



Newark TOWN COUNCIL

FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE MINUTES

Minutes of the Meeting of the Finance & General Purposes Committee held on Wednesday 6th September 2023 in the Council Chamber, at the Town Hall.

Membership Present:	Councillor	B Corrigan (Chairman)
	Councillors	P Ball (Ap) I Brown D Campbell T Collier E Cropper S Crosby S Dickinson L Geary J Kellas D Ledger D Moore (Vice-Chairman) G Rix N Ross L Roulstone M Skinner M Spoors (Ap) P Taylor
Apologies for Absence:	Councillors	P Ball, M Spoors
Officers Present:	Town Clerk	Matthew Gleadell
Taking Notes:	PA to the Town Clerk	Helen Crossland
	There were 2 members of the public present.	

Venue:	Council Chamber, Newark Town Hall
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Prior to the meeting the Chairman proposed a one minute silence in memory of Sgt Graham Saville, a local policeman who had sadly lost his life, whilst trying to help someone else a couple of weeks ago.

Cllr Mrs I Brown then asked the Chairman to remind all present to speak up please.

FGP27/23/24 Minutes of the last meeting of the Finance & General Purposes Committee held on Wednesday 26th July 2023

Pages 8/9 – CCWG Recommendations

The Town Clerk identified that there had been some confusion about the allocation of funds in the Minutes of the last meeting.

A reworded copy of those Minutes had been circulated prior to this meeting and Members were being asked to accept them.

The Chairman then proposed that Members accept the Minutes as noted above.

Page 10 – Cemetery Development Plans

‘The Town Clerk thought that the space would probably give around 200 years – that then gave rise to questions that if the main cemetery became full, would older people still want to be buried there’

The Chairman proposed an amendment to the above paragraph as follows:

‘The Town Clerk thought that the space would probably give around 200 years – that then gave rise to the question would families still want to bury their children there if this was the case’.

Page 11 – The Chairman proposed that the word **‘possible’** be inserted as follows:

‘Members then AGREED to abandon the previously resolved Cemetery development plans and RESOLVED to focus effort and resource into investigation and developing plans for the delivery of a possible new burial site in, or close to Newark so as to ensure that Newark continues to have available burial space when the existing Cemetery becomes full.’

The above amendments had all been proposed by the Chairman. A vote was held and they were **AGREED**.

The Minutes of the last meeting held on Wednesday 26th July 2023 will be amended as indicated and brought back to the next meeting of the Committee on Wednesday 11th October 2023.

FGP28/23/24 Declarations of Interest

It was **AGREED** to accept any Declarations of Interest as and when they arose during the meeting.

FGP29/23/24 Monthly Payment Schedule 04/24

Cllr D Ledger asked what Voucher Number 346 referred to and was informed that it was HMRC.

Cllr B Corrigan proposed and Cllr D Ledger seconded the Monthly Payment Schedules as follows:

Members **AGREED** that payment in accordance with Payment Schedule 04/24 in the sum of £175,614.97 (one hundred and seventy five thousand, six hundred and fourteen pounds and 97p) be **APPROVED**.

FGP30/23/24 Arts, Culture, Events and Twinning Working Group

This item began with a discussion about the Remit.

It was **AGREED** to amend some of the wording; this is indicated in **RED** below:

Appendix 1 – Remit of Arts, Culture, Events and Twinning Working Group

The group shall consist of 5 Town Council members.

Meetings of the group shall be quorate with at least 3 members present.

The existence and remit of the group shall be reviewed annually at the first FGP meeting of each Civic year and as necessary the Chairman and Vice Chairman shall be appointed at the same meeting.

The group shall meet as often as it deems necessary for the effective discharge of the business of the group.

The group shall report to the FGP committee on at least a quarterly basis albeit more frequent reports may at times be submitted.

The group may from time to time invite third party stakeholders to meetings to support the working group. Representatives from third party stakeholders however shall hold no voting rights.

The group shall be responsible for oversight of the following Town Council undertakings:

- 1. Civic Events, Relationships and Activity.*
- 2. Town Council and Partner Events*
- 3. Town Hall Museum and Art Gallery*

*The purpose of the group will be to take an **influential** ~~active~~ role in the planning, organisation, delivery and evaluation of local events in which*

the Town Council plays an active role either as the principal delivery body or as a partner organisation. This includes all Mayoral Civic events as well as wider public events.

The group will oversee the operation and delivery of the Town Council Museum and Art Gallery.

*The group will oversee the Town Councils Twinning activities **engaging** where considered appropriate ~~alongside~~ **with** the Newark Twinning Association **and any other individuals, groups or organisations interested in Twinning activities.***

The group will be a consultative group for officers who are involved in the delivery of the various event, museum and civic activity and it is not intended for the group to micro manage every aspect of the undertakings identified above.

The group will consider community and partner proposals for arts and cultural activity where Town Council involvement financially or otherwise is being sought.

