

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE **FINANCE & AUDIT COMMITTEE** HELD AT NEWTON'S PLACE, WOLBOROUGH STREET, NEWTON ABBOT ON **WEDNESDAY 1st NOVEMBER 2023** AT 7.00 P.M.

PRESENT: Councillor C Parker (Chairperson) Presiding

Councillors	P Bullivant	M Joyce
	L Cooke	M Ryan
	C Davieson	L Wood
	A Hall	

Councillors G Jennings and A Gibbs also attended the meeting.

Officers in Attendance: Phil Rowe – Town Clerk
Sam Scott – Deputy Town Clerk and RFO
Linda McGuirk - Principal Administrator

By invitation: A representative of Newton Abbot Swimming Club
A representative of Newton Abbot Park Run
A representative of Newton Abbot Citizens Advice Bureau
A representative of Decoy Community Orchard

278. APOLOGIES

Valid reasons for absence were received on behalf of Councillors S Walker, B Bailey, D Corney-Walker, Sally Henley – Town Development Manager and Nigel Canham Communications Advisor.

279. INTERESTS

Councillor C Parker declared an interest in agenda item 8(c), Grant Applications, as he is the Council's representative for the Citizen's Advice Bureau (CAB) and sits on the board of the CAB.

Councillor P Bullivant declared an interest in agenda item 8(d), Grant Applications, as he is a Trustee of Newton Abbot Community Transport.

Councillor A Hall declared an interest in agenda item 8(d), Grant Applications, as he is a Trustee of Newton Abbot Community Transport.

280. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Finance & Audit Committee held on 28th June 2023 were received and signed as a correct record.

281. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

None.

Chairperson initials.....

282. **GRANT APPLICATIONS**

The Chairperson advised that the current grant budget balance is less than the amount of funding being requested. The RFO confirmed that some budget headings were underspent which could be utilised to support the grant budget. Members were further advised they could use capital expenditure to support some of the applications.

The Chairperson welcomed the representatives of the groups to the meeting and invited them to give a short presentation to members.

a) ParkRun Newton Abbot

Members considered the grant application received from ParkRun Newton Abbot. Accordingly, it was:

RESOLVED that the Town Council hereby grants £1,000 to ParkRun Newton Abbot.

b) Newton Abbot Swimming Club

Members considered the grant application received from Newton Abbot. Swimming Club. Accordingly, it was:

RESOLVED that the Town Council hereby grants £2,275 to Newton Abbot Swimming Club. To include £400 from the grants budget and £1,875 from Capital expenditure.

c) Citizens Advice Bureau

Members considered the grant application received from Newton Abbot. Citizens Advice Bureau. Accordingly, it was:

RESOLVED that the Town Council hereby grants £5,500 to Newton Abbot. Citizens Advice Bureau.

Having declared an interest Cllr C Parker took part in discussions but abstained from voting.

d) Newton Abbot Community Transport

Members considered the grant application received from Newton Abbot Community Transport. Accordingly, it was:

RESOLVED that the Town Council hereby grants £5,000 to Newton Abbot Community Transport.

Having declared an interest Cllrs P Bullivant and A Hall took part in discussions but abstained from voting.

e) Newton Abbot Community Orchard

Members considered the grant application received from Newton Abbot Community Orchard. Accordingly, it was:

RESOLVED that the Town Council hereby grants £1,000 to Newton Abbot Community Orchard.

Chairperson initials.....

Cllr M Ryan took part in discussions but abstained from voting.

Discussion took place about how the Council supports organisations such as the CAB and Community Transport in the future. It was agreed the Strategic Planning Forum should consider the process.

283. **INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT: INTERIM REPORT 2023/24**

The Chairperson introduced the Interim Internal Audit Report 2023/24, circulated prior to the meeting. He highlighted the approach of the internal audit to ensure the Council's financial systems remain robust and the Council operates in a manner to ensure effective probity of transactions and to afford a reasonable probability of identifying any material errors or possible abuse of the Council's own and the national statutory regulatory framework.

