



**Needham Market Town Council
Governance & Finance Committee
Minutes – 10th August 2021**

Present: Chairperson Cllr Annis, Cllrs Kett, Lea, Mason, Norris, O'Shea, Ost, Rix and Stansfield.

The Town Clerk was in attendance.

GF001/21 To receive apologies for absence.

Cllr Phillips

GF002/21 To receive any Declarations of Pecuniary or Non-Pecuniary Interests by Members.

Cllr Lea – Payments of Accounts (Reimbursement of Expenses).

GF003/21 To approve any dispensations with respect to Disclosable Pecuniary Interests.

There were none.

GF004/21 The Minutes of the meeting of the Finance and Governance Section held on 11th May 2021 have been adopted by the Town Council at its meeting held on 19th May 2021.

GF005/21 To consider Accounts for Payment and Confirmation.

Cllr Annis referred the Committee to the Accounts for Payment and Confirmation document that was tabled and a copy of which will be appended to the Minutes and confirmed he had checked all items contained therein and was satisfied they were appropriate to pay.

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

GF006/21 Update on Governance and Finance Arrangements.

- a) To adopt Council's Financial Regulations.

The Clerk explained it was necessary to adopt Financial Regulations previously known as and adopted as Financial Standing Orders, a copy of which had been provided to all Town Councillors.

Cllr Annis proposed the Council adopt what were its Financial Standing Orders renamed Financial Regulations. Cllr Lea seconded the proposal. The Committee agreed the proposal.

- b) To review the Terms of Reference of the Governance & Finance Committee.

The Clerk suggested that, to aid the efficient operation of Council business, the Committee include responsibility for Employment and Staffing matters within its remit.

Cllr Rix proposal the Clerk's suggestion be approved. Cllr Lea seconded the proposal. The Committee agreed the proposal.

- c) To receive the Annual Audit Report 2020/21.

The Clerk referred to the Annual Audit Report 2020/21, a copy of which had been provided to every Town Councillor and a copy of which has been posted on the Town Council's website. In endorsing the need for Council to acknowledge and respond to those issues and recommendations raised in the report, which require action, that action should be carried out as quickly as is practicable. The Clerk identified the relevant items in the report and explained where action had, or is due to be, taken. A number of the issues raised in the report were discussed.

- d) To monitor the Council's approved Budget 2021/22 against actual expenditure.

The Clerk tabled a high-level Income and Expenditure Account plus detailed accounts showing Income and Expenditure against each individual Council Section Budget and Income and Expenditure against each of the Council's Committees Budget (the Committees having replaced the Sections in year).

Councillors welcomed the opportunity to see the detailed Income and Expenditure figures in the two formats provided and discussed both those documents and the overall financial health of the Council. Councillors expressed their thanks to Louise Mills who is standing in for the Responsible Finance Officer during a long-term absence.

- e) Review of the Council's Financial Management procedures.

The Clerk informed the Committee that following a lengthy and arduous process, the Council is at long last on the verge of implementing full online banking procedures. To

ensure this change is visible and authorised, the Clerk suggested the Committee formally approve the additional use of online banking.

Cllr O'Shea proposed approval of the use of online banking and payment of accounts adopting the same verification and validation process currently in use for cheque payments. Cllr Ost seconded the proposal. The Committee agreed the proposal.

- f) Consideration of the allocation of grants and donations for the current financial year.

The Clerk referred the Committee to the allocations of grants and donations already made for the current financial year and confirmed the unspent budgeted for balance available.

The Clerk read out an email from the Needham Market Library Manager thanking the Council for its donation which has been used to purchase prizes for the Library Children's Summer Reading Competition.

The Clerk confirmed the bank account for the Mayor's Charity fund, which is no longer in use but on which regular bank charges are levied, has been closed. The Committee acknowledged the closure as prudent in the circumstances presented.

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

The Clerk informed the Committee that whilst CIL funds have been received by the Town Council during the current and past two fiscal periods, and these have been reported through the necessary process to Mid Suffolk District Council, the Council is yet to establish a priority list for expenditure of the funds.

- h) Review of Council's Policies.

The Committee agreed to defer this item to its next meeting.

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

The Clerk reported the overall review is not yet complete but that, in the meantime, all matters which require a Risk Assessment are assessed as they arise.

- j) Review of the Council's Insurance Cover.

The Clerk reported a copy of the recently renewed Insurance Cover documentation has been provided to all Councillors and referred to a subsequent increase in the Council's Fidelity Insurance Cover prompted by a recommendation in the Annual Audit Report 2020/21.

G007/21 To scrutinise any matters referred from, or to, Council's Community & Assets Committee and/or Planning Committee.

There were no referrals.

G008/21 Date, location and timing of the next Governance & Finance Committee meeting.

Cllr Annis confirmed the next meeting will take place on Tuesday 9th November at 7pm in the Green Room, Needham Market Community Centre.

G009/21 To consider whether, pursuant to Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, the public should be excluded from the meeting for the business specified below on the grounds that if the public were present during this item, it is likely that there would be the disclosure to them of exempt information. The presenters of the reports proposed to be considered are satisfied that the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

Cllr Mason proposed the next item be held in Camera. Cllr Rix seconded the proposal. The Committee agreed the proposal.

- a) To receive a report from the Employment Committee meeting held 30th July 2021.

Cllr Annis presented his report to the Committee. The Committee noted the items therein.

The meeting closed at 8:25pm.

Chairman **Date**