

NORTHSTOWE TOWN COUNCIL - Finance and Governance Committee
MINUTES of the Committee meeting held on 17th January 2023
at Pathfinder Primary School, Northstowe

Members: 6: Cllr Castelino (Chair); Cllr Benedicic (Vice-Chair); Cllr Littlemore; Cllr Owen; Cllr Panvekar; Cllr Sovago.
Quorum: 4 Members.
Present: 5 Members: Cllr Benedicic; Cllr Castelino; Cllr Littlemore; Cllr Owen; Cllr Sovago.
Town Clerk/RFO
No member of the public.
Apologies: Cllr Panvekar.
Absent: N/A.

The meeting was started at 19:00 pm. Cllr Castelino took the Chair.

57/22-23 APOLOGIES (Standing item)

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

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

58/22-23 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 Chairman if they wish to speak on the matter during public participation.*

No interests were declared.

59/22-23 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.*

No member of the public was present. The Chair reconvened the meeting.

60/22-23 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS COMMITTEE MEETINGS (Standing Item)

[Sub-item 1 deferred from non-quorate committee meeting of 13th Dec. '22]

1) *To approve the minutes of the meeting of the Finance and Governance Committee held on 15th November 2022 as a true record of that meeting (attached).*

It was proposed by Cllr Littlemore, seconded by Cllr Benedicic and **RESOLVED, with 4 voting for and 1 abstaining, to approve the minutes of the Finance and Governance Committee held on 15th November 2022 as a true record of that meeting.**

2) *To approve the minutes of the meeting of the (non-quorate) Finance and Governance Committee held on 13th December 2022 as a true record of that meeting (attached).*

It was proposed by Cllr Littlemore, seconded by Cllr Benedicic and **RESOLVED, with 3 voting for and 2 abstaining, to approve the minutes of the Finance and Governance Committee held on 13th December 2022 as a true record of that meeting.**

61/22-23 FINANCE

[Sub-items 1 (i, ii), 2 and 4 deferred from non-quorate committee meeting of 13th Dec. '22]

1) TO APPROVE BANK STATEMENTS & BALANCES

[Item deferred from the non-quorate meeting on 13th Dec. '22]

i) *To receive the bank statement for 30th November 2022 (shared with Cllrs).*

ii) *To approve and sign the bank reconciliation for 30th November 2022 (attached).*

iii) *To receive the bank statement for 31st December 2022 (shared with Cllrs).*

iv) *To approve and sign the bank reconciliation for 31st December 2022 (attached).*

Noted.

In response to a question raised whether the vandalism of the Christmas tree over the Bank Holiday period might incur any additional costs for the Town Council, the RFO explained that this had been discussed with the tree decorating company contracted when on site examining the damage and that, apart from a few baubles, all items remained in working order and that the company will therefore not charge any additional costs to the Council.

It was proposed by Cllr Benedicic, seconded by Cllr Littlemore and **RESOLVED unanimously to approve and sign the bank reconciliation for 30th November 2022 and for 31st December 2022.**

The Bank Reconciliations were signed by the Chair.

2) INCOME

- i) Sponsorship - Greenbelt, towards Christmas tree costs (received 11/11/22). £500.00
- ii) Sponsorship - Homes England, towards Christmas tree costs (received 11/11/22). £500.00
- iii) Remittance advice SCDC – S106 Notice Board Tranche 2 and 3 (received 01/12/22). £23,305.66
[Following resolution Full Council 22nd Nov. 2022, item 165/22-23(2)].

Noted.

3) TO APPROVE EXPENDITURE

RETROSPECTIVE APPROVAL – DIRECT DEBITS:

- i) TPT Pensions Trust - pension contributions, period Dec '22, including back pay for Apr. – Nov. '22 (cashd 09/01/23) Confidential

APPROVAL OF NEW PAYMENTS:

- ii) SLCC – Job advert Bronze Package.
(as per resolution at Full Council meeting 25th Oct. '22, item 140/22-23(3) £388.80
- iii) CAPALC – Mid-year Internal Audit service.
(as per resolution Finance & Governance Committee 22 Jun. '22, item 75/22-23(2)) £211.65
- iv) HMRC – period 10 (6 Jan. – 5 Feb. 2023).
(attached for Cllrs' information). Confidential
- v) Salary Town Clerk – January 2023 (payment date 25/01/23)
(attached for Cllrs' information). Confidential

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

Cllr Littlemore and Cllr Owen counter-signed the invoices and paperwork for above payments, and carried out online bank authorisations.

4) RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS REPORT

To receive the Receipts and Payments report (attached). NB: includes above new receipts & payments.

Noted.

In response to a question raised around a potential discrepancy appearing in the percentage of budget used to date, when comparing budget allocated for staff salary and that allocated for pension contributions and HMRC contributions, the RFO took an **action** to look into this and get back to the committee on this by email.

62/22-23 REVISED CPCA GRANT ALLOCATION BASED ON PILOT MARKET BUSINESS PLAN (FINANCIAL PLAN)

[Item referred from the Events and Markets Committee meeting held on 29th Nov. 2022 (item 72/22-23(2))]

[Item deferred from non-quotate committee meeting of 13th Dec. '22]

- 1) To receive a report regarding the updated business plan including a revised outline on how the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority (CPCA) funding made available to the Town Council for the set-up of a regular market in Northstowe is to be used (report, plus additional updated budget proposals or '23 – '24 obtained from the Events and Market Committee's Market Development Working Group – Documents shared with Cllrs).

It was observed that the information about the changes proposed to the original CPCA grant spending plan was difficult to find in the document. It was recommended to pass on the message to the Market Development Working Group that, if any future updates would be needed, the proposed changes are to

be highlighted more clearly, rather than embedding these in the document, and that it would then also need to come with a separate, robust statement summarising what has changed and which is to come with a clear justification for the changes proposed.

A question was also asked regarding what the arrangements are going to be for traders' payments. The RFO explained that the Market Development Working Group is in the process of developing these procedures, but that, based on discussions he had held with members of the Working Group about this, it is likely that a system is to be developed (and as such to be included in any agreements to be made with traders) that payments are to be made on a monthly basis, in advance and by BACS only; final proposals about the payment system are to be brought to the relevant Council meeting before an outdoor market is to start.

2) *To approve the financial plan for the delivery of pilot market and revised allocation of the CPCA funding.*

It was proposed by Cllr Owen, seconded by Cllr Benedicic and **RESOLVED unanimously, to amend the motion, to include that future changes are to come with: a clear overview of changes made; a summary statement of changes made; and a justification statement for the changes proposed.**

It was proposed by Cllr Owen, seconded by Cllr Benedicic and **RESOLVED unanimously, to approve the financial plan for the delivery of pilot market and revised allocation of the CPCA funding, as amended.**

63/22-23 INTERNAL AUDIT – MID-YEAR REPORT

[Item deferred from non-quorate committee meeting of 13th Dec. '22]

1) *To receive a report and accompanying letter following the mid-year internal audit report for the financial year 2022-3, as carried out by CAPALC in November 2022 (letter and report attached).*

Noted.

2) *To discuss the report and letter, and consider its findings and recommendations.*

In a discussion a wish was expressed to start actioning one of the items mentioned in the internal audit report, the development of an Investment Strategy. As the Council has in the last few months obtained significant additional income, e.g. additional S106 contributions, it was considered that it would be prudent to consider alternative banking arrangement options, to address any risks that may be associated with this situation. The RFO was **tasked** to draft an Investment Strategy and bring this back to a future Committee meeting. Cllr Littlemore offered to help in the development of such a document.

64/22-23 ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

[Item deferred from non-quorate committee meeting of 13th Dec. '22]

1) **External Auditor appointment.** *To receive correspondence from the Smaller Authorities Audit Appointments (SAAA) about the auditor appointment for smaller authorities for the five financial years from 2022-23 to 2026-27 (email attached).*

[Further to Full Council meeting held on 27th September 2022, item 121/22-23(2)].

Noted.

2) **Credit card:** *Update - received.*

[Further to Finance and Governance Committee meeting held on 15th March 2022, item 66/21-2].

The RFO explained that the credit card had now been received and has proven fully functional. Noted.

65/22-23 DATES OF FUTURE COUNCIL MEETINGS (Standing item)

To note;

▪ Full Council: Tue 24th January 2023, 7-9PM, Pathfinder Primary School.

[Finalised motions to be received by 14/01].

▪ Finance and Governance Committee: Tue 21st February 2023, 7-8 PM; Location: TBC.

[Finalised motions to be received by 11/02].

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Noted.

The meeting was closed at 19:48 pm.

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

Date.....