

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE **FINANCE & AUDIT COMMITTEE** HELD ON **WEDNESDAY 26<sup>th</sup> FEBRUARY 2020** AT 7.00 P.M. AT THE TOWN HALL, GREAT WESTERN HOUSE, 9 DEVON SQUARE, NEWTON ABBOT

**PRESENT:** Councillors C N Parker (Chairman) Presiding  
D Corney-Walker (Vice-Chairman)

Councillors Mrs C Bunday D Howe  
R Hall C Jenks  
R Hayes M Joyce (Dep Mayor)  
M Hocking M E Ryan

Councillors in Attendance: C Davieson  
B Hayes  
M Pilkington

Officers in Attendance: Phil Rowe – Town Clerk  
Sam Scott – Deputy Town Clerk and RFO  
Sally Henley – Town Development Manager  
Alex Robinson – Committee Administrator

454. **APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillors Philip Bullivant, Richard Jenks (Mayor), Mrs Ann Jones and Mrs Lesley Sheffield.

455. **INTERESTS**

None.

456. **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting of the Finance & Audit Committee held on 15<sup>th</sup> January 2020 were received and signed as a correct record.

457. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

None.

458. **STREET CLEANSING – BIN EMPTYING**

The Chairman referred to the letter from Teignbridge District Council, concerning the review of services for emptying litter and dog waste bins within the responsibility of the Town Council, as previously circulated. The Chairman advised Members of the process by which Teignbridge District Council had reviewed the charges under the new Administration and had sought to raise the fees to a more realistic level. The steep rise in charges reflected the period of time where the Town Council, along with all parish and town councils in the District, had not been charged sufficient fees for the service provided.

The Chairman summarised the number of litter and dog waste bins at the Town Quay and Victoria Gardens that remained within the Town Council's responsibility. The Deputy Town Clerk (RFO) had provided a breakdown of the charges due for the year

2020/21. The Chairman advised that he had recently met with the Leader of Teignbridge and had expressed the Council's displeasure at the unexpected steep rise in charges coupled with the untimely demand for payment which fell after the Council had set its precept for the year 2020/21. Councillor Parker added that following some negotiation with Councillors at Teignbridge District Council the principal authority had offered to defer the payment for the forthcoming year to the year end (March 2021) to coincide with a charge for the year 2021/22 (April 2021) to facilitate the Town Council precepting for the two charges. There had also been the offer of instalment payments subject to further negotiation.

Councillors raised grave concerns at the poor financial management and communication of the issue by Teignbridge District Council in this matter. Members noted that the changes would apply to all town and parish councils within Teignbridge and would therefore also have implications for neighbouring budgets. There followed a considered discussion at the potential reduction or total loss of bins within the town; the possibility of relocating the bins outside the jurisdiction of the Town Council and the impact on residents and visitors to Newton Abbot. In an effort to maintain the high standard of service to the residents of Newton Abbot, Councillors felt they were compelled to oblige with the District Council's increase in fees but recorded their express dismay at the methods by which the increased charges were introduced. Accordingly, it was:

**RESOLVED** that a) the Town Council accept the revised charges levied by Teignbridge District Council for the emptying of Litter and Dog Waste bins from Newton Abbot and b) pay the sum of £10,633 in respect of the year from April 2021 to March 2022 (to be billed in advance each year) and negotiate the payment of instalments in respect of charges for the forthcoming financial year.

#### 459. **INCOME AND EXPENDITURE**

##### **A. INCOME & EXPENDITURE STATEMENTS**

The Committee received the Income and Expenditure Statements for December 2019 and January 2020 (previously circulated). The RFO advised that there had been some minor queries in advance of the meeting. The Chairman invited further questions from Members.

