

**Minutes of the Meeting of the Finance and Administration Committee
held in the Town Hall on Wednesday 22 February 2023**

Present Councillor R Hopkinson (Chair)
Councillors S Abbott, H Belcher, J Brook, T Ellis, M Jackson, S Senior
and G Ward

In Attendance Mrs M Jones (Head of Finance and Administration)
D Martin (Chief Executive)

F&A 11/22 Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillors D Jarman.

F&A 12/22 Public Question Time and Petitions

Representatives from The Last Baguette Theatre Company and Rewired Counselling asked the Committee to support their grant applications (see *Minute F&A 15/22*).

F&A 13/22 Declarations of Interest

To receive any Declaration(s) of Interest under Corsham Town Council's Code of Conduct issued in accordance with the Localism Act 2011.

Councillor R Hopkinson declared a non-pecuniary interest in *Agenda Item 5 Grant Applications* as a relative was working for the MS Society.

F&A 14/22 Matters Arising from the Notes of the Finance and Administration Committee meeting held on 7 December 2022

There were no matters arising.

F&A 15/22 Grant Applications (Sixth Round)

Three grant applications were considered.

Resolved

- i) That The Last Baguette Theatre Company be awarded £500 towards hire of rehearsal space at Corsham Rugby Club for a new outdoor family production of Pandora's Box.

- ii) That Rewired Counselling be awarded £500 towards a full day mental, physical and emotional health event for over 200 students at The Corsham School, in conjunction with Pound Arts.

Section 137

- iii) That the Wessex MS Therapy Centre grant application be deferred to the next Finance and Administration Committee meeting pending further information on matters including the location of therapy sessions and the number of beneficiaries from Corsham.

Corsham Area Development Trust (CADT)/Tourist Information Centre request

The CADT which operates the Tourist Information Centre in Arnold House, had requested further financial support towards its energy costs. It had been awarded £500 in the current financial year from an earmarked reserve (EMR 361 – Grant Tourism/CADT). Energy costs for the ground floor of the property were currently split 50:50 between the CADT and Town Council because part of the ground floor is the mess room for the Council's grounds team. There was £1,467 remaining in the earmarked reserve, part of which could be used towards the CADT's share of the energy costs. The Chief Executive would arrange to meet the CADT to discuss and review the current and future funding agreement.

Resolved

- i) That the Town Council grants the CADT a further £600 from earmarked reserves towards the energy bill for Arnold House.
- ii) That the CADT be requested to provide a copy of its most recent set of accounts.

F&A 16/22 Grants Policy (*Minute F&A 06/22*)

Further to the previous meeting, the draft revised grant guidance and application form were considered. The Committee were asked to consider transferring the Corsham Youth Zone budget to the Community Services Committee for future years.

Resolved

- i) That, subject to minor amendment, the grant guidance and application form be approved.
- ii) That from the 2024/25 financial year, the Corsham Youth Zone budget be transferred to the Community Services Committee.

F&A 17/22 Detailed Income and Expenditure Accounts (including the Town Hall)

The Committee reviewed and noted the Income and Expenditure Accounts and Financial Report. Minor typographical errors in the summary report were

pointed out. The Chief Executive drew the committee's attention to the section of the report on Community Infrastructure Levy expenditure.

F&A 18/22 Annual Review of Standing Orders, Financial Regulations and Terms of Reference

The annual review had been completed and the only changes proposed were with reference to the increase in the threshold for the requirement to advertise tenders on the Contracts Finder website and Find-a-Tender (the UK e-notification service). From 21 December 2022, the threshold increased from £25,000 to £30,000. This will mean updating Standing Orders 18.1 v. and 18.3, along with Financial Regulations 11.1 b) and 11.1 h).

Resolved

That the Full Council be recommended to update the Town Council's Standing Orders and Financial Regulations to reflect the new thresholds for advertising contracts.

F&A 19/22 Councillor Training Needs Survey

The periodic Councillor Training Needs Survey had been completed in January 2023. Nine Councillors expressed an interest in training. The Head of Finance and Administration had begun to identify suitable training courses and further in-house training will be provided during the year.

It was reported that the Annual Training and Development Report for Staff and Councillors would be considered at the April Committee meeting.

F&A 20/22 Exclusion of Press and Public

Resolved

That the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the next item of business in order to consider confidential personal information covered by the Data Protection Act 2018.

F&A 21/22 Staffing Review (Notes 12 F&A Cttee 20/04/2022 and 11 F&A Cttee 19/10/2022)

Further to previous meetings, the Chairman and Vice-Chair of the Council and the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Finance and Administration Committee met with the Chief Executive and Head of Finance and Administration on 26 January 2023 to consider a confidential Staffing Review Report. A benchmarking exercise had been completed and several options had been considered.

Resolved

- i) That option ii) Appendix C (Revised Salary Ranges - as amended) contained in the confidential report be implemented from 1 April 2023.

- ii) That, subject to satisfactory performance, one additional increment be awarded after 10 years' continuous service with Corsham Town Council, to those employees who have reached the top of their scale.
- iii) Suggestions such as flexible working, compressed hours, job applications via CVs, the amount of leave which could be carried forward and selling back annual leave be explored further by the Chief Executive and Head of Finance and Administration and be brought back to a future Finance and Administration Committee meeting for consideration.

The meeting commenced at 7.30pm and closed at 8.32pm. There were three members of the public present at the start of the meeting and none at the end.

CHAIRMAN

DATE