

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE **FINANCE & AUDIT COMMITTEE** HELD AT  
NEWTON'S PLACE, 43 WOLBOROUGH STREET, NEWTON ABBOT ON **WEDNESDAY**  
**3<sup>rd</sup> NOVEMBER 2021** AT 7.00 P.M.

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

Councillors P Bullivant D Howe  
Mrs C Bunday (Dep Mayor) R Jenks  
A Hall M Joyce (Mayor)  
R Hall M E Ryan  
M Hocking Mrs L Sheffield

Officers in Attendance: Phil Rowe – Town Clerk  
Sam Scott – Deputy Town Clerk and RFO  
Alex Robinson – Principal Administrator

218. **APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received on behalf of Councillor Mrs Ann Jones and Mrs Sally Henley, Town Development Manager.

219. **INTERESTS**

Councillors Mrs Carol Bunday, Mike Hocking and Mrs Lesley Sheffield gave notice of their intention to declare personal interests on Minute 223 E. below.

220. **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting of the Finance & Audit Committee held on 30<sup>th</sup> June 2021 were received and signed as a correct record.

221. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

None.

222. **PRESENTATION – DCC HIGHWAYS**

The Chairman welcomed Mr John Fewings, Devon County Council (DCC) Neighbourhood Highways Manager and invited him to give an update on the work of the Highways Team in the town, particularly in relation to vegetation.

Mr Fewings gave a background to the Highways team for Newton Abbot and advised that he covered three teams across West Devon; Torridge, Teignbridge and South Hams. Mr Fewings acknowledged that following the recession and subsequent financial budget cuts that services had been significantly reduced over the past 12 years. Having reviewed examples of pavements and paths in Newton Abbot as provided to Mr Fewings he reported that Devon County Council was reviewing its current service provision and policy to take account of safety issues and areas which had severely deteriorated or become damaged due to vegetation.

The Chairman thanked Mr Fewings for his introduction and summary of the work within Newton Abbot and invited comments and questions from Members.

Members raised the following key points:

- Whilst Members understood the financial constraints concerned that DCC was not meeting its statutory duty to keep the footpaths open and safe,
- Safety issues must be met and defects resolved;
- Considerable amount of vegetation to pathways is as a result of growth from private property – the process to get landowners to maintain their adjoining hedges can be slow and difficult;
- Members were encouraged to report defects on the DCC website, but concern expressed that these reports were not actioned despite repeated attempts;
- NATC staff were working hard to clear areas under DCC and Teignbridge District Council (TDC) responsibility without the funding or resources;
- NATC were currently charged for the disposal of any arisings from the clearance;
- DCC had funds available to support Highway Community and Safety work up to 50% of the costs and would offer to remove disposal charges incurred by NATC;
- Local residents have reported defects repeatedly and expressed frustration that they are not actioned;
- Members highlighted examples (specifically in Buckland but also elsewhere) of where the vegetation or tree growth has caused root heave and lifted the paving surface leading to safety issues and potential injury;
- Concern at the new roads which are suffering due to vegetation and their design features have lost appearance with lack of maintenance;
- Jetty Marsh Road is an example of a new road which has deteriorated in a short period and safety concerns were raised for pedestrians or those alighting from vehicles alongside the verge;
- DCC is reducing design and aesthetic features in favour of simple maintenance free surfacing to keep within budget constraints; and
- The Maintenance plan needs increased resources as one cut per year is not sufficient.

In summary Members offered their support to DCC to assist in the maintenance and clearance of vegetation providing the Town Council was supported financially and given the necessary resources to meet the requirements of the town. Mr Fewings welcomed the support of the Town Council and invited further discussion on measures that could be introduced to increase the ongoing maintenance and improve the overall appearance of the town for its residents and visitors.

The Chairman invited Members to forward any further comments to Mr Fewings via the Principal Administrator and thanked Mr Fewings for his open discussion and for his consideration of the concerns raised by Members. Mr Fewings concluded his report with assurances that DCC could provide the Town Council with additional resources and would be pleased to work to improve the situation in the town.

Following which, Mr Fewings was invited to leave the meeting.

