

MUCH WENLOCK TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of a
FINANCE & ASSET MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE
meeting held at the Corn Exchange, Much Wenlock
at 7.00 pm on Tuesday, 24th October 2023

Present:

Cllrs. Susan Crooke-Williams, David Fenwick, John O'Dowd, Marcus Themans and Duncan White.

In attendance:

Trudi Barrett – Town Clerk, Diane Barlow – Responsible Financial Officer (RFO), a member of the Shropshire Roots Brotherhood.

1. Apologies

Councillor Christian Toon – family commitment.

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.

Councillor Duncan White declared a personal interest in grant applications from Much Wenlock Bowling Club and Much Wenlock Windmill Trust.

Councillor Susan Crooke-Williams declared a personal interest in grant applications from Holy Trinity Church Bellringers and Much Wenlock Festival.

3. Dispensations

None requested.

4. Minutes

It was RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Finance and Asset Management Committee held on 26th September 2023 be APPROVED and signed as a true record.

5. Town Clerk's report

Members noted the Clerk's written and verbal report on action taken since the last meeting. The Clerk reported that work had commenced on removing the lean-to and repairing the roof of the cemetery chapel.

Councillors requested that consideration of the cemetery extension be added to a forthcoming agenda.

6. Finance

- a. The RFO presented a written and verbal report. She reported that Councillor Crooke-Williams had attended the office on 19th October to undertake the quarterly review of the petty cash and all had gone well. Councillors Themans, Crooke-Williams and White had also reviewed and signed the quarters 1 and 2 bank statements and bank reconciliations (April-September) to check they matched and to comply with the Council's financial regulations.

Councillors were advised that the Councillor training budget had not been fully utilised this year and that they should advise the Town Clerk if they wished to undertake any training.

Income to 30th September was £49,739 (excluding precept, income from grant awards, and proceeds from property sales) which was 73.2% above budget for the time of year. This figure also included the refund from SSE Swalec. Expenditure to 30th September was £142,201 which was 3.7% below budget for the time of year.

- b. Members noted the balance sheet as at 30th September 2023.
- c. Members noted the income and expenditure to 30th September 2023.
- d. Members reviewed the bank reconciliations to 30th September 2023. **It was RESOLVED to approve the bank reconciliations to 30th September 2023.**
- e. **It was RESOLVED to approve payments from 27th September 2023 to date.**

7. 2024/25 Budget

Members reviewed the first draft of the 2024/25 budget. The RFO provided additional information and outlined the rationale behind the calculations. Councillors considered how best to show staff time spent on the Gaskell Recreation Ground and considered information provided by the internal auditor and Rialtas. Staff were asked to make further enquiries.

It was RESOLVED to take item 10 of the agenda next.

8. Grant Awards

- a. Members considered applications received from local organisations for Town Council grants. **It was RESOLVED to make the awards shown below from the available budget of £3,000:**

To	For	Amount £
Much Wenlock, Broseley & District U3A	The purchase of two new sets of bowls to enable members to establish a league team	0 Bowls available for free loan from MW Bowling Club
The Friendly Transport Service	To help fund annual volunteer training, DBS costs and vehicle safety maintenance.	£250
Wenlock Olympian Games Live Arts Festival	Funds to pay for annual membership of the British and International Federation of Festivals, which is required to retain an active organisation. A contribution towards the annual insurance policy is also requested.	£250
Much Wenlock First Responders	To continue to have an ambulance response vehicle in Much Wenlock funds must be raised annually. The response car insurance and car service costs £1,000 per year to run and a contribution towards these costs is sought.	£800
Much Wenlock Windmill Trust	To assist with the costs of the annual cutting, baling and harrowing of Windmill Hill.	£350
Much Wenlock Bowling Club	To refurbish the floor of the 'Matchroom' in order to bring the building back into use as an important facility for the club.	0 To be considered separately for potential S106 funding
Much Wenlock Warriors	To purchase a portable defibrillator to use during match days.	0 Other options available
Holy Trinity Church Bellringers	The clappers, stays and pulleys for the bells are in need of major refurbishment. The Church is fundraising £25,000 for this work.	£500
Much Wenlock Festival	Much Wenlock Festival will be held in June 2024. The four-day festival will cost approximately £20,000 and a contribution towards these costs is requested.	£350
Northgate Swimming Club	To fund the purchase of new equipment such as swimming resistance tethers, strength and conditioning equipment and kickboards etc.	£100
Shropshire Roots Brotherhood	Provision of equipment for outside group meetings such as fire pit, cooking utensils and portable lights. Also, to help secure a permanent heated, indoor venue.	£350
Royal British Legion	Poppy wreath	£50
	TOTAL	£3,000

- 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.**

The member of the Shropshire Roots Brotherhood left the meeting.

It was RESOLVED to suspend standing orders to allow the meeting to continue past 9.00pm

9. The Guildhall Project

Members noted that a meeting to discuss the Guildhall project would be held the following day with the consultants Greenwood Projects, Lathams and Focus.

10. Guildhall – Report on Oak Pillars

Members considered a report from the Senior Conservation Officer & Technical Specialist at Shropshire Council on the condition of the oak pillars at the front of the Guildhall.

Members RESOLVED to share the report with the surveyor preparing a condition survey of the Guildhall as part of the viability study for comment.

11. Roundel Art Features

Members considered a suggestion from a resident for relocating the roundel art features currently located at the rear of the Corn Exchange. It was noted that the suggested locations were in residential areas away from the town centre.

It was RESOLVED to re-locate the roundels to positions at the end of Sheinton Street, junction with Smithfield Road, and in the High Street, next to Back Lane car park.

12. Date of next meeting

It was noted that the next meeting of the Finance & Asset Management Committee would be held on Tuesday, 21st November 2023 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.

13. Rental of 10 High Street

Members noted an update on the marketing of 10 High Street for commercial rental.

14. Public Toilets

Members noted that a meeting had been arranged for the following day with the Managing Director of Healthmatic to discuss the public toilets at St Mary's Lane.

15. Christmas Lights

Members noted that the Christmas lights on the tree adjacent to Back Lane car park had failed.

It was RESOLVED to agree the purchase and installation of replacement lights in warm white for the tree adjacent to Back Lane car park and to place the order with Potters Electrical.

16. Gaskell Recreation Ground

Members considered correspondence from Shropshire Council regarding the boundary of the Gaskell Recreation Ground and agreed a response.

17. Much Wenlock Museum

- a. Members reviewed the Museum Lease with Shropshire Council. **It was RESOLVED to retain the rent at the current level.**
- b. Members considered a report on Much Wenlock Museum arising from the meeting held with Shropshire Council on 9th October 2023. **It was RESOLVED to notify Shropshire Council of the need to maintain a minimum 1,000 opening hours in any 12-month period for the museum and to request a review of the situation in April 2024.**
It was noted that further information relating to the museum was awaited from Shropshire Council.

The meeting closed at 9.50pm.

Signed.....
Chairperson

Date.....