



Needham Market Town Council
Governance & Finance Committee
Minutes 8th August 2023

Present: Chairperson Cllr Annis; Cllrs, Cave, Lea, Mason, Norris, Ost and Phillips.

The Town Clerk was in attendance.

GF011/23 To receive apologies for absence.

Cllrs Darnell, Lawrence, O'Shea, A Reardon, J Reardon, Stansfield.

GF012/23 To receive any Declarations of Pecuniary or Non-Pecuniary Interests by Members.

Cllr Annis – Community Centre Grant (minibus)

GF013/23 To approve any dispensations with respect to Disclosable Pecuniary Interests.

None.

GF014/23 The Minutes of the meeting of the Governance and Finance Committee held on 7th February 2023 were received and adopted at the 17th May 2023 Annual Town Council Meeting.

GF015/23 To consider Accounts for Payment and Confirmation.

Cllr Phillips proposed the Accounts for Payment and Confirmation be approved. Cllr Ost seconded the proposal. The Committee agreed the proposal.

Cllr Annis suggested the Accounts for Payment and Confirmation process could be streamlined if, in following the practice of other Local Council's, regular inescapable payments were authorised by a single resolution at the first opportunity in each fiscal period. This would reduce the number of accounts to be considered at each Council/Committee meeting, many of which are repetitive. Examples such as staff salaries, energy charges and grounds maintenance were referred to.

Cllr Annis proposed an amended Accounts for Payment and Confirmation process, as outlined, be introduced with immediate effect. Cllr Phillips seconded the proposal. The Committee agreed the proposal.

GF016/23 To consider Grants/Donations Budget 2023.24.

The Clerk informed the Committee, £4,600 of the Council's Grants/Donations budget 2023.24, remained unspent. Grants/Donations to the Council's core recipients, Needham Market Community Centre (contribution to the cost of employing a Community Minibus driver) and Citizen's advice had not yet been considered. A letter had been received from Needham Market Community Centre requesting support for the Centre's minibus service.

Cllr Lea proposed £1,500 be donated to Needham Market Community Centre (contribution to the cost of employing a Community Minibus driver) and £2,500 to Citizen's Advice (Stowmarket). Cllr Ost seconded the proposal. The Committee agreed the proposal.

GF017/23 Update on Governance and Finance Arrangements.

- a) To monitor the Council's approved Budget 2023/24 against actual expenditure.

The Committee agreed that, as monitoring had been undertaken at the full Town Council meeting held on 19th July 2023, nothing further was required at this point.

- b) Review of the Council's Financial Management procedures including consideration of amendments to Council's Financial Regulations.

Cllr Annis referred to the information provided to Councillors prior to the meeting, that set out the three proposed amendments and their context. One of the amendments was required by a change in statute. The other two reflected a change in Council staff structure and a practical need to increase the petty cash threshold.

Cllr Annis proposed the Council's Financial Regulations be amended in line with his referral. Cllr Norris seconded the proposal. The Committee agreed the proposal.

With reference to the amendment reflecting a change in the Council's staff structure, Councillors should remain aware, the Responsible Finance Officer role is not that of an Assistant Town Clerk.

- c) Review of Council's Community Infrastructure Levy priorities and expenditure.

A comprehensive review had been undertaken at the full Town Council meeting held on 19th July 2023.

- d) Review of Council's Policies.

There were no policies for review.

- e) Review of the Council's Risk Assessment.

The Clerk reported the Council's Risk Assessment is up-to-date following the recent annual insurance renewal process. A further formal review will be

undertaken towards the end of the calendar year.

GF018/23 To consider matters raised in the Council's Internal Audit Report.

The Clerk referred to the matters raised in the Internal Auditor's Report and outlined the actions being taken to mitigate the Council's processes where obligations were currently identified as being partly met.

GF019/23 To scrutinise any matters referred from, or to, Council's Community & Assets Committee and/or Planning Committee.

Cllr Phillips informed the Committee that a request had been received from a member of the public made under the Freedom of Information provisions. It was agreed the request was lawful and the Clerk would respond accordingly.

GF020/23 Date, location and timing of the next Governance & Finance Committee meeting.

Cllr Annis reported the next meeting of the Committee, will be held on Tuesday 7th November 2023, at 7pm.

The meeting closed at 7.47pm.

Chairperson..... Date.....