## **223. INCOME AND EXPENDITURE**

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

The Committee received the Income and Expenditure Statements for June, July, August and September 2021 (previously circulated). The RFO advised that there had been some minor queries in advance of the meeting. The Chairman invited further questions from Members who sought clarification on a few items in relation to

expenditure during the period June to September 2021. Members also sought information on the final account in relation to the Newton's Place Project and the Clerk advised that once the Project Manager and Quantity Surveyor were in receipt of the final accounts that a full report would be presented to a Meeting of the Finance and Audit Committee early next year. Members noted that the success of Newton's Place as a community space and facility accessible to all in the town could not be solely quantified in financial terms and they expressed their appreciation to all those involved in making it such a superb asset for the town.

**30<sup>th</sup> June 2021**

<b>Opening Balance</b>	<b>£ 558,206.71</b>
Misc. Income	£ 10,619.84
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>£ 568,826.55</b>
 <b>LESS:</b>	
Expenditure	£ 123,605.64
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>£ 123,605.64</b>
<b>BALANCE as at 30<sup>th</sup> June 2021</b>	<b>£ 445,220.91</b>
<b>Business Call &amp; Current Account:</b>	

Balances as at 30<sup>th</sup> June 2021

Current Account	£	100.00
Business Call Account	£	445,120.91
Petty Cash Account	£	200.00
 <b>Total Cash in hand at bank</b>	 <b>£</b>	 <b>445,420.91</b>

Total:  **£ 445,420.91**

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**31<sup>st</sup> July 2021**

<b>Opening Balance</b>	<b>£ 445,220.91</b>
Misc. Income	£ 8,006.04
VAT refund (1 <sup>st</sup> QTR)	£ 23,464.31
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>£ 476,691.26</b>

**LESS:**

Expenditure £ 127,931.46

**TOTAL EXPENDITURE £ 127,931.46**

**BALANCE as at 31<sup>st</sup> July 2021  
Business Call & Current Account: £ 348,759.80**

Balances as at 31<sup>st</sup> July 2021

Current Account £ 100.00

Business Call Account £ 348,659.80

Petty Cash Account £ 200.00

**Total Cash in hand at bank £ 348,959.80**

**Total: £ 348,959.80**

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**31<sup>st</sup> August 2021**

**Opening Balance £ 348,759.80**

Misc. Income £ 11,132.93

**Total Income £ 359,892.73**

**LESS:**

Expenditure £ 62,891.32

**TOTAL EXPENDITURE £ 62,891.32**

**BALANCE as at 31<sup>st</sup> August 2021  
Business Call & Current Account: £ 626,023.10**

Balances as at 31<sup>st</sup> August 2021

Current Account £ 101.00

Business Call Account £ 296,900.41

Petty Cash Account £ 200.00

Total Cash in hand at bank £ 297,201.41

Total: -----  
£ 297,201.41

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30<sup>th</sup> September 2021

Opening Balance £ 297,001.41

Misc. Income £ 9,307.04

Second Tranche of Precept £ 457,353.50

Total Income £ 763,661.95

LESS:

Expenditure £ 151,520.08

TOTAL EXPENDITURE £ 151,520.08

BALANCE as of 30<sup>th</sup> September 2021 £ 612,141.87  
Business Call & Current Account:

Balances as of 30<sup>th</sup> September 2021

Current Account £ 100.00

Business Call Account £ 612,041.87

Petty Cash Account £ 200.00

Total Cash in hand at bank £ 612,341.87

Total: -----  
£ 612,341.87

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The Chairman invited further comment on the statements and reports. Following discussion among Members, accordingly, it was,

**RESOLVED** that the statements of income and expenditure for June, July, August and September 2021 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 – 30<sup>th</sup> September 2021 (previously circulated). The Chairman

noted that there had been no questions in advance but invited questions from Councillors. Following a brief discussion among Members, accordingly, it was;

**RESOLVED** that the Financial Budget Comparison Summary for the Finance and Audit Committee for the period 1<sup>st</sup> April – 30<sup>th</sup> September 2021, be hereby, approved and signed by the Chairman of the Finance and Audit Committee.

