

Minutes of the Finance Committee Meeting

held in the Council Chamber, Emersons Green Town Council,

1900hrs on Thursday 15th December 2022.

- Present:** Councillors Richard Nichols (Chair for this meeting), David Somers (Deputy Mayor), Colin Hunt, Caroline Johnson and Christopher Edwardson.
- Absent:** None.
- In attendance:** Town Clerk, Ian Lyons, Town Clerk's Assistant, Donna Simmons.
- Apologies:** Cllr James Hunt (Chair).
- Public:** None.
- Notes:** The meeting began at 1900hrs. All resolutions are passed with a majority vote, by a show of hands, unless otherwise stated.

FIN_2022.86 Welcome and Introductions.

Motion: In the absence of Cllr James Hunt (Chair) it was moved by Cllr Caroline Johnson and supported by Cllr Colin Hunt that Cllr Richard Nichols Chair this meeting.

Minutes: Cllr Richard Nichols (Chair for this meeting) welcomed everyone present at the meeting and explained the emergency procedures.

FIN_2022.87 Declaration of Interest – Localism Act 2011.

Minutes: Cllr Richard Nichols (Chair for this meeting) reminded members of the requirement to declare an interest.

FIN_2022.88 Public Participation.

Minutes: No members of the public were present.

COUNCIL ADMINISTRATION

FIN_2022.89 Minutes.

Motion: It was moved by Cllr Richard Nichols (Chair for this meeting), supported by Cllr Christopher Edwardson and resolved that:

Resolved: The Minutes of the Finance Committee meeting held on the 24th of November 2022, copies having been circulated, be approved as a correct record, and signed by the Chair.

Minutes: The minutes were signed at the meeting by Cllr Richard Nichols (Chair for this meeting)

FIN_2022.90 Outstanding items from the previous minutes.

Minutes: At the invitation of Cllr Richard Nichols (Chair for this meeting), the Town Clerk delivered a summary of the work undertaken as a result of the resolutions and action points from the previous meetings. As follows:

- The first Treasury Deposit was completed. This will return the sum of £101528.33 on the 27th November 2023. A copy of the transaction had been circulated to Members.
- The photocopier contract was commissioned.
- Barclays.net application has been completed and the hardware is soon to be installed.
- The request for a Citizens Advice motion has been deferred.
- The budget was received and approved by Full Council with two amendments, Office Maintenance (Roller Shutters – additional £1000.00) and Room Hire (Youth Clubs – additional £21000).
- The Rialtas Cloud contract has been commissioned.
- A reminder about the availability of IT services to Councillors was delivered at Full Council.

FINANCE

FIN_2022.91 Bank Reconciliations.

Minutes: The committee read the circulated documents and they were signed by the Chair.
The Town Clerk reported that the interest rate for the Business Premium Account has increased from 0% to 0.4%.

FIN_2022.92 Monthly Payments & Investments.

Minutes: Members examined the schedule, Cllr Caroline Johnson queried why the monthly contracted expenditure for the Town Council's IT provider had increased from the previous month. The Town Clerk was able to clarify that the additional cost was due to the inclusion of the annual web hosting and maintenance, previously carried out by another supplier.
The Town Clerk asked the committee to discuss the option of a further Treasury Deposit of £100,000 with Barclays Bank for a period of 12 months. The investment would not be made until January 2023, therefore the monies and accrued interest would not be received back until January 2024. The Town Clerk

advised Members that the period is not fixed for 12 months, however, this period does yield the greatest interest and the amount can only be £100,000. The Town Clerk has taken into account the approved budget for 2023/2024 and feels that a further Treasury Deposit of £100,000 is achievable. Members had a detailed discussion and after careful consideration agreed that the Town Clerk make a further Treasury Deposit of £100,000 with Barclays Bank in January 2023.

Motion: It was moved by Cllr Richard Nichols (Chair for this meeting), supported by Cllr Christopher Edwardson, and resolved that:

Resolved: The monthly payments list, copies having been circulated, be approved, and signed by the Chair.

Minutes: The Chair signed the payments list.

FIN_2022.93 Budget Monitoring.

Minutes: Members had reviewed the circulated documents and had no questions

FINANCIAL PLANNING

FC_2022.94 Budget 2023.

The two amendments approved by Full Council; Office Maintenance (Roller Shutters – additional £1000.00) and Room Hire (Youth Clubs – additional £21000) were noted by the committee.

PROCUREMENT & CONTRACTS

FIN_2022.95 Procurement – Enhanced DBS Checks.

Minutes: The Town Clerk advised that he will shortly be drafting a Safeguarding Policy to be taken to Full Council for consideration, however, in the meantime it is felt that due to the close working relationship office staff and strategic partners have with members of the public it is felt that DBS checks should be completed. A short discussion was had by Members, Cllr Richard Nichols advised that South Gloucestershire Council offer this service alongside an 'update service' covering potential future changes. Cllr Caroline Johnson thought that all of the office staff should be included. The Town Clerk confirmed that he had spoken to staff members who had agreed to the checks. At the invitation of Cllr Richard Nichols (Chair for this meeting), the Town Clerk provided the following advice:

Enhanced DBS Checks.

