



Meeting (No) **Finance & Administration Committee (4)**
Time & Date **10am Tuesday 20th February 2024**
Place **Neston Town Hall**
Document **Minutes**

Present: Cllrs S. Jones (Chair), C. Braithwaite, J. Edwards, S. Hudspeth and P. Kynaston.

In attendance: Z. Dean (Locum Chief Officer), T. Godfrey (Finance Manager/RFO).

PART 1: Items considered in the presence of the press and public	
33	Public Participation
	No members of the public were present.
34	Apologies for Absence
	Cllr Wastell – personal reasons.
35	Declarations of Interest
	None received.
36	Minutes of the Last Meeting
	RESOLVED: to accept the minutes from the meeting held on 12/12/23 as an accurate record of that meeting. The Chairman duly signed the minutes.
37	Committee Accounts up to Month 10
	<p>A question was asked regarding the budget remaining in the contingency fund (code 4099). The RFO clarified that this amount is set aside in the budget, which does not detract from reserves when taking into account all funded expenditure. A £1,000 spend in the budget is forecasted to date. The underspend in this budget could help alleviate overspends in other areas of the accounts. The Town Council does not currently have a budget for elections; costs for the May 2023 elections totalled £719. It was noted that Neston Town Council would need an election budget by 2027. £5,000 from CIL has been paid out for play equipment, and a further £5,000 has been agreed and ring-fenced for the speed chicane at Ness. Officers clarified that no CIL money is due for the current year, which has been confirmed by CWaC.</p> <p>RESOLVED: To approve the accounts as presented.</p>
38	Finance
a	<p>The biscuit decorating for the Halloween market was queried. Due to the way the accounting system is set up the amount appears multiple times due to separate, agreed expenditure being drawn down from the Ear Marked Reserve (EMR). It was clarified that the payments for Cllr Wastell came from the Mayor's Allowance. A request was made to note the specific items where the system will allow, i.e. wreath for Remembrance Day. The payment for mosquito monitoring was queried, members noted that the required equipment is paid for by the Council as time to undertake the work is provided free of charge by the volunteers. The payment for flood barriers was queried. The RFO explained that it is not always possible to shop locally for specialist equipment which is why the internet is often utilised to source specifics.</p> <p>RESOLVED: to approve expenditure of £84,299.14 net from the Council's current account authorised by the RFO from 01/11/23 to 31/01/24, and Equals card payment of £875.39 net from 01/11/23 to 31/01/24.</p>

Initial:

Date:

b	<p>Members noted that the Town Hall is doing well this year, income-wise. By 31/01/24 the income projection had been exceeded. For the new financial year (2024/25) income is forecasted at £15,000.</p> <p>RESOLVED: to note current account income of £14,022.52 net from 01/11/23 to 31/01/24.</p>
c	<p>RESOLVED: to agree the reconciliation of the Council's three bank accounts to 31/01/24.</p>
39	<p>Breakdown of ICT Costs</p>
	<p>At the last meeting, committee requested further comparisons. December 2023 had been included as the invoiced amounts were relatively small over the festive period. Committee noted they found the graphs were useful and they wished for them to continue.</p> <p>RESOLVED: To receive the ICT cost breakdown.</p>
40	<p>ICT SLA</p>
	<p>It was noted that the charges were reasonable and the document had been extensively revised last year. Only marginal increases had been included: 20.1.1 - Increase to £200 (£25 annual increase), 20.1.2 - Increase to £48 (£3 per hour increase).</p> <p>The following amendments were proposed:</p> <p>20.1.1 – update the year to 2024</p> <p>21.1.3 – to rework the following paragraph: In the event of disagreement over the appointment of an Expert, the President of the Institute of Arbitrators shall be asked to appoint an arbitrator; the person appointed is to act as expert and not arbitrator and whose decision is binding on all parties.</p> <p>RESOLVED: to accept the ICT SLA with the above amendments.</p>
41	<p>Delivery Plan</p>
	<p>Following a query, Committee was advised that the asset management agreement for the Town Hall and Lower Community Unit would be updated and a new lease agreement from CWaC was expected. With regards to the Council Facebook page, members noted that the page needed to be staff managed, work was ongoing behind the scenes for this. Work was ongoing for the Town website with Cllr Jones and the volunteers to replace the current business directory with Google search technology which would be suitable for mobile devices.</p> <p>RESOLVED: to accept the F&A Delivery Plan in its current form.</p>
42	<p>Date of Next Meeting</p>
	<p>It was noted that the next scheduled meeting would held be on 16/04/24 at 10am.</p>

The meeting closed at 11am.

Signed _____ Date _____