#### **C. PROPOSED BUDGET 2022/23**

The Chairman invited Members to consider the proposed budget for the Finance and Audit Committee for 2022/23. The Chairman advised that the budget should follow in line with the other Committee budgets and remain at a standstill subject to inflation and that it would be further considered at the next Meeting of the Strategic Planning Forum to be held on 10<sup>th</sup> November 2021.

Following a brief discussion, it was;

**RESOLVED** that the proposed budget for the Finance and Audit Committee for 2022/23 be further considered at the next Meeting of the Strategic Planning Forum to be held on 10<sup>th</sup> November 2021.

#### **D. PROPOSED BUDGETS FOR 2022/23 REFERRED FROM OTHER COMMITTEES, SUB-COMMITTEES AND WORKING GROUPS**

The Committee received and noted the proposed budgets for the following Committees, Sub-Committees and Working Groups:

- a) Community Engagement Group - Newton In Bloom budget of **£27,000 plus inflation;**
- b) Community Engagement Group - Museum budget of **£32,800 plus inflation\*;**
- c) Events Sub-Committee budget of **£22,000 plus inflation\*;**
- d) Community and Heritage budget **TBC**
- e) Policy and Resources budget of **TBC**

\*Balance from the Museum Budget and the Events Sub-Committee Budget 2021/22 to be carried forward to 2022/23.

Following consideration, Members noted and approved all the budgets listed a) to e). Arising from the discussion it was;

**RESOLVED** that the proposed budgets listed as a) to c) above be hereby recommended for approval and adopted and budgets listed as d) to e) to be considered further at the meeting of the Strategic Planning Forum on 10<sup>th</sup> November 2021.

#### **E. GRANT APPLICATIONS – NOVEMBER 2021.**

The Chairman invited Members to consider applications for Grants and Financial Assistance, a summary of which had been previously circulated. The differing financial contribution was clarified as a Grant being awarded for a specific project or task and Financial Assistance to support ongoing running costs.

The Committee received the following Applications for consideration:

Grants

1. Newton Abbot & District Society of Arts	£600.00
2. The Clay Ball	£250.00

Financial Assistance

3. Newton Abbot Community Transport	£3,300.00
4. Citizens Advice Teignbridge	£5,500.00

Following consideration, it was

**RESOLVED** that

- (a) Applications for **Grants** listed as 1 and 2 be hereby approved; and
- (b) Applications for **Financial Assistance** listed as 3 and 4 be hereby granted.

*Councillors Mrs Carol Bunday, M Hocking and Mrs L Sheffield having declared personal interests on the respective applications abstained from the discussions and voting thereon. Councillor Bunday item (2); Councillor Hocking items (1,2 & 3) and Councillor Sheffield item (4).*

**224. INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT – INTERIM 2021/22**

The Chairman referred Members to the Draft Interim Report for 2021/22 as prepared by the Internal Auditor, previously circulated. The Chairman invited the Deputy Town Clerk (RFO) to provide Members with an update on the Recommendations labelled R1-R6. The Deputy Clerk outlined the actions taken for each of the recommendations.

Members recorded their appreciation that the Internal Audit report demonstrated that despite the minor comments made by the Auditor it showed that the Council had been well managed by Officers and they expressed their particular thanks to the Deputy Town Clerk (RFO) and the Clerk for their efforts and hard work. Following discussion among Members about the resolution of the recommendations, accordingly, it was:

**RESOLVED** that the Council at its meeting to be held on 17<sup>th</sup> November 2021 be **RECOMMENDED** to adopt the **Interim Internal Audit Report 2021/22** and the recommendations labelled **R1-R6** be noted.

**225. PARISH PRECEPTS IN ENGLAND 2020/21**

The Chairman invited the Town Clerk to report on the Comparison Chart, previously circulated, as produced by the Department of Communities and Local Government. Members noted the comparison chart of English Parish Precepts 2020/21. Following consideration, it was:

**RESOLVED** that the Parish Precepts in England 2020/21 be hereby, noted.

**226. LATE CORRESPONDENCE**

None.

227. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting would be Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> January 2022.

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Chairman