

MUCH WENLOCK TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of a
FINANCE & ASSET MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE
 meeting held at the Corn Exchange, Much Wenlock
 at 7.00 pm on Wednesday, 26th October 2022

Present:

Cllrs. David Fenwick, John O'Dowd, Marcus Themans, Chris Tyler, Linda West, Duncan White.

In attendance:

Trudi Barrett – Town Clerk, Diane Barlow – Responsible Financial Officer (RFO)

1. Apologies

None.

2. 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.

3. Dispensations

None requested.

4. Minutes

- a. It was noted that the meeting scheduled for 18th October had been inquorate and that the meeting had therefore been re-scheduled to 26th October 2022.
- b. **It was RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Finance and Asset Management Committee held on 27th September 2022 be APPROVED and signed as a true record.**

5. Town Clerk's report

Members received a written report on action taken since the last meeting. Members considered the need for a new digital fire alarm system for the Guildhall (minute 24 from March 2022). **As the project to renovate the Guildhall was now moving forward, it was RESOLVED to leave in abeyance seeking quotations for a new digital fire alarm for the Guildhall.** It was noted that the existing fire alarm was in working order but the analogue telephone line did not communicate automatically with the monitoring station or fire service.

The Clerk reported that discussions with Healthmatic over the provisions of the maintenance and cleaning contract were still ongoing and that Healthmatic would be proposing options for the future configuration and operation of the toilets in St Mary's car park.

It was RESOLVED that the Town Clerk's report be NOTED.

6. Finance

- a. The RFO presented a written and verbal report. The written report highlighted issues to note, including the overspend on street light electricity charges. The RFO reported that the new Christmas lights for the Gaskell corner had been selected and delivered, together with the new Christmas lights for the Square, ready for installation on 20th November. Income to 30th September 2022 was £38,192 (excluding precept) which was 42.6% above budget for the time of year. Expenditure for the same period was £115,039, which was 16.48% below budget for the time of year. However, some large invoices were expected imminently, including those for library services and Christmas lights installation.
Members noted the report.

Councillors expressed concern about street lighting energy costs and considered options for reducing these costs. **It was RESOLVED to investigate the economies and risks of a reduction in street lighting provision.**

- b. Members noted the balance sheet as at 30th September 2022.
- c. Members noted the income and expenditure to 30th September 2022.
- d. Members reviewed the bank reconciliations to 30th September 2022. **It was RESOLVED to approve the bank reconciliations to 30th September 2022.**
- e. **It was RESOLVED to approve payments from 28th September 2022 to date.**

7. 2023/24 Budget

Members considered the draft budget. Members reviewed rental rates for council-owned property and **RESOLVED to increase the rental rate for several council tenancies.**

It was RESOLVED to increase the hire rate for stalls in the Square to £30 per day.

It was noted that the latest version of the draft budget would be presented to the Finance & Asset Management Committee for approval at the November meeting, for subsequent consideration and approval by full Council.

Officers were asked to seek quotations for engraving the mayoral chain with the names of recent Mayors.

8. Grant Awards

- a. Members considered applications for grant awards and **RESOLVED to award the following grants to local organisations:**

To	For	Amount £
Holy Trinity Church	Maintenance of church green	500
Wenlock Olympian Games Live Arts Festival	Membership of the British & International Federation of Festivals and insurance costs	450
Much Wenlock First Responders	Running costs for the ambulance response vehicle	1,000
Much Wenlock Windmill Trust	Tree planting at the base of Windmill Hill	250
Walkers are Welcome	Printing of a replacement 'Walkers are Welcome' leaflet	400
Royal British Legion	Poppy wreath	50
	TOTAL	2,650

A reserve of £350 remained in the grant budget.

- b. **It was RESOLVED to approve a donation of £250 to the Wenlock Herald to support publication of the Town Council's regular contribution to the magazine.**

9. Strategic Plan

It was noted that committee members had met on 4th October and the agreed priorities for inclusion in the Town Council's Strategic Plan had been passed to the Clerk.

