

HUNTINGDON TOWN COUNCIL**FINANCE COMMITTEE**

A meeting of the Finance Committee was held at Huntingdon Town Hall on Thursday 1st June 2023 at 7pm.

MINUTES

Present: Councillors M Baker; A Blackwell; K Brockett; D Cole; S Gifford; G Hunt; M Kadewere; P Kennington; B Luckham (Chairman); A McAdam; S McAdam; A Norton; P Pearce; T Sanderson; J Taylor and K Webb.

Absent: None.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillors: J Cole, M Fearon and P Kadewere.

2. APPOINTMENT OF VICE CHAIRMAN

It was proposed, seconded and unanimously

RESOLVED that Councillor P Kennington be appointed Vice Chairman to the Finance Committee for the local government year 2023-24.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllrs D Cole, K Brockett, S Gifford, A McAdam and S McAdam declared an interest in item 13 as members of Huntingdon and Godmanchester Twinning Association. It was noted that as there are no financial implications for this interest, it was not necessary to declare.

4. PUBLIC ADDRESS

There was none.

5. MINUTES

The minutes of the Finance Committee meeting held on the 13th April 2023 (M6) were presented to Members. The Chairman asked Members if there were any comments and with no questions raised, it was then proposed, seconded and

RESOLVED to approve the minutes.

2 members abstained.

6. MONTHLY EXPENDITURE

Members had before them a copy of the monthly expenditure of Huntingdon Town Council for March 2023 and April 2023. Members had been asked to email any

questions to the RFO in advance of the Meeting.

The Chairman confirmed that there had been a question relating to descriptions for aggregated invoices, where one description was used to summarise several transactions. The Town Clerk confirmed that all invoices will be listed separately in future for clarity.

The Chairman asked if there were any further questions, and there were none. It was then proposed, seconded and

RESOLVED to approve the monthly expenditure for March 2023 and April 2023.

7. BANK RECONCILIATION

Members received a copy of the bank reconciliation for months ending 31st March 2023 and 30th April 2023.

The Chairman asked Members whether there were any questions. There were none.

It was proposed, seconded and

RESOLVED to approve the bank reconciliation for month ending 31st March 2023 and 30th April 2023.

8. INCOME AND EXPENDITURE

Members had before them

- i. The year end account as of 31st March 2023 report
- ii. The Balance Sheet summary

The Chairman asked the Finance Officer to give a summary of her report.

The Finance Officer confirmed that the total income received by the council by the end of March 2023, totalled £3,335,071, of which precept is £1,436,220, VAT Refund is £804,568 and remaining income is from the council activities such as crematorium, hall hiring and allotments.

Although income budgeted for the financial year 2022/23 was £2,723,321, the actual income was £2,530,503 leaving a shortfall of £192,818. Most of the income generated is from the crematorium and this was overstated.

The budgeted expenditure is £2,723,321, but the actual spending for the year is £3,095,274 and it leaves an overspend of £371,953 due to an ongoing capital cost and increased utility bill.

The Council income was down by £192,818 and expenditure increased by £371,953 leaving a deficit of £564,771 which was absorbed in the £804K received from VAT refund and gives a surplus of £239,797 at the end of the year.

Members were notified of overspending throughout the financial year because of some capital cost not budgeted and increase in utility bills due to inflation.

The finance officer confirmed that the council has met the legal requirement of having

at least three months revenue budget in the general reserves. She confirmed that money had been ringfenced within the reserves to budget for future elections and repairs and renewals.

The finance officer stated that the crematorium finished with a net expenditure of £270,585 overspent because the income received from crematorium is less than budgeted amount. Some items have been under budgeted such as electricity, licences, and few others. The new crematorium is now used to the maximum capacity and with the aim to meet the target for the year 2023/24.

The finance officer confirmed that the income received from Town Hall and Coneygear Centre for the year is £57,760 compared to budget of £100,000. The budget is overstated because hiring in the Townhall has reduced compared to previous year.

The chairman asked if there were any questions or comments.

A member asked why the CIL reserve balance was lower. The Finance officer confirmed that this was because projects allocated as CIL funded had been completed, as reported on the HDC website. The member asked if it would be possible for a breakdown of CIL funding to be included on next report.

A member asked about the surplus of £239,797, and whether it was able to be spent on upcoming projects, or if it was needed to go in reserves.

The chairman advised that the money would be put into general reserves but could be spent as per council recommendations. The finance officer confirmed that it would be sensible to have a larger reserve.

A member asked about the public works loan. The Finance officer confirmed that it would not be listed out separately as it was already included within the budget.

A member asked if the surplus could be spent on anything, but the finance officer confirmed there would be restrictions on what the money could be spent on.

Members noted the reports.

9. ANNUAL INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT

Members had before them the Annual Internal Audit report. The chairman noted that this had only been received today and invited members to review the document.

