

## STAMFORD TOWN COUNCIL

### **MINUTES OF THE FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY, 20 FEBRUARY 2024 AT 6.30PM**

**PRESENT** Councillor Andrew Croft (Mayor)  
Councillor Kelham Cooke (Chairman)  
Councillor Robin Morrison (Vice-Chairman)  
Councillor Bret Allibone  
Councillor Barry Devereux  
Councillor Habib Rahman  
Councillor Shaun Ford  
Councillor Ed Fancourt  
Councillor Amanda Wheeler  
Councillor Jo Winterbourne

**ALSO PRESENT** Town Clerk, Patricia Stuart-Mogg  
Representative of Friends of Stamford Station

#### **699. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (Agenda Point 1)**

A representative of Friends of Stamford Station presented an application for £515.00 grant assistance towards the continuous improvements and enhancement of Stamford station for the benefit of local residents and visitors to the Town.

The Chairman thanked the representative for his presentation and advised that this matter would be considered later in the meeting. The decision would be advised following the Town Council meeting at the end of the month.

**6.45pm** - Member of public left the meeting.

**700. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (Agenda Point 2)** - None

#### **701. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (Agenda Point 3)**

Councillor Barry Devereux declared a Personal and Prejudicial Interest in respect of any discussions relating to the issue of the boundary matter at Queens Walk allotments and a resident living on Tinwell Road as they are his future parent-in-laws.

#### **702. MINUTES (Agenda Point 4)**

The minutes of the Committee meeting on 16 January 2024 which had been ratified at the Town Council meeting of 23 January 2024 were signed as a true record of the meeting.

#### **703. FINANCE (Agenda Point 5)**

- i. New format for Financial Reporting* – The Town Clerk presented the new financial report proposal, which had been completed with the assistance of Councillor David Scammel, to help Councillors better understand the operation and movement of Council finances. Following discussion, the Committee considered that although this report illustrated how held ‘Reserves’ are used over the course of the financial year, it did not represent modern accountancy software. The other apprehension was that funds for Council approved projects could be identified as ‘Committed Projects’ rather than ‘Earmarked Reserves’, which was the usual terminology for such resources. Councillor Kelham Cooke observed that any such projects could be cancelled or deferred at any time by the Council. It was also recognised that any additional funds held by the Council could be labelled as the ‘General Fund’. The latter would effectively represent a

contingency to be drawn upon in the event of an emergency. 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 were being utilised and what resources remain unused over an extended period. This document will be updated monthly and accessible to each Committee through SharePoint.

It was a consensus that a simpler accountancy programme other than Sage such as Quick Books could be considered for ease of understanding.

**Proposal 1** – It was proposed by Councillor Kelham Cooke, seconded by Councillor Robin Morrison and unanimously **RESOLVED** that the new report should be circulated to the Council for a decision to be taken at the forthcoming Town Council meeting.

- ii. Finance Committee Membership Review – It was noted that Councillor Robin Morrison considered including Councillor David Scammell as a permanent member of this Committee. However, this would require the Terms of Reference to be reviewed. It was recognised that Councillor Scammell could attend these Committee meetings but could not vote. As there were only two more meetings in this financial year it was the consensus to defer this matter until the Annual Town Council meeting.

**Proposal 2** – It was proposed by Councillor Kelham Cooke, seconded by Councillor Robin Morrison and unanimously **RESOLVED** to retain the status quo and defer the Terms of Reference to the forthcoming Annual Town Council meeting in May.

- iii. *Internal Audit & External Audit way forward* – The Town Clerk reported that a meeting was scheduled on the 15<sup>th</sup> March with the Internal Auditor and David Scammell to examine the Council accountancy processes in preparation for External Audit. Councillor Robin Morrison observed that the Internal Auditor advocated that there should be more scrutiny of the accountancy process. Councillor Morrison suggested that he and another member of the Council scrutinise the processing system monthly.

**Proposal 3** – It was proposed by Councillor Robin Morrison, seconded by Councillor Andrew Croft and unanimously **RESOLVED** that Councillor Morrison and another member of the Council scrutinise the processing system monthly. The nomination of the other Councillor would be decided at the forthcoming Town Council meeting.

- iv. *Succession Planning leading to handover* – The Chairman proposed that this item is moved to be discussed in Closed Session at the end of the Meeting as it related to personnel issues. This was agreed by the Committee.
- v. *To approve Debit Card cap of £500* – This matter was discussed, with the consensus supporting a cap on the Council debit card.

