

DOWNHAM MARKET FINANCE COMMITTEE
MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD WEDNESDAY 19 OCTOBER 2022 AT 7:00PM

This meeting was held at 15 Paradise Road, Downham Market PE38 9HS

	Present	ACTION
	<p>Committee Members - Cllrs Buxton, Lawson, Marsay, S Moyses and Pyatt</p> <p>Non-Committee Attendee – Cllr Incorvaia</p> <p>Town Clerk – Mr G Spark Deputy Clerk – Ms C Dornan</p> <p>There was three members of the public present</p>	
	<p>Cllr Pyatt, as Mayor, chaired the meeting until agenda Item 1 had been completed.</p>	
1	<p><u>To elect a Chair</u></p> <p>Proposed – Cllr Pyatt Seconded –Cllr Buxton</p> <p>‘That Cllr Lawson be elected as Chair of the Finance Committee.’</p> <p>All In favour</p>	
2	<p><u>To receive Members’ Apologies for Absence</u></p> <p>The following apologies were given:</p> <p>Cllr Pegg – Family Commitments</p> <p>Cllr Wiles – Attending a Police Priority Meeting (Formally known as SNAP)</p> <p>These apologies were accepted.</p>	
3	<p><u>To receive Members’ Declarations of Interest</u></p> <p>There were no declarations of interest made.</p>	
4	<p><u>To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 02 August 2022</u></p> <p>Proposed – Cllr Lawson Seconded –Cllr Pyatt</p> <p>‘That the minutes for the meeting held on 02 August 2022 be approved as a true record of the meeting.’</p>	

	All In favour	
5	<p><u>Public participation – 15 minutes allowed.</u></p> <p>The members of the public in attendance did not wish to speak.</p>	
6	<p><u>To approve the Payment of Bills</u></p> <p>Proposed – Cllr Lawson Seconded – Cllr Pyatt</p> <p>‘That the Bills be approved for payment from 557 – 565.’</p> <p>All In Favour</p> <p>It was noted that the payment 566 was under dispute as it appears to have been paid twice. It is assumed to be a billing error as it has been paid under invoice and on the Credit Card. The RFO is investigating. As the payee is St John Ambulance and we have future bookings planned, there is no immediate concern regarding the funds. The value is £198 including VAT.</p>	CD
7	<p><u>To receive the External Auditor ‘Notice of Conclusion of audit’ for Year End 31 March 2022</u></p> <p>Members received the Notice of Conclusion of audit which had been posted on the Town Council website and noticeboard on 30 September 2022.</p> <p>Members agreed to accept the conclusion notes.</p>	
8	<p><u>To receive Bank Statement and Bank Reconciliation to 30 September 2022</u></p> <p>Members received copies of the August 2022 and September 2022 Bank Statements.</p> <p>Members were advised that the account balances on 19 October 2022 were:</p> <p>BCA - £3,259.08 Reserves - £292,383.77 CIL - £29,300.29 EMR - £109,176.88 Sweep Account - £400,780.96</p> <p>Total = £834,900.98</p> <p>Members were advised that the Bank Reconciliation to 31 August 2022 had been completed however the September 2022 was still underway.</p>	CD

	Proposed – Cllr Pyatt	Seconded – Cllr Buxton	
	<p>‘That the Chair be authorised to sign the Bank Reconciliation to 31 August 2022 on behalf of the Council.’</p> <p>All In Favour</p>		
9	<p><u>To receive VAT position</u></p> <p>Members were advised that the VAT position is up to date.</p> <p>The next period will be 01 July 2022 – 30 September 2022 and the submission is due by 07 November 2022.</p> <p>The submission will be made once the Bank Reconciliation to 30 September 2022 is completed.</p>		CD
10	<p><u>To review budgets against actuals and make recommendations to Full Council on budget amendments</u></p> <p>Members were advised the position up to Month 7.</p> <p>The main overspend areas are Street Lights (upgrade To LED), market operations and car park maintenance.</p> <p>Members did not have any queries on the report.</p>		
11	<p><u>To receive 2023/2024 draft budget suggestions from:</u></p>		
11.1	<p><u>HR Committee</u></p> <p>A draft budget of £308,291.17 had been received.</p> <p>Members discussed reducing the employment costs by working with community volunteers, considering an apprentice and working with Duke of Edinburgh applicants.</p> <p>Members also discussed not clerking working parties to reduce lieu / over-time payments and reducing the number of committees to reduce lieu / over-time payments and stream-line staff hours.</p> <p>Members discussed whether closing the Town Hall on one day a week would reduce Maintenance Officer overtime.</p> <p>Members also discussed whether a recruitment freeze on the Market Porter / part-time Maintenance Officer role be considered and the recruitment of an</p>		

