

STAMFORD TOWN COUNCIL

**MINUTES OF THE FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING
HELD ON TUESDAY, 16 JANUARY 2024 AT 6.30PM**

PRESENT Councillor Andrew Croft (Mayor)
Councillor Kelham Cooke (Chairman)
Councillor Robin Morrison (Vice-Chairman)
Councillor Barry Devereux
Councillor Shaun Ford
Councillor Ed Fancourt
Councillor Amanda Wheeler
Councillor Jo Winterbourne
Councillor David Scammell (Substituting for Councillor Bret Allibone)

ALSO PRESENT Town Clerk, Patricia Stuart-Mogg
Councillor Marion Pitt (on-line)
2 members of public on-line

623. Public Participation (Agenda Point 1): None

7.00pm - Members of public left the meeting.

624. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (Agenda Point 2):

Councillor Brett Allibone, Councillor Habib Rahman and Councillor Jo Winterbourne had submitted their apologies, which were noted.

Proposal 1 – It was proposed by Councillor Kelham Cooke, seconded by Councillor Amanda Wheeler and unanimously **RESOLVED** that the apologies were accepted.

625. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (Agenda Point 3)

None made.

626. MINUTES (Agenda Point 4)

The minutes of the Committee meeting on 18 December 2024 which had been ratified at the Town Council meeting of 19 December 2023 were signed as a true record of the meeting.

627. FINANCE (Agenda Point 5)

- i. New format for Financial Reporting* – The Town Clerk reported that following discussion with Councillor David Scammell, as had been reported at the Town Council meeting, a new monthly reporting system should be considered, which may alleviate some of the concerns which have been raised by Councillors. The report will express how ‘Reserves’ are held and used while continuing to monitor the budget over the course of the financial year. It is recommended that any Council approved project, to which funds have been allocated, are identified as ‘Committed Projects’. This would assist with understanding any other funds held by the Council, which should be labelled as the ‘General Fund’. The latter would be effectively a contingency to be drawn upon in the event of an emergency. The Chairman observed that any ‘Committed Project’ could be cancelled or deferred at any time by the Council. There was discussion on how funds which have been earmarked and have not yet been allocated a Purchase Order are managed. As part of the spreadsheet, each Committee budget would categorise every project and the value of the funds assigned. This will provide additional clarity for the Council and Committees as to how funds are

being utilised and what resources are remaining unused over an extended period. It will be the responsibility of each Committee to deliver the services and schedules associated with their budget and committed projects. This document will be updated monthly and accessible to each Committee through SharePoint. The Town Clerk suggested that given recent discussions, it may be beneficial to have a Working Group scrutinise the operation of the budgetary process and checking the system of the Council's financial procedures.

Following discussion, it was considered that an additional Working Group was unnecessary, but a new report may be useful as the current format is not the easiest to understand. It may be necessary to have a separate Budget item on the main Council agenda each month to confirm the status of finances. There was opinion that there may be a gap in scrutiny between the finances and the actual movement of funds. It was considered that perhaps the duties of the Finance Committee should be reviewed to make them more streamlined. It was considered that the new report should be given an initial three-month trial period.

- ii. *Budget Analysis Working Group* – It was the consensus that this would be adding an additional and unnecessary operational layer, as had been previously discussed.
- iii. *The Future Museum Governance* – The Town Clerk advised that this item was included on the agenda so that the new Council are aware of the discussions which had been held with Museum Development East Midlands (MDEM), who advised the Council on its Accreditation application. It was recommended that the preference is for the Town Council to be strongly associated with the Museum project, rather than considering its operation under a Trust. This is especially important in reference to the LCC collection transfer. This was noted, however any decision in respect of Governance will need to be considered when the Council Strategy has been made clear.
- iv. *Staff Parking Charges* - The Chairman observed that following the District Council's review of their parking strategy, the parking passes which had hitherto been issued have been withdrawn. It was noted that five passes were issued for staff to use either Wharf Road or Cattle Market car park. Most of the staff utilised the passes to get to work, attend various site meetings and to transport Council equipment to various sites. The passes are used during the week and over several weekends. There was opinion expressed that staff should consider a cycle to work scheme, as it is a greener option.

Proposal 2 – It was proposed by Councillor Kelham Cooke, seconded by Councillor Jo Winterbourne and unanimously **RESOLVED** that the cost options for acquiring a block of parking passes should be examined.

