

NORTHSTOWE TOWN COUNCIL - Finance and Governance Committee

Minutes of the meeting of the Finance and Governance Committee Held on 15th March 2022 at 7PM in The Wing, Pathfinder School, Northstowe.

Members: 6 - Cllr Castelino (Chair), Cllr Benedicic (Vice-Chair), Cllr Gamon, Cllr Littlemore, Cllr Owen, Cllr Panvekar.
Quorum: 4 Members.
Present: 4 Members: Cllr Castelino; Cllr Littlemore; Cllr Owen; Cllr Panvekar.
1 member of the public.
Apologies: Cllr Benedicic.
Absent: Cllr Gamon.

Meeting started at 19:25 pm. Cllr Castelino took the Chair.

60/21-22 APOLOGIES

Apologies were received and have been accepted from Cllr Benedicic.

61/21-22 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None were declared.

62/21-22 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

No member of the public wished to speak.

63/21-22 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS COMMITTEE MEETING, 22ND FEBRUARY 2022

1) *To approve the minutes of the meeting of the Finance and Governance Committee held on 22nd February 2022 as a true record of that meeting.*

It was proposed by Cllr Littlemore, seconded by Cllr Owen and **RESOLVED, with 3 votes for and 1 abstaining, to approve the minutes of the meeting of 22nd February 2022 as a true record of that meeting.**

The Chair moved item 68/21-22 forward on the agenda.

68/21-22 MARKET BUSINESS PLAN TO SECURE SCDC FUNDING

1) *To receive and approve an updated business plan consisting of revised outline on how the funding made available to the Town Council by SCDC for the set-up of a regular market in Northstowe is to be used.*

(NB: this follows in-principle approval by resolution at the 23rd February 2022 Full Council meeting (item 198/21-22 (3)), detailing any changes made since).

The Chair invited Cllr Carla Bros Sabria, present as a member of the public, to provide further clarification, as she is a member of the Market Development Working Group who wrote the proposed business plan. She provided an updated, informing the Members that the information considered at the February Full Council meeting was passed onto the relevant Officer at South Cambridgeshire District Council. She clarified that, as a result of feedback received, the current version compared with the version discussed by Full Council has had the budget headings for training and staff provision removed as these proved not eligible for the grant funding, with otherwise only minor changes made to the Business Plan and associated budget.

It was proposed by Cllr Littlemore, seconded by Cllr Owen and **RESOLVED unanimously, to approve the updated business plan, to allow SCDC- awarded funding to support the piloting of a market in Northstowe to be transferred to Northstowe Town Council.**

Following a discussion, the RFO was **tasked** to discuss with the relevant SCDC Officers how the funds can be transferred and to ensure this is presented appropriately in the Town Council's accounting system, whereby it was suggested to put the grant in an earmarked reserve when received.

64/21-22 FINANCE – KEY CHANGES

For information:

a) Pay rates: agreement for 2021-'22 – 1.75% increase.

NB: current member of staff is at NJC scale LC3 SCP38

Noted. Councillors briefly discussed the impact of the late pay raise agreement on staffing payments. Following a question, the RFO confirmed that for the budget calculations for the '22-'23 financial year, as approved by Full Council in December 2021, he had already calculated staffing costs on the basis of a 1.75% increase for the '21-'22 financial year, and calculations also include a 2% (expected) increase for the '22-'23 financial year.

65/21-22 FINANCE

1) TO APPROVE BANK STATEMENTS AND BANK BALANCES

i) 28th February 2022.

It was proposed by Cllr Owen, seconded by Cllr Littlemore and **RESOLVED unanimously to approve the bank statements for 28th February 2022.** The Bank Reconciliation was signed by the Chair.

2) TO APPROVE EXPENDITURE

DIRECT DEBITS - RETROSPECTIVE APPROVAL:

- | | |
|---|---------|
| i) TPT Pensions Trust - pension contributions, period 01 Feb – 28 th Feb 2022 | £418.82 |
| ii) TPT Pensions Trust - pension contributions, period 01 Mar – 31 st Mar 2022
(£426.14 plus backpay for period 9 th Aug 2021 – 28 th Feb 2022) | £475.98 |

APPROVAL OF NEW PAYMENTS:

