

MUCH WENLOCK TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of a
FINANCE & ASSET MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE
meeting held at the Guildhall, Much Wenlock
at 7.00 pm on Tuesday, 20th July 2021

Present:

Cllr. Mike Atherton, Cllr. Sam Neal, Cllr. John O'Dowd, Cllr. Marcus Themans, Cllr. Daniel Thomas, Cllr. Robert Toft

In attendance:

Trudi Barrett – Town Clerk, Diane Barlow – Responsible Financial Officer (RFO), Councillors David Fenwick and Duncan White.

1) Election of Chairman

It was **PROPOSED, SECONDED and RESOLVED** to elect Councillor Daniel Thomas as Chairman of the committee.

2) Election of Deputy Chairman

It was **PROPOSED, SECONDED and RESOLVED** to elect Councillor Marcus Themans as Deputy Chairman of the committee.

3) Apologies

It was **PROPOSED, SECONDED and RESOLVED** to approve the following apologies: Councillor Sam Neal – holiday
Councillor Mike Atherton had advised that he would be late to the meeting.

4) Disclosure of pecuniary interests

Members were reminded that they are required to leave the room during the discussion and voting on matters in which they have a disclosable pecuniary interest, whether or not the interest is entered in the Register of Members' Interests maintained by the Monitoring Officer.

5) Dispensations

None requested.

6) Minutes

It was **PROPOSED, SECONDED and RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting of the Finance, Asset Management & HR Committee meeting held on 23rd March 2021 be **APPROVED** and signed as a true record.

7) Town Clerk's report

Members received a written and verbal report from the Town Clerk on action taken since the last meeting.

It was **PROPOSED, SECONDED and AGREED** that the Town Clerk's report be **NOTED**.

8) Finance

- a. The RFO presented a written and verbal report. She advised that the markets were being well supported with some new traders. Business rates on public conveniences had recently been abolished, with effect from April 2020, and a refund of £3,680.92 had been received for the financial year 2020/21 and the early part of 2021/22. 'Wenlock's Covid Chronicles' had been launched on 3rd July with income of £1,055 to date, including a donation of £125, and expenses of £969. A VAT refund of £2,240.94 had been received for the fourth quarter of 2020/21. Bank mandates had been updated with previous councillors having been removed and new councillors added.
Members **NOTED** the report.
- b. Members **NOTED** the balance sheet as at 30th June 2021.
- c. Members **NOTED** the income and expenditure to 30th June 2021.
- d. The RFO gave an overview of the Council's different bank accounts and Members reviewed the bank reconciliations to 30th June 2021. It was **PROPOSED, SECONDED and RESOLVED** to approve the bank reconciliations to 30th June 2021.
- e. It was **PROPOSED, SECONDED and RESOLVED** to retrospectively approve payments from 15th May 2021 to date.

Councillor Mike Atherton joined the meeting.

9) Community Infrastructure Levy Neighbourhood Fund

- a. Members noted the 2020/21 Neighbourhood Fund allocation of £5,746.16 to Much Wenlock and the total allocation between 1st January 2012 and 31st December 2020 of £24,190.66.
- b. Members noted that, including the 2020/21 payment, the Council was currently holding £18,589 in the Neighbourhood Fund budget.

10) Guildhall Cupola

Members noted that the application for Listed Building Consent for work to the cupola had been submitted to Shropshire Council. The Clerk advised that the work could not be scheduled with the contractor until consent had been obtained.

11) Cemetery Grass Cutting and Grounds Maintenance

Members considered correspondence received from a member of the Friends of the Old Cemetery regarding the grass cutting regime in the cemetery. They noted the need to balance the expectations of members of the public with regard to the appearance of the cemetery with the promotion of more environmentally friendly site management. It was noted that wildflower areas were already being encouraged on the Gaskell Recreation Ground

It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and RESOLVED that members of the Friends of the Cemetery working group should meet with the correspondent to discuss grounds management.

12) Busking in The Square

It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and RESOLVED to suspend standing orders to allow Councillor White to contribute to the discussion.

Members noted requests to busk in the Square from individuals and voluntary groups and considered how to deal with these. Issues included insurance, power, noise levels and collections. Members concurred that music in the Square could improve the ambience in the town centre and entertain visitors.

It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and RESOLVED to support the principle of busking in the Square, on the following conditions:

- **Buskers would be permitted between 10am and 2pm on Saturdays**
- **A booking must be made with the Council office**
- **Public liability insurance would be required**
- **Buskers would need to fit in with any market stalls**
- **A collection could be made for the busker or a charity if desired**
- **Buskers must be respectful of the community in terms of noise levels and other potential nuisance.**

Councillor White agreed to liaise with buskers, if required.

The Clerk was asked to investigate separate public liability insurance for the Council which would cover buskers.

It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and RESOLVED to reinvoke standing orders.

13) Review of Property Holdings

It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and RESOLVED to set up a working group to review the Town Council's property holdings. Members of the group would be drawn from the whole Council as well as suitably qualified or skilled members of the public, when appropriate.

The group would identify priorities for building management of Town Council owned properties and make recommendations for action. The Clerk would draft terms of reference for approval.

Councillors Mike Atherton, David Fenwick, John O'Dowd, Marcus Themans and Duncan White put themselves forward for the group.

It was noted that Councillor O'Dowd had distributed an English Heritage style of report for old buildings which could be helpful to use as a base document. Members of the group would arrange to visit the Council's properties.

14) Date of next meeting

It was noted that the next meeting of the Finance, Asset Management & HR Committee would be held on Tuesday, 21st September 2021 at 7.00pm.

PUBLIC BODIES (ADMISSION TO MEETINGS) ACT 1960

Pursuant to Section 1(2) of the above Act it was PROPOSED, SECONDED and RESOLVED that, due to the confidential nature of the business to be transacted, the public and press should not be present.

Councillors Fenwick and White left the meeting.

15) Linden Lodge Inspection Report

Members considered the most recent periodic inspection report for Linden Lodge from March 2021. It was noted that the Clerk was seeking quotations for several minor works.

16) Office Photocopier

Members noted that the lease on the office photocopier expired at the end of June and considered quotations for a new lease copier.

It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and RESOLVED to accept the quotation from Sharp for a 5 year rental.

17) Floral Displays

It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and RESOLVED to retrospectively approve the contract for the town's summer floral displays at a cost of £1,206.

18) Fire Safety Audit

Members noted the Fire Safety Audit of the Corn Exchange, carried out on 8th June 2021.

It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and RESOLVED that administrative staff should work through the report, implement recommendations which could be achieved at little or no cost and seek quotations for higher value measures.

The meeting closed at 20.55 pm

Signed.....
Chairman

Date.....