The group will report to the FGP committee at least on a quarterly basis with relevant details of any matters being dealt with by the group although more frequent updates can be provided as necessary.

Budgets for events and other activity falling under the remit of this group will be allocated annually by the Council.

Where necessary the group will make proposals to the FGP committee in relation to specific decisions that relate to the activity of the group but which can only be made by the FGP committee in accordance with Standing Orders and Financial Regulations.

In all areas of the groups work and remit, the group will seek to ensure appropriate governance and financial management is applied for any financial commitment towards the undertaking of the Group and will seek to ensure that in all areas of undertakings the Council is obtaining best value for public funds and resources.

Cllr I Brown said that she was only asked tonight if she wanted to be on this Committee. It was very short notice to decide.

Cllr P Taylor said he would like to support his paper. The fact that this council was insulted and told that they could not have membership of the group (Twinning Association), they did not want the Town Council to look at their governance. He would like to request that this group gives no money to the Twinning Association, in any form, until there is reassurance that their governance is in order.

Cllr D Ledger asked if this group would work with Newark Creates and N&SDC who already do events; the Chairman referred to paragraph 6 in the remit (above).

Cllr D Ledger then noted that the reasons for the Twinning Association not wanting to have a Town Council representative on their committee

are not known and voiced her concern that the previous comments could be construed as slanderous and could be taken out of context.

Cllr I Brown said that quite a few people in the group had said not to give the Twinning Association any money, but then Cllr N Ross seems to have changed his mind.

Cllr N Ross said this was correct; we do not know the reasons for their decision. There was consultation following the elections. The Governance around the group is their responsibility.

We should expect the same from the Twinning Association. If we do not give them the money, we have no right to ask them anything.

This proposal appears to deal with working with Newark Twinning Association. The amount given to them is a very small proportion of what we spend on events over the year.

Cllr B Corrigan said it was really about the Civic relationship with the Twinning Association.

Cllr L Geary left the meeting at this point.

Cllr S Crosby thought that the Twinning Association had made it quite clear they do not want to work with Newark Town Council.

Cllr J Kellas then spoke; he was concerned about the purpose of the group, Officers in particular. Could be much more involved – they could meet on ‘Teams’ for instance.

Cllr N Ross said he did not want the group doing the work of the LHG.

Cllr I Brown asked the Town Clerk what spare time any Officer(s) would have to do this (taking notes at the meetings for instance). He responded that it would depend on how active the group became.

Cllr B Corrigan said the reason we are keen on this group being set up is so that Newark Town Council will have a better idea of how much is involved.

Cllr G Rix asked if it was absolutely necessary to have staff at these meetings.

Cllr N Ross responded that the Town Council is already heavily involved in all of the events, it might be good to have some Councillors who are involved in this too.

Cllr P Taylor said this was supportive of this authority.

Cllr D Moore named some of the groups in Newark and asked if the Town Council had asked any of them if they wanted Newark Town Council to be involved; he also talked about Arts & Culture.

Cllr B Corrigan then proposed the amendments (as indicated above) to the remit.

This was seconded by Cllr G Rix; a vote was held and this was **AGREED.**

Cllr B Corrigan proposed the establishment of this Working Group.

This was seconded by Cllr G Rix; a vote was held and this was **AGREED.**

The following Members were appointed in line with the remit already discussed:

- Cllr L Roulstone (Labour)
- Cllr J Kellas (Conservative)
- Cllr S Dickinson (IfN)
- Cllr T Collier (IfN)
- Cllr D Campbell (IfN)

Cllr I Brown again said that she had not had time to think about being on the Committee, and that other Councillors seemed to have agreed this beforehand.

Cllr B Corrigan informed Cllr I Brown that she had not been any discussions with regard to this before this meeting.

Cllr G Rix thought that if Cllr I Brown was interested in being on this group, this item should be deferred to the next meeting.

This was not agreed; Cllr G Rix said that it would be noted that not enough notice was given to some people about this item.

Cllr M Skinner proposed, Cllr D Moore seconded, that Cllr T Collier be appointed as the Chairman and Cllr S Dickinson as the Vice-chairman.

A vote was held and this was **AGREED**.

The remit of the group was **AGREED** as above.

FGP31/23/24 Town Centre Lighting/Festive Lighting and Newark Castle Lighting

The questions put before Members were discussed at length.

1. Do we wish to hear NSDC's proposals for the Castle Lighting and use of Doris Bainbridge funds to support this? Use of the remaining Doris Bainbridge funds will result in investment income being lost and the Council then needing to pick up the cost of the Brass Band concerts should they continue. Other reserve funds could be potentially utilised in order to leave the Doris Bainbridge trust funds in place.
2. Does the Council support additional lighting throughout the year having regard to the climate implications of heightened energy use? With green/climate change issues a focus of the Council's undertakings and a desire to be 'net zero' enhanced energy use may be a concern.
3. Does the council wish to invest in the existing Festive display this year? Allowing for wider strategies to be developed and considered makes sense before any significant investment is made.
4. Does the Council wish to support generally wider Town Centre lighting schemes through its festive lighting provision? There are potential install and removal costs where lighting can be left in situ all year round.