- v. *To consider Schedule of Payment No.10* – The schedule was examined. It was noted that there were additional invoices to add to the schedule which would be presented to the Town Council for final approval.
- vi. *UK Prosperity Fund Application* – The Town Clerk informed the meeting that the Station Adopters had withdrawn their application for signage at the station, as they did not wish to take the responsibility for the signs. To avoid losing the funding the Town Clerk applied on behalf of the Town Council to pursue this initiative which has been approved by SKDC. The cost for these signs is match funded by a grant approved by the Skells Trust which will need to be reconfirmed at the forthcoming Skells meeting.

Proposal 3 – It was proposed by Councillor Kelham Cooke, seconded by Councillor Amanda Wheeler and unanimously **RESOLVED** the Council accepts the UK Prosperity Fund Grant and Skells Grant to complete the station signage project.

628. GRANT/DONATION REQUEST TO BE CONSIDERED (Agenda Point 6)

The level of grant funding available was noted. It was noted that a request had been received from the Speedwatch Team to obtain a Community Speedwatch sign and a tally counter. The application had been submitted to the Skells Trust, but as this is a project operated by the Town Council the funding should be covered by the latter.

Proposal 4 – It was proposed by Councillor Amanda Wheeler, seconded by Councillor Shaun Ford and unanimously **RESOLVED** that the Council supports this expenditure of £133.49 from the grant budget.

629. ASSETS:

- a. *To consider the future use of the Pavilion* – It was noted that an offer had been received to lease the Pavilion as a Community Hub. This was discussed and there were mixed views as to whether the number of charitable organisers currently using the facility regularly will be prevented from using it. Several Councillors considered that this would not be the case and that Councillors Ed Fancourt and Jo Winterbourne examine the offer with an option for a three-month lease (May/June/ July).

Proposal 5 – It was proposed by Councillor Amanda Wheeler, seconded by Councillor Robin Morrison and unanimously **RESOLVED** that the Council considers a trial lease of the Pavilion for a three-month period.

- b. *Consider the future management of the Bastion* – Following discussion it was the consensus that the first step is for a site meeting to be convened by the Committee.

Proposal 6 – It was proposed by Councillor Jo Winterbourne, seconded by Councillor Shaun Ford and unanimously **RESOLVED** that a site meeting is convened for the Finance Committee as soon as possible.

- c. *Update on Red Lion Square Public Conveniences* – It was confirmed that the scaffolding had been erected and the roof work is commencing. The clearance of the basement should be completed this month and the drawings for all levels have been obtained. Once the basement is clear, the next step would be to secure the Council's access points to the site.
- d. *Extension of the Heritage Board in the Court Room* – It was noted that this needs to be scheduled to ensure future space. A specialist quote had been received to replicate another section and install the unit at a cost of £7,185.00 + VAT. The price will be valid for 6months.

Proposal 7 – It was proposed by Councillor Kelham Cooke, seconded by Councillor Shaun Ford and unanimously **RESOLVED** that the Council approves this work to proceed at a cost of £7,185.00 + VAT.

- e. *Town Hall remedial work* – The Town Clerk reported that following an inspection to the front office it had been observed that the two sash windows need to be replaced. A quote is waited for the work. Discussion ensued as to enhancing security by installing shutters. It was considered that installing wooden window shutters would be preferable to retain the integrity of the building.

Proposal 8– It was proposed by Council Kelham Cooke, seconded by Councillor Amanda Wheeler and unanimously **RESOLVED** that a quote is obtained to investigate whether wooden window shutters could be fitted to the windows to the front offices, Malcolm Sargent Room and Parlour.

- f. *Town Council Asset Bookings* – A schedule of bookings was considered and noted. In respect of the Civil Ceremony bookings there was a suggestion that possibly Councillors could be involved

in ‘buddying’ with staff to cover these events. An allowance of £15.00 per hour should be paid to Councillors. This would be considered further.

20.00hrs - The Chairman confirmed that pursuant to Section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 it was resolved that, because of the commercial sensitivity and confidential staff business to be discussed, the meeting would continue in Closed Session.

20.30hrs – Meeting resumed in Open Session.

630. DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING – Tuesday 20 February 2024

Chairman - Meeting Closed at 20.30pm