- | | |
|---|-----------|
| iii) CAPALC affiliation costs Apr '22 - Mar '23, incl. Data Protection Officer Membership Scheme | £582.55 |
| iv) Vision ICT – website hosting and support Apr '22 – Mar '23, SSL certificate and 15 emails hosted | £594.00 |
| v) Vision ICT – additional email hosting | £21.60 |
| vi) SLCC – Training seminar Midlands 21 st Sep 2022 | £102.00 |
| vii) Staff expenses 1 st January – 9 th March 2022 | £205.48 |
| viii) CB Leaflets – A4 Leaflet distribution (market survey) | £65.00 |
| ix) Northstowe Secondary College – hall hire 16 th March 2022 | £198.00 |
| x) Salary Town Clerk – Mar 2022 (payment date 23/03/2022), including backpay for period 9 th Aug 2021 - 28 th Feb 2022) – payment date 23/03/2022 | £2,662.20 |

It was noted that, although the CAPALC affiliation costs were already included in the details of the approved budget for '22-'23 and the costs are within the budget allocation it was requested to have an item discussing the renewal of CAPALC membership to appear at a Full Council meeting in either January or February, in advance of the renewal invoice appearing in March. It was also recommended to include an item at the upcoming full Council meeting, to inform the Full Council about the membership renewal.

It was proposed by Cllr Owen, seconded by Cllr Littlemore and **RESOLVED unanimously to approve the above retrospective and new payments.**

Cllr Littlemore and Cllr Panvekar counter-signed the invoices and other relevant paperwork for above payments; Cllr Littlemore and Cllr Owen provided for the online banking authorisations.

3) TO RECEIVE SUMMARY OF RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS REPORT

Noted. No questions raised.

66/21-22 DEBIT CARD

- 1) To receive a report setting out options for bank cards allowing the RFO to pay for essentials and emergency spend on things such as stationary, in line with the Town Council's Financial Regulations, section 6.18.

The Chair asked the RFO to provide a summary. He informed the Committee that, following considerations of the bank card options researched, he recommends the Council to approve applying for a Unity Corporate MultiPay Card from Unity Trust Bank. Although it comes with a higher initial fee, the card does come with reduced financial risks and reduced risks of administrative errors for the Council, when compared with a pre-paid card, as explained in somewhat more detail in the report. Moreover, the additional number of actions and checks that would be needed to be done with a pre-paid card means that such cards would probably not be cost-effective when also taking into account the RFOs' time needs, whereas the Unity Corporate MultiPay Card from Unity Trust Bank comes with a direct debit linked to the current Council's bank account, thereby reducing administrative burden, potential administrative errors or accidental late payment fines.

2) *To approve applying for a Unity Trust Bank Debit Card, to be issued to the RFO.*

Councillors **tasked** the RFO to seek clarification from Unity Trust Bank as to the costs for replacements cards, as information about replacement cards is only available on their website for emergency replacement which come with very high fees; costs for ordinary replacement costs for e.g. changing name on card, do not seem to be listed on their website.

It was proposed by Cllr Littlemore, seconded by Cllr Owen and **RESOLVED unanimously to amend the original Motion and change the wording to: 'To approve applying for a Unity Trust Bank Card, to be issued to the RFO, subject to the RFO obtaining satisfactory clarification on Unity Trust's standard card replacement fees.'**

It was proposed by Cllr Littlemore, seconded by Cllr Owen and **RESOLVED unanimously to adopt the Motion as amended.**

67/21-22 FINANCIAL PROCEDURES

For information:

a) *Q4 quarterly financial checks arrangements made.*

The RFO informed the Committee that Cllr Bros Sabria has agreed to carry out the Q4 financial checks. Noted.

b) *End-of-year accounting processes.*

The RFO informed the Committee that he is in the process of ensuring that all end-of-year accounting procedures are carried out. Noted.

c) *Internal and external auditing and AGAR processes.*

The RFO informed the Committee that, as this will be the first time for internal and external auditing and the AGAR processes for the Town Council, he will endeavour to keep the Committee as well as Full Council, were relevant, updated on the progress along the way. The processes will be carried out in stages from April until the late summer. He added that he will send useful documents around to the committee about the processes. Noted.

69/21-22 GRANT POLICY

1) *To receive and discuss an updated draft Grant Awarding Policy (V1.2).*

Councillors agreed that all amendments as proposed at the last meeting and those proposed since have been included.

2) *To approve the Grant Awarding Policy and recommend to Full Council for adoption.*

It was proposed by Cllr Owen, seconded by Cllr Littlemore and **RESOLVED unanimously to approve the Grant Awarding Policy and recommend this to Full Council for adoption.**

70/21-22 DATES OF FUTURE COUNCIL MEETINGS

Full Council:

Wed 30th March 2022 at 7PM (The Wing)

Finance and Governance Committee:

Tue 19th April 2022 at 7PM (The Wing)

For all Council meetings, see www.northstowetowncouncil.gov.uk

Noted.

Meeting closed at 20:24 pm.

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

Date.....