LEGAL POWER OR DUTY TO ACT

- Equality Act 2010.
- Children and Families Act 2014.
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2019.
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018.

- The Education Act 2002.
- The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child 1992.
- The Human Rights Act 1998.
- The Children and Social Work Act 2017.
- The Care Act 2014.
- Finance Committee Terms of Reference Function 6.

RECOMMENDATIONS, CONDITIONS, AND OTHER CONTROLS

- Resolve that: “The Finance Committee delegates authority to the Town Clerk to commission Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service checks, at the Town Clerk’s discretion, example copies having been circulated.”

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

- To comply with the law.
- To improve the safety and security of the Town Council team, and strategic partners.
- To aid with a variety of risk assessments.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS & RISKS

For jobs that involve contact with vulnerable adults or children, there is no choice. A DBS check will help to assess if someone poses a risk. The consequences of failing in this regard are incalculable.

Motion: It was moved by Cllr Richard Nichols (Chair for this meeting), supported by Cllr Caroline Johnson, and resolved that:

Resolved: The Finance Committee delegates authority to the Town Clerk to commission enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service checks.

FIN_2022.96 Contract – Central Heating System.

Minutes: The Town Clerk advised that the system is over four years old and has never been serviced, an annual service contract would not only keep the system in good working order but could prevent unexpected breakdowns/large repair bills. At the invitation of Cllr Richard Nichols (Chair for this meeting), the Town Clerk provided the following advice:

LEGAL POWER OR DUTY TO ACT

- Local Government Act 1972, s.133
- The Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998.
- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974.
- The Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998
- Finance Committee Terms of Reference Function 6.
- The Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992.

RECOMMENDATIONS, CONDITIONS, AND OTHER CONTROLS

Resolve that: “The Finance Committee delegates authority to the Town Clerk to commission an annual service contract for maintenance of the central heating system, at the Town Clerk’s discretion, example copies having been circulated.”

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

- To comply with the law.
- To maintain safety standards
- To prolong the life of the equipment.
- To comply with the manufacturer's recommendations.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS & RISKS

The Council currently has no specific budget heading for 'building/property maintenance. However, the current budget for 'office maintenance' is £760 per annum, with £4970 spent in the year to date, due to the fascias and guttering being replaced. Of course, next year's budget includes an adequate allowance of £1800 for this type of expenditure and an earmarked reserve of £30,000 for unexpected costs. At the time of writing, the Council still has substantial reserves held in General Contingency, earmarked reserves, of £175,614.12 and an estimated underspend of over £40,000 for the financial year-end.

Motion: It was moved by Cllr Richard Nichols (Chair for this meeting), supported by Cllr Colin Hunt, and resolved that:

Resolved: The Finance Committee delegates authority to the Town Clerk to commission an annual service contract for the maintenance of the central heating system.

FIN_2022.97 Contract – Roller Shutter Maintenance.

Minutes: The Town Clerk reported that the main entrance shutter had not been functioning correctly recently and an engineer had been called to service the shutter. It was felt that all of the shutters would benefit from an annual service, preventing possible breakdowns and/or large repair bills. A specific qualification is required for shutter maintenance and the Town Clerk has completed a due diligence check on the proposed supplier.

Members discussed the cost implications of an annual service contract against the cost implications of a breakdown. At the invitation of Cllr Richard Nichols (Chair for this meeting), the Town Clerk provided the following advice:

LEGAL POWER OR DUTY TO ACT

- Local Government Act 1972, s.133
- Finance Committee Terms of Reference Function 6.

RECOMMENDATIONS, CONDITIONS, AND OTHER CONTROLS

- Resolve that: "The Finance Committee delegates authority to the Town Clerk to commission an annual service contract for the maintenance of the roller shutter doors, copies having been circulated."

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

- To maintain access to the building.
- To maintain security.
- To prolong the life of the equipment.

- To comply with the manufacturer's recommendations.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS & RISKS

The Council currently has no specific budget heading for 'building/property maintenance. However, the current budget for 'office maintenance' is £760 per annum, with £4970 spent in the year to date, due to the fascias and guttering being replaced. Of course, next year's budget includes an adequate allowance of £1800 for this type of expenditure and an earmarked reserve of £30,000 for unexpected costs. At the time of writing, the Council still has substantial reserves held in General Contingency, earmarked reserves, of £175,614.12 and an estimated underspend of over £40,000 for the financial year-end.

Motion: It was moved by Cllr Richard Nichols (Chair for this meeting), supported by Cllr David Somers (Deputy Mayor), and resolved that:

Resolved: The Finance Committee delegates authority to the Town Clerk to commission an annual service contract for the maintenance of the roller shutter doors, copies having been circulated.

FIN_2022.98 Dates and Timings.

Minutes: Cllr Richard Nichols (Chair for this meeting) announced that the next meeting of the Finance Committee was scheduled to take place:

Thursday 26th January 2023 at 1900hrs in the Emersons Green Town Council Chamber.

Cllr Richard Nichols (Chair for this meeting) concluded the formal business of the meeting at 1940hrs and announced that an informal 'round-table' discussion would take place afterward.