Members analysed the report and were satisfied that the four recommendations contained at the end of the report relating to the room booking system were being resolved. Members agreed it was an excellent report and expressed their thanks to the RFO and the Town Clerk for their due diligence to ensure the Council's finances meet the necessary standard as set out in the Joint Panel on Accountability and Governance (JPAG).

Accordingly, it was:

RESOLVED that the Finance & Audit Committee approves the Interim Internal Audit Report 2023/24.

284. **POLICIES**

The Chairperson introduced the policy documents, previously circulated:

a) Financial Regulations

The RFO advised that the Financial Regulations had been updated to reflect changes to the Public Contracts (Amendment) Regulations 2022.

Members considered increasing the amount the Clerk can spend under delegated authority, in consultation with the Mayor and Chairperson of the Finance & Audit Committee, in relation to expenditure on behalf of the Council within the appropriate revenue budget. Additionally, expenditure which is necessary to carry out any emergency repair, replacement or other work which is of extreme urgency. Members recognised these limits had not been increased for several years.

Arising from discussions, it was:

RESOLVED that the Financial Regulations be hereby approved and adopted subject to the following amendments:

- Public Contracts (Amendment) Regulations 2022.

Chairperson initials.....

- An increase to the amount the Clerk can spend, in consultation with the Mayor and Chairperson of the Finance & Audit Committee, on behalf of the Council within in the revenue budget, subject to a limit of £5,000 (previously £2,500).
- An increase to the amount the Clerk can spend, in consultation with the Mayor and Chairman of the F&A Committee, to incur expenditure on behalf of the Council which is necessary to carry out any repair replacement or other work which is of extreme urgency. Whether or not there is a budgetary provision for the expenditure, subject to a limit of £20,000 (previously £10,000).
- Page 10, para 12(a) The successful tenderers for major capital contracts shall be asked to provide the guarantee of an insurance company bond or other suitable insolvency cover approved by the Council in a sum normally equal to 20% (previously 10%) of the tender sum.

The Clerk asked members to consider delegating authority to the Clerk to incur expenditure on behalf of the Council when an opportunity arises that requires immediate action, such as purchase of an asset. Members raised some concerns and asked the Clerk to carry out further due diligence and report back with appropriate wording for consideration.

b) Reserves Policy

The RFO advised the Reserves Policy included an update to reflect changes in the Joint Practitioners and Accountability Guide (JPAG) March 2023. Accordingly, it was:

RESOLVED that the Reserves Policy be hereby, approved and adopted.

285. **STRATEGIC PLANNING FORUM**

- a) The Minutes of the Meeting of the **Strategic Planning Forum** held on 26th July 2023 as presented by the Chairperson, Councillor A Hall, were received and approved; and
- b) The Minutes of the Meeting of the **Strategic Planning Forum** held on 13th September 2023 as presented by the Chairperson, Councillor A Hall, were received and approved.

286. **INCOME AND EXPENDITURE**

a) **INCOME & EXPENDITURE STATEMENTS**

The Committee received the Income and Expenditure Statements for the period June to September 2023 (previously circulated). The Chairperson invited questions from Members who sought clarification on a few items in relation to expenditure during the period.

RESOLVED that the statements of income and expenditure for the period June to September 2023 as submitted to the Committee be hereby approved and signed by the Chairperson of the Finance and Audit Committee.

Chairperson initials.....

NEWTON ABBOT TOWN COUNCIL

INTERNAL AUDIT

30th June 2023

Opening Balance	£ 598,054.83
Misc. Income	£ 18,784.89
Total Income	£ 616,839.72
LESS:	
Expenditure	£ 111,145.45
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	£ 111,145.45
 BALANCE as of 30th June 2023 Business Call & Current Account:	 £ 505,694.27

Balances as of 30th June 2023

Current Account	£ 101.00
Business Call Account	£ 505,593.27
Petty Cash Account	£ 200.00
Total Cash in hand at bank	£ 505,894.27

Total: £505,894.27

*Balance of CCLA fund at 30th June 2023***£434,696.00**

Chairperson initials.....

