

STAMFORD TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY, 12 MARCH 2024 AT 6.30PM

PRESENT Councillor Andrew Croft (Mayor)
Councillor Robin Morrison (Vice-Chairman)
Councillor Bret Allibone
Councillor Habib Rahman
Councillor Shaun Ford
Councillor Ed Fancourt
Councillor Amanda Wheeler

ALSO PRESENT Town Clerk, Patricia Stuart-Mogg

738. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (Agenda Point 1) - None

739. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (Agenda Point 2)

Councillor Kelham Cooke, Councillor Barry Devereux and Councillor Jo Winterbourne submitted their apologies and reasons for absence. These were noted.

Proposal 1 – It was proposed by Councillor Shaun Ford, seconded by Councillor Andrew Croft and unanimously **RESOLVED** to accept the reasons for absence.

740. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (Agenda Point 3) - None

741. MINUTES (Agenda Point 4)

The minutes of the Committee meeting on 20 February 2024 which had been ratified at the Town Council meeting of 27 February 2024 were signed as a true record of the meeting.

742. FINANCE (Agenda Point 5)

- i. Confirm renewal agreement with Barclays Bank* – The Town Clerk confirmed that a new agreement had been reached with Barclays Bank for the hire of Town Hall facilities for the coming 12 months. This was noted and the Town Clerk was instructed to sign the agreement on behalf of the Council.
- ii. To review status of 2023/24 budget and funds for committed projects* - It was noted that this item would be deferred as the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) details are due from the PKF Littlejohn on 18 March 2024. The AGAR is a set of documents and financial statements that the Town Council is required to prepare and submit each year. It is an essential part of the External Audit process, as it provides a transparent and accountable overview of a Council's financial activities, governance procedures, and decision-making processes. It allows the Council to demonstrate its stewardship of public funds, compliance with statutory requirements and financial regulations. The Governance statement provides assurance that the Council's financial operations are conducted in a responsible and proper manner. It ensures that the Council's accounts are accurate, complete, and reflective of the Council's financial position. The AGAR typically consists of several sections, including the Annual Governance Statement, Accounting Statements, and an Internal Audit Report. Each section requires specific information related to the Council's governance arrangements, financial transactions, assets and liabilities, income and expenditure details. It was noted that the end of year calculations would be available by the April Finance meeting. On Friday 15th March a meeting is scheduled with the Internal Auditor and Councillor David Scammell to discuss the audit process. This was noted.

- iii. *2024 – 2025 Grass Verge Tenders* – The Town Clerk confirmed that three tender receipts had been received. These would be examined and analysed in Closed Session once all other agenda items had been addressed.
- iv. *To consider a loan scheme* - The Town Clerk reported that a request had been received as to whether there could be consideration by the Town Council to offer a loan against a salary payment. It was considered that this item should be discussed further during the Closed Session.
- v. *2023/24 Annual Report* – All Committee chairs were reminded to submit their committee reports in readiness for the Annual Town Meeting scheduled on 25th March.
- vi. *To consider Schedule of Payment No.12* – The schedule is being prepared and as there are additional invoices to add it which would be presented to the Town Council for final approval.

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

The status of the grant fund had been circulated and was noted. No grant requests had been received for consideration.

744. ASSETS (Agenda Point 7)

- a. *Update on action points relating to assets:*
 - i. **Town Hall** – Work to the front office and the gents' lavatories is scheduled to commence shortly.
 - ii. **The Pavilion** – It was reported that the fire escape door is sticking as the wooden building has moved slightly. An inspection is being carried out and a quote for the work is awaited. It was recognised that expressions of interest are being requested and this work will be undertaken before any such agreement is in place. There was discussion as to whether any research had been carried out as to the commercial value of leasing this unit. This matter is in hand and should be available when considering the bids to enable an informed decision being made.
 - iii. **The Bastion** – It was noted that this is pending clearance. It was reported that between 1st March and mid-September is the nesting season. Providing the site is checked for no active bird nesting, the clearance of the site may continue. However, Historic England is to be contacted to ensure that they are comfortable with the clearance and that no damage will occur to the historic structure. During discussion it was recognised that the extensive growth of self-seeded buddleia is of concern. Once cleared a reassessment would be taken regarding the future use of the site.
 - iv. **RLS Public Conveniences** (formerly the Butter Market) – It was reported that the request for three architects to submit their proposals for constructing a simple access to the property, together with their vision for the future use of the building, are awaited for consideration.
 - v. **Cemetery Chapel and Workshop** – Following the completion of the roofing work the new guttering has now been fitted and internal decoration to refresh the Chapel before use is scheduled commencing 18 March. The quote to address the floor tiles is awaited. The furniture will be cleaned by the Council Operatives in readiness for the Chapel to be available in April. This was noted.
 - vi. **Renewal of Leases & Licence of Clubs** – Councillor Fancourt confirmed that these remained in hand and meetings with the clubs are scheduled to update the leases and licences. All outstanding invoices are due to be submitted in respect of this financial year.
 - vii. **Recreation Ground public conveniences** – It was noted that a request had been submitted in respect of the D Day 80th anniversary commemoration on the 6th June 2024 for the public

toilets to be open from 5pm to 10pm. This would incur overtime and unsocial hours payments. Following discussion, the consensus was to grant consent, but the overtime cost would have to be allocated to the Events budget.

Proposal 2 – It was proposed by Councillor Amanda Wheeler, seconded by councillor Ed Fancourt and unanimously **RESOLVED** that the overtime cost for the opening of the facility is allocated to the budget of the Events Committee.

- b. *Renewal of Town Council Insurance Policy* – It was recommended that the insurance policy for the coming year is renewed with the current provider. This was supported and it was agreed that the premium details would be advised at the Town Council meeting.

19.15hrs - The Chairman confirmed that pursuant to Section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 it was resolved that, due to the commercial sensitivity and confidential staff business to be discussed, the meeting would continue in Closed Session.

19.45hrs – Meeting resumed in Open Session.

745. DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING – Tuesday 16 April 2024

Chairman
Meeting Closed at 19.45pm