8 checks are to be carried out on bank reconciliations and on statements of Receipts and Payments on at least a quarterly basis. As these are done on a monthly basis and which is delegated to this Committee, the Council is thereby adhering to this policy.
- He had previously been asked by Councillors whether an additional quarterly, independent check of finance documentation by a Councillor who is not on this Committee might be worthwhile. This item has, therefore, been added to this agenda, as this is not currently detailed as such in the Financial Regulations.

It was proposed by Cllr Owen, seconded by Cllr Gamon and **RESOLVED unanimously to have an independent Councillor, not on the Finance and Governance Committee, to check the financial documentation on a quarterly basis and to counter-sign the invoices accordingly.**

23/21-22 Grant Policy

1) *To discuss the needs, aims and timeline for developing a Grant (Giving) Policy.*

The Chair initiated a discussion in which Councillors expressed:

- The wish to work towards a Grant (Giving) Policy, ideally to be finalised and in place at the start of the new financial year;
- It was noted that this should be developed with templates for applicants and any other paperwork needed for grant giving processes to be implemented;
- It was also suggested that a Grant Application Policy is something the Council could also consider developing.

The Clerk was tasked to look at some examples of Grant Policies and send over links to the Committee, and have this added as a standard item on subsequent committee meetings.

24/21-22 Budget Financial year 2022-23

- 1) *To receive information from the Clerk on the timeline for budget development and the responsibilities therein for the Finance and Governance Committee.*

The Chair invited the Clerk to speak. The Clerk informed the Committee that, assuming he is to obtain sufficient information from each Committee on their budget needs, he should normally be in a position to bring a draft budget to the next Committee meeting scheduled for 17th November for an initial discussion, with the aim to finalise a budget proposal at the 8th December Committee meeting, aiming to recommend a budget for discussion at the Full Council meeting planned for 15th December.

He continued, mentioning that he has recently received information, making it clear that a form with the precept request will normally need to be submitted to South Cambridgeshire District Council by 24th January 2022 at the latest, thus the Council needing to have its budget finalised before that date. As such, the Clerk continued, it is not inconceivable that an extraordinary Council meeting may need to be called for in the middle of January, were a budget not to be agreed on at the preceding Full Council meeting.

- 2) *To discuss budget needs for the Finance and Governance Committee.*

The Chair invited the Clerk to speak. The Clerk explained that he wished the Committee members to come forward with suggestions for budget needs for this committee, for next year's budget. In the discussion that followed, Councillors proposed the following budget suggestions: Costs associated with preparing a Business plan for the Council; Costs for training needs for Councillors.

The Clerk was tasked to include these cost headings in a draft budget.

25/21-22 Dates of next meetings

Full Council: Wed 27th October at 7PM
Finance and Governance Committee: Wed 17th November at 7PM
For all Council and Committee meetings, see www.northstowetowncouncil.gov.uk
Noted.

Meeting closed at 7:56pm.

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

Date.....