NEWTON ABBOT TOWN COUNCIL

INTERNAL AUDIT

31st July 2023

Opening Balance	£ 505,694.27
Misc. Income	£ 48,338.22
Total Income	£ 554,032.49
LESS:	
Expenditure	£ 179,206.53
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	£ 179,206.53
BALANCE as of 31st July 2023 Business Call & Current Account:	£ 374,825.96

Balances as of 31st July 2023

Current Account	£ 100.00
Business Call Account	£ 374,725.96
Petty Cash Account	£ 200.00
Total Cash in hand at bank	£ 375,025.96

Total: £375,025.96

Balance of CCLA fund at 31st July 2023

£434,696.00

Chairperson initials.....

NEWTON ABBOT TOWN COUNCIL

INTERNAL AUDIT

31st August 2023

Opening Balance	£ 374,825.96
Misc. Income	£ 12,981.62
Total Income	£ 387,807.58
LESS:	
Expenditure	£ 123,085.55
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	£ 123,085.55
 BALANCE as of 31st August 2023 Business Call & Current Account:	 £ 264,722.03

Balances as of 31st August 2023

Current Account	£ 100.00
Business Call Account	£ 264,622.03
Petty Cash Account	£ 200.00
Total Cash in hand at bank	£ 264,822.03

Total: £264,822.03

Balance of CCLA fund at 31st August 2023

£434,696.00

Chairperson initials.....

*Appendix H***NEWTON ABBOT TOWN COUNCIL****INTERNAL AUDIT****30th September 2023**

Opening Balance	£ 264,722.03
Misc. Income	£ 6791.83
Precept (2 nd tranche)	£ 642,250.00
Total Income	£ 913,763.86
LESS:	
Expenditure	£ 107,351.88
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	£ 107,351.88
BALANCE as of 30th September 2023 Business Call & Current Account:	£ 806,411.98

Balances as of 30th September 2023

Current Account	£ 100.00
Business Call Account	£ 806,311.98
Petty Cash Account	£ 200.00
Total Cash in hand at bank	£ 806,611.98

Total: £806,611.98

Balance of CCLA fund at 30th September 2023***£434,696.00***

Chairperson initials.....

b) FINANCIAL BUDGET COMPARISON

The Chairperson referred to the Financial Budget Comparison summary and report which detailed Income and Expenditure for the Finance and Audit Committee for the period 1st April 2023 to 30th September 2023 (previously circulated). The Chairperson 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 1st April 2023 to 30th September 2023, be hereby, approved and signed by the Chairperson of the Finance and Audit Committee.

287. INSURANCE DECLARATION

The Clerk reported that following recent issues at a south-west Town Council, Members who have an involvement in financial matters are being asked to consider the statements below and approach the Town Clerk privately if any of the undermentioned provisions apply to them:

The Policyholder or any partner or any director involved with the business (this includes Councillors with financial responsibility) must specifically disclose if they have:

- Been the subject of a County Court Judgement, an Individual Voluntary Arrangement, a Company Voluntary Arrangement or a Sheriff Court Decree.
- Been convicted of or charged with (but not yet tried for) or been given an Official Police Caution in respect of any criminal offence (other than a motoring offence) which is not spent under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act. Page 5.
- Been declared bankrupt or insolvent or have been or are currently the subject of any bankruptcy or insolvency proceedings.
- Been involved as owner partner or director of any business which has gone or is currently going into receivership, liquidation or administration.
- Been disqualified from being a company director.
- Been subject to an investigation by HM Revenue and Customs, which has resulted in a prosecution.

288. LATE CORRESPONDENCE

None.

289. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting would be Wednesday 10th January 2024.

Meeting closed at 20:40 hrs.

Chairperson initials.....

Chairperson.....Date.....

Chairperson initials.....