**Proposal 4** – It was proposed by Councillor Kelham Cooke, seconded by Councillor Shaun Ford and unanimously **RESOLVED** that the Council approves a cap of spending limit £500.00 against the Council debit card.

- vi. *Legal Advice on Allotment Boundary issue* – The Chairman proposed that this item is moved to be discussed in Closed Session at the end of the Meeting as it related to a legal matter associated with a resident. This was agreed by the Committee.
- vii. *The Future Museum Governance* – The Town Clerk advised that this item was included on the agenda so that the new Council is 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.

- viii. *To consider Schedule of Payment No.11* – The schedule is being prepared and as there are additional invoices to add it would be presented to the Town Council for final approval.
- ix. *Power Surge at Town Hall* – It was reported that a power outage had occurred at the Town Hall which had resulted in the passenger lift, photocopier and cookers in the main kitchen not functioning. During debate, it was considered that all extension leads without surge protection should be immediately upgraded and a back up portable printer be purchased. It was noted that all electrical items are routinely PAT tested, with the full electrical inspection due possibly in 2026.

**Proposal 5**– It was proposed by Councillor Amanda Wheeler, seconded by Councillor Jo Winterbourne and unanimously **RESOLVED** the Council approves all extension leads without surge protection be immediately upgraded and a backup portable printer be purchased.

#### **704. GRANT/DONATION REQUEST TO BE CONSIDERED (Agenda Point 6)**

- a. *Friends of Stamford Station* – The Committee considered the grant application for assistance of £515.00 to support the enhancement of Stamford Station.

**Proposal 6** – It was proposed by Councillor Amanda Wheeler, seconded by Councillor Andrew Croft and unanimously **RESOLVED** the Council approved the grant award of £515.00 to the Friends of Stamford Station.

- b. *Frank Newbon* – The Committee considered the request for grant assistance of £307.93 to support the ongoing costs of the outdoor gym located on the Recreation Ground.

**Proposal 7** – It was proposed by Councillor Amanda Wheeler, seconded by Councillor Ed Fancourt and unanimously **RESOLVED** the Council approves the grant award of £307.93 to Frank Newbon Community Projects CIC towards the ongoing cost to support the community outdoor gym.

#### **705. ASSETS (Agenda Point 7)**

- a. *To consider the future use of the Pavilion* – The Chairman proposed that this item be moved to be discussed in Closed Session at the end of the Meeting as it related to Commercially sensitive matters. This was agreed by the Committee.
- b. *Consider the future management of the Bastion* – Following discussion and the recent site visit it was considered that the first step would be for the site to be cleared subject to consultation with Historic England. Once this step had been completed the Council would be better able to assess the future use of this location.

**Proposal 8** – It was proposed by Councillor Kelham Cooke, seconded by Councillor Amanda Wheeler and unanimously **RESOLVED** that the Council approves the site being cleared subject to consultation with Historic England.

- c. *Update on Red Lion Square Public Conveniences* – The Town Clerk confirmed that the clearance of the basement had been completed and the initial floor plans of the Red Lion Square public toilet building, formerly the Butter Market, had been obtained. Following discussion, it was recognised that the initial activities to be undertaken are the provision of a simple access to the upper and lower floors and the provision of an electrical supply to the upper and lower floors from the Red Lion Square public toilet electrical meter. It was also noted that a feasibility study

is scheduled to be conducted by the Museum Committee of the Town Hall which could also include the former Butter Market. It was understood that the Heritage Officer is obtaining a grant to carry out this study.

**Proposal 9** – It was proposed by Councillor Amanda Wheeler, seconded by Councillor Shaun Ford and unanimously **RESOLVED** that the Council approves that a quote is obtained for the installation of a simple access to the upper and lower floors of the Former Butter Market, together with the installation of an electricity supply to these floors.

**706. TOWN COUNCIL STRATEGY PHASE 1 REPORT AND PROPOSAL FOR PHASE 2  
(Agenda Point 6)**

The Town Clerk observed that the completed Phase 1 report had been received and the proposed Phase 2 needed consideration. Following discussion, it was considered that the documents should be circulated to all members of the Council and would be reviewed at the next Finance Committee meeting.

**Proposal 10** – It was proposed by Councillor Kelham Cooke, seconded by Councillor Amanda Wheeler and unanimously **RESOLVED** that the documents are circulated to the members of the Council and the proposed Phase 2 be reviewed by the Finance Committee at the April meeting.

**19.10hrs** - 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.

**707. DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING – Tuesday 12 March 2024**

Chairman - Meeting Closed at 20.30pm