#### **31<sup>st</sup> December 2019**

<b>Opening Balance</b>	<b>£ 842,767.21</b>
Heritage Lottery Fund Payment	£ 33,370.00
Misc. Income	£ 5,297.74
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>£ 881,434.95</b>
<b>LESS:</b>	
Expenditure	£ 153,979.39
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>£ 153,979.39</b>
<b>BALANCE as at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2019</b>	

**Business Call & Current Account:** £ 727,455.56

Balances as at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2019

Current Account	£	100.00
Business Call Account	£	727,355.56
Petty Cash Account	£	200.00

**Total Cash in hand at bank** £ 727,655.56

**Total:** £ 727,655.56

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**31<sup>st</sup> January 2020**

**Opening Balance** £ 727,455.56

Heritage Lottery Fund Payment £ 24,026.00

VAT refund 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter £ 90,277.08

Misc. Income £ 4,720.40

**Total Income** £ 846,479.04

**LESS:**

Expenditure £ 206,452.33

**TOTAL EXPENDITURE** £ 206,452.33

**BALANCE 31<sup>st</sup> January 2020**

**Business Call & Current Account:** £ 640,026.71

Balances as at 31<sup>st</sup> January 2020

Current Account	£	100.00
Business Call Account	£	639,926.71
Petty Cash Account	£	200.00

**Total Cash in hand at bank** £ 640,226.71

**Total:** £ 640,226.71

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The Chairman invited comment on the Statements. Members noted the detailed reports provided by the Deputy Town Clerk and expressed their appreciation of the transparency and ease with which they could review the financial statements. Accordingly, it was,

**RESOLVED** that the statements of income and expenditure for December 2019 and January 2020 as submitted to the Committee be hereby approved and signed by the Chairman of the Finance and Audit Committee.

## **B. FINANCIAL BUDGET COMPARISON**

The Chairman referred to the Financial Budget Comparison summary and report which detailed Income and Expenditure for the Finance and Audit Committee for the period 1<sup>st</sup> April 2019 – 31<sup>st</sup> January 2020 (previously circulated). The Chairman noted that there had been no questions in advance but invited questions from Councillors. There being no further questions, accordingly, it was;

**RESOLVED** that the Financial Budget Comparison Summary Income for the Finance and Audit Committee for the period 1<sup>st</sup> April 2019 - 31<sup>st</sup> January 2020, be hereby, approved and signed by the Chairman of the Finance and Audit Committee.

### **460. NEWTON'S PLACE PROJECT - UPDATE**

The Chairman invited the Town Clerk to update Members on the project. The Town Clerk reported that since the last meeting there had been good progress on site; the key elements were that the glass wall to the community room had been installed; the gas boiler had been commissioned and the second fix for both the electricity and carpentry were underway. The sub-contract for the manufacture and installation of the lift car had been let to a new contractor, the date for installation and commissioning had not yet been provided. The furniture for the community rooms had been delivered and would be stored under protective plastic until the construction was completed. The Council had taken receipt of storage crates in preparation of the office move scheduled for 18<sup>th</sup> March 2020 and a meeting to hand over Newton's Place to the Council had been arranged for 16<sup>th</sup> March 2020. The Clerk reported that a press-release had been drafted to advise the public on communication with the Council during the transition to the new building. The Clerk was pleased to report that the Conservation work to the Chancel ceiling would commence in the forthcoming week.

Councillor Mike Ryan, the Chairman of Newton's Place Project Board added that he and Councillor Mike Hocking had attended the last two site meetings and were pleased to note the progress on site during the period between the two meetings.

Following discussion among Members, accordingly, it was;

**RESOLVED** that the verbal updates from both the Town Clerk and the Chairman of the Project Board on the Newton's Place Project be hereby, noted.

### **461. LATE CORRESPONDENCE**

None.

### **462. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting would be Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> July 2020.

### **463. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS**

**RESOLVED** that the press and public be excluded from the meeting during the discussion of the following item of business on the grounds that publicity

would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

464. **NEWTON'S PLACE – ESTABLISHMENT**

The Chairman referred to the proposed amendments to the Council's staffing arrangements as considered at the Meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee on 12<sup>th</sup> February, reference Minute 20/02(436), whereupon Councillors reached agreement in principle subject to the financial implications. The Chairman invited the Deputy Town Clerk (RFO) to update Members on the financial adjustments necessary to meet those arrangements. Following discussion among Members about the increased resilience in service provision by the Town Council, accordingly it was:

**RESOLVED** that the Deputy Town Clerk be authorised to make the necessary adjustments to the Establishment records and payroll services.

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Chairman