11.2	<p>additional Administrator to job share with the Administrator which had reduced their hours be postponed until an assessment of need be completed.</p> <p>Members supported the training budget and agreed that it would need to be increased due to the May 2023 elections to ensure all new Councillors receive adequate training. Also, the recruitment of a new Town Clerk could incur CiLCA costs and health and safety training costs.</p> <p>Property Committee</p> <p>A draft budget of £195,098 had been received.</p> <p>Members queried whether merging the Property Committee with the Town Hall Committee would streamline administration of all properties owned by the Council.</p> <p>Members noted that the Town Maintenance contract was due for tender ahead of the October 2023 expiry and therefore with increasing inflation, the budget for this cost code was difficult to estimate.</p> <p>Members noted that SSE energy contracts were in fixed until Q1 2024.</p> <p>It was commented that there is the possibility of the Jubilee Community Centre and Jubilee Sports Centre being returned for management by the Town Council however their current bank funds would be ring-fenced for use and there should be little to no impact on the budget.</p> <p>It was noted that the £50,000 budget for upgrade works to The Old Clerk's Office (No. 6) did not take into account the potential rental income from the Town Council Offices at Paradise Road which would be in the region of £24,000. There is currently a loss of income following the Registration Services moving to the library.</p> <p>It was noted that the budget did not include the Town Square LED upgrade of Street Lights.</p> <p>It was noted that the budget did not include the income from Morrisons (£10,100 + CPI), Discover Downham (£250 + RPI), Mind (£12,500 under negotiation), Allotments (£250).</p> <p>It was noted that there was no allocation for allotment provision as land had not been found despite work with local landowners and the Borough Council. However, the current allotment plots would require payment of £250.</p> <p>This figure did not include estimated market income of £28,000.</p>	
------	---	--

11.3	<p>The Burial Board precept had not been budgeted.</p> <p>Town Hall Committee</p> <p>The Committee discussed the Town Hall proposal dated 04 October 2022:</p> <p>‘The same level of funding for 2023-4 would be required with a 3% uplift. An additional £5,000 is requested to cover the costs of repair work to the stage.’</p> <p>When reviewing the 2022/2023 budget, the approved figure was £94,646.00. This included Community Cinema and Craft Fair budget lines which would now be under Community Development and Events. It also included a budget for the stage work (£5,000). The broadband costs would continue until the OneCom contract expires.</p> <p>This figure did not include projected income of Town Hall lettings (£15,000) and Bar Services (£500).</p>	
11.4	<p>Planning & Environment Committee</p> <p>A draft budget of £1,115.00 had been received.</p> <p>Members noted that the budget was a thorough assessment and included a staff requirement assessment as part of this budget. The budget allocated hours to the administration team. Members concluded that the budget request, minus staff costings which HR Committee had already taken into account in their budget, meant that the budget required was to cover postage and expenses such as travel and parking, when attendance was required at the Borough Council offices. This would be covered by the Office Administration budget and therefore no budget was required.</p> <p>And agree responses to Committees</p> <p>A draft budget is to be requested from Community Development and Events Committee. It was noted that there had been some discussion by the Committee over an ice-rink for Christmas 2023. It was unlikely that this would be considered given the current economic climate.</p> <p>It was noted that a budget had not been received from Car Park Management Committee.</p> <p>It was noted that a Downham In Bloom Committee budget had not been submitted to the Finance Committee.</p>	

	All In Favour	CD
14	<p><u>To discuss and agree the updated Risk Register</u></p> <p>Members decided to amend the current Risk Register in the short term and vote to accept this at the next meeting.</p> <p>Cllr Lawson will continue to work on his version and present it when he has fewer work commitments.</p>	DL
15	<p><u>To discuss and agree Scribe Accounting Package renewal term</u></p> <p>Members discussed the old accounting system and the existing system. It was agreed that the Scribe system was cost effective and user friendly and to commit to this system.</p> <p>The options available with Scribe are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 year (standard pricing): +15% which is an extra £11.87 per month (Billed Annually) • 2 years: +10% per year for 2 years which is an extra £7.92 per month (Billed Annually) • 3 years: + 8% per year for 3 years which is an extra £6.33 per month (Billed Annually) <p>It was resolved:</p> <p>Proposed – Cllr Lawson Seconded – Cllr Marsay</p> <p>‘That Council commit to another 3 years, as per the quote. If a 5-year renewal rate is available at less than + 8% then The Clerk is authorised to accept this offer.’</p> <p>All In Favour</p>	GS
16	<p><u>To receive an update on Norfolk and Waveney Mind rent review due by 31 March 2023</u></p> <p>The Deputy Clerk advised that she had been in discussion with the Norfolk and Waveney Mind representative to negotiate the income for the next 3 years. They had offered 4% year on year.</p> <p>It was resolved:</p>	

