

	Meeting (No)	Finance & Administration Committee (3)	
	Date	12th December 2023	
	Document		
	Update on CW&C Asset Management Agreement	Ref No	FA3-30

Following the Extraordinary Market & Town Hall meeting held on 15th November 2023, Council requested that the Asset Management agreement was further progressed with Cheshire West & Chester Council. Additional financial aid was also requested from CW&C in response to the high costs associated with Neston Town Council operating the Market and Town Hall assets following a steep rise in utility charges.

Extract from Extraordinary Market & Town Hall Committee minutes 15/11/23:

35. Market & Town Hall Financial Report

- a) Members studied the report in depth, the RFO talked members through all sections and answered queries. The committee noted that it cost over £41,000 to keep the building open, cleaned, and the rates and utilities paid in 2022/23 [...]
- b) [...] The Finance Manager explained that the breakdown shown was necessary; all costs detailed were a result of the Market & Town Hall being open and operational. The Committee requested that when the report is sent to CWaC, Neston Town Council states its position by including the following issues/concerns:
 - The deficit is met through the budget because the Town Council recognises it is providing a service for local people through the Market & Town Hall assets;
 - A request to re-negotiate the Management Agreement is included;
 - An increase in the service charge received from CWaC is requested, to take into consideration the increase in utility charges both for the current and previous year, to offset costs in lieu of a current agreement.

On 4th December 2023, the Locum Chief Officer and the Finance Manager met with Cheshire West & Chester Council financial officers and the Property Manager in order to examine the accepted Market & Town Hall Financial Breakdown Report 2022/23. The report was discussed in detail and several items were clarified by Neston Town Council officers, noting all contents of the report are based on costs associated with Neston Town Council operating the Town Hall and Market assets.

Cheshire West officers indicated that a two-year extension to the Asset Management agreement is on the horizon. Neston Town Council is also requested to consider financial aid amount required towards running costs and service rent.

Zoë Dean

Locum Chief Officer

6th December 2023