10. The Guildhall Project – Renovation and Future Use

- a. A date for work to the beam at the rear of the Guildhall was still awaited.
- b. Members noted that full Council had delegated day to day responsibility for overseeing the Guildhall Project to the Finance & Asset Management Committee.
- c. Members noted that an application had been submitted to the Architectural Heritage Fund for a Project Viability Grant. The application had been provisionally assigned to a decision meeting scheduled for 12th December 2022.

11. Cemetery Management

- a. Members considered a draft Management Plan 2022-27 for the Old Cemetery. Members expressed thanks to Tim Coleshaw, author of the Plan, and other contributors.
It was RESOLVED to approve the Management Plan 2022-27, with the exclusion of the proposal for additional tree planting along the roadside boundary and the proposal for additional seating. Low level shrubs might be considered for the roadside boundary and whilst Councillors considered there was already sufficient seating in the cemetery, they would be prepared to consider additional benches on an individual basis.
- b. With regard to memorial safety, the Clerk had sought advice from SALC and other local Councils. Those Councils which had responded carried out their own memorial testing. The RFO would be attending an online course on Cemetery & Churchyard Safety and Memorialisation the following day.

12. Testing of Street Light Columns for Christmas Lights Display

Members noted that Shropshire Council had advised that they required the Town Council to arrange strength testing of the street lighting columns identified for Christmas lights displays and that this would incur an additional cost. This was a new requirement, recently introduced by Shropshire Council. The Town Council's Christmas lights contractor, Potters Electrical, was arranging the testing, but the cost had not yet been confirmed.

13. Date of next meeting

It was noted that the next meeting of the Finance & Asset Management Committee would be held on Tuesday, 22nd November 2022 at 7.00pm at The Corn Exchange.

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.

14. Internal Audit

It was **RESOLVED** to appoint DM Payroll Services as internal auditor for the financial year 2022/23.

15. Reprint of Much Wenlock Leaflet

Members considered a reprint of the Much Wenlock tourist leaflet, in association with Shropshire Council's Museum Service.

It was **RESOLVED** to arrange for the artwork to be amended at a maximum cost of £150 and for the printing of 5,000 copies at a cost of £389, with a contribution of 50% of the total cost coming from Shropshire Council.

16. Mary Webb Room

Councillors considered the future use of the Mary Webb Room. It was **RESOLVED** to continue to use the room as a Council meeting room and for casual hires, rather than let it on a long-term basis. It was **RESOLVED** that the hire cost should be £10 per hour, with a minimum hire period of two hours. As a general rule, the room should be hired out during working hours only.

It was **RESOLVED** to suspend standing orders to allow the meeting to continue past 9pm.

17. 2 Burgage Way

Members reviewed progress with the sale of 2 Burgage way. It was **RESOLVED** to approve the Fittings and Contents form and the Property Information form.

18. 10 High Street

- a. Members considered quotations for refurbishment work at 10 High Street. It was **RESOLVED** to award the contract to Prestige Property Maintenance Midlands Ltd at a cost of £3,225 plus an additional £300 per day (excluding materials) for electrical work.
- b. It was **RESOLVED** to leave in abeyance the provision of an intruder alarm at 10 High Street.
- c. Members noted information provided by Barclays Bank on the management of the cashpoint machine at 10 High Street.

19. Street Lighting Maintenance and Replacement

- a. Members considered quotations for a new three year street lighting maintenance contract from May 2023. It was **RESOLVED** to award a three year contract for street lighting maintenance to E.ON Highways Lighting at a cost of £1,595.00 p.a.
- b. Members considered quotations for the replacement of the Council's SON street lamps and replacement of those with asbestos seals.
It was **RESOLVED** to award the contract for the replacement of the Town Council's SON lamps with LED lamps to E.ON Highways Lighting at a cost of £9,007.60, to be spread over a two year period.
It was **RESOLVED** to award the contract to replace the SOX lights containing asbestos seals with LED lamps to E.ON Highways Lighting at a cost of £5,302.41.

The meeting closed at 9.40 pm

Signed.....
Chairman

Date.....