A member questioned the lack of cyber security insurance cover as mentioned in the report. The Finance officer confirmed this was being followed up with the insurance provider, as it was understood it was included in the current policy, but the report recommended a separate policy.

A member asked about the Asset Register. The Finance Officer confirmed that some items had been listed incorrectly as a fixed asset. These had now been corrected, but not all changes had been noted to allow for tracking. This process had now been implemented.

The Town Clerk noted that the report was incorrect when referring to the standing orders. The NALC model, which Huntingdon Town Council used as a basis, was updated in 2022, but Huntingdon Town Council did not adopt these changes until April

2023.

With no further comments, it was then proposed, seconded and

RESOLVED to approve the Annual Internal Audit report.

10. END OF YEAR ACCOUNTS 2022/23

The Town Clerk stated that these documents were presented to the Finance committee for interim approval and would receive official approval at the full Town Council meeting.

- i. Members had before them the Draft Financial Statement 2022-23.

A member noted that the listing under Capital Projects 'Loan repayment to HDC' should be corrected to 'Public Works Loan'.

Members noted the statement ahead of official approval at Town Council.

- ii. Members were asked to receive, note and approve the Annual Governance Statement (Section 1) – AGAR.

A member asked about trust funds, and the Town Clerk confirmed that this section was not applicable to Huntingdon Town Council.

With no further questions, it was proposed, seconded and

RESOLVED to approve the Annual Governance Statement (Section 1) – AGAR.

- iii. Members were asked to approve the Accounting Statements (Section 2) – AGAR, and it was proposed, seconded and

RESOLVED to do so.

11. RISK MANAGEMENT ASSESSMENT

Members had before them the Risk Management Assessment.

A Member questioned the item regarding anti-virus software being updated annually. The Finance officer confirmed that it was likely that this referred to the subscription being renewed annually, and not the actual software itself. The Town Clerk confirmed this would be clarified and updated at the next meeting.

Members noted the Risk Management Assessment.

12. FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

The Finance Manager gave a background to the report. The current financial regulations are based on NALC guidance and assume the roles of Town Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer are the same. The Finance Manager has worked with the Town Clerk and chairman to update the regulations to reflect the situation within Huntingdon Town Council.

The chairman noted that there were still some grammatical changes to be made, which would be completed shortly.

It was proposed, seconded and

RESOLVED to approve the financial regulations, subject to amendments.

13. **GUBBIO REPORT**

Members had before them a report from the Huntingdon and Godmanchester Twinning Association on their recent trip to Gubbio. A member gave a background to the report, which was part funded by the EU Twinners for Tomorrow Project.

Three young people from Huntingdon attended and were well received; an Instagram account has now been set up by HGTA to continue this work. The young people intend to stay involved with HGTA.

A member stated that the twin towns of Wertheim and Szentendre also attended the event, along with Thann a French town twinned with Gubbio. There was no representation from Salon de Provence who have dissolved their Twinning Association. The Town Clerk confirmed that although the association has been dissolved, the town council are still in contact with Salon through the Mayor's office.

A member stated that at previous twinning events, focused on sport competitions between towns, there was not an opportunity for collaboration and that cultural exchanges such as these should be encouraged.

A member raised the issue of finances for Twinning. It was suggested that an SLA is drawn up with equal funding to be provided by Huntingdon Town Council and Godmanchester Town Council. The Town Clerk confirmed he would be part of these meetings.

It was proposed, seconded and

RESOLVED to draw up a new Service Level Agreement with the Huntingdon and Godmanchester Twinning Association, following discussions with Godmanchester Town Council.

14. **BUS STATION PARKLET**

The Chairman invited the Town Clerk to give the background to the document.

The Town Clerk stated that the first parklet has been situated outside Sainsburys for a couple of months and other than a small increase in litter, seems well received. The second parklet was purchased at the same time and is waiting to be installed at the bus station, subject to approval of the license by both HTC and HDC.

A member stated that they were in favour of anything to improve that area of the town and highlighted that the wall adjacent to the bus station remains in disrepair. The Town Clerk confirmed that the wall is on HDC land and therefore it is for them to repair.

A member stated that the current parklet is very well used. A member asks if there would be any cost to the council to return the area to its original state, as per the license agreement. The Town Clerk stated that costs could not be confirmed as there is no

agreed date for removal. Town Clerk confirmed the planters would be filled as soon as the parklet was able to be installed.

It was proposed, seconded and

RESOLVED to approve the parklet license for Huntingdon Bus Station.

15. DATE & AGENDA OF THE NEXT MEETING

The date of the next meeting was noted as Thursday 27th July 2023.

Chairman

ITEM NO.	ACTION	WHO'S RESPONSIBLE	DUE DATE	UPDATE