Cllrs D Ledger and B Corrigan thought Question 1 was a good idea. Cllr B Corrigan thought that Question 2 was premature – more information was needed from NSDC.

Cllr D Moore thought that questions 1 and 2 should be deferred.

Cllr G Rix agreed with that and objected to using the Doris Bainbridge money. She also said that if we wait for NSDC to come forward, we may end up with no lights this year.

Cllr D Moore also did not want to use the Doris Bainbridge fund and pointed out that the Gatehouse Project had already been budgeted for. He thought the Brass Bands and Brass Explosion funding was more appealing.

Cllr P Taylor was not sure that the Town Council should 'give' money to NSDC and thought that this was going to get very complex. He supported not spending any money now. He also said that there was a significant issue in that area about the lighting disturbing the wildlife – this should be looked at; Cllr E Cropper agreed and said that there are solutions to this – timed switches for instance.

Cllr D Ledger noted that the Doris Bainbridge funds were specifically for using in the Castle Ground and thought that the Town Council needed to see what NSDC were planning. She asked if the Town Council could sustain the Brass Bands if this money were to be used.

Cllr I Brown did not understand why NSDC were being involved.

Cllr J Kellas talked about intrusive lighting and planning. He asked if there was a runout point for this year. By next year there may be a strategy in place.

Cllr B Corrigan asked if we had 'missed the boat' this year to hire Christmas lights.

The Town Clerk responded that it was not too late - he would plan to use the company that has previously worked for the Town Council if this was the case.

The Town Clerk then said he would get clarity on the Doris Bainbridge funds.

Cllr P Taylor then said that NSDC were not trying to 'take' the Town Councils money – they were looking at a partnership.

At this point Cllr G Rix asked for the vote to be taken.

Cllr B Corrigan then proposed that the Town Council wanted to be 'at the table' and may be prepared to give some of the Doris Bainbridge funds at a later stage.

Cllr E Cropper seconded the proposal; a vote was held, and this was **AGREED.**

Cllr B Corrigan then proposed that the existing festive lighting scheme be used for this year and some money spent on repairs for it for this year.

Cllr T Collier seconded the proposal; a vote was held, and this was **AGREED.**

FGP32/23/24 Christmas Lights Switch-On-Event

Cllr D Ledger began the discussion on this item. She supported having the Switch On event this year. She understood fireworks were an issue (with what happened at the Festival). The NCP let us down last year also. She said she would still like to have fireworks included and the people of Newark need to know if it is going to happen.

The Town Clerk informed Members he had been looking at other locations; there might be an occasion to 'test' it on 5th November.

The Town Clerk then talked about Lincoln Market (as outlined in the report).

Cllr G Rix opposed the use of fireworks on environmental grounds.

Cllr P Taylor said he would like to see fireworks if possible but could not condone the use of them at the Riverside Park.

Cllr M Skinner said that if there were to be fireworks the location should be on a 'need to know' basis – perhaps on pink papers. He pointed out that fireworks are very important to children and that this event was very important for charities who raise large amounts of income on this day. It was crucial to maintain this.

Cllr L Roulstone supported Cllr Rix; she thought that the money could be spent on other things to make the event better.

Cllr T Collier supported having fireworks. He did not think the Town Council should be prescriptive about where.

Cllr D Moore noted that the market fills to capacity in the time before the fireworks. It is for the town and is relatively inexpensive for what it does for the town.

Cllr N Ross agreed with Cllr M Skinner. The risk assessment is all important and the location should be on a 'need to know' basis; everything possible should be done to keep the location safe.

Cllr P Taylor suggested this could be advertised as the 'alternative Lincoln Market'.

Cllr I Brown then spoke; she said she had brought this up last year – the middle of the market is not safe. No-one could move at certain times of the night. The Town Council need to ask how many fairground rides were going to be allowed in.

Cllr B Corrigan said that this could be given to the Arts, Culture, Events and Twinning Working Group next year.

Cllr B Corrigan then proposed that there would be fireworks at the Christmas Light Switch on subject to safety considerations (if a safe place can be found).

Cllr P Taylor seconded the proposal; a vote was held and this was **AGREED.**

FGP33/23/24 Chairman's Update – Climate Change Working Group

Cllr D Campbell gave Members an update from the last meeting of this group and the progress that had been made.

The topics covered had been:

Inspire training, Cycle training and Town Hall Energy Survey Proposals.

Cllr D Moore reported that NSDC are just beginning an assessment of their buildings, perhaps the Town Council could 'piggy back' on this.

Cllr M Skinner also informed Members that the group had committed some expenditure.

Cllr E Cropper said that the next meeting would be very soon, to keep the momentum going.

Cllr P Taylor thought the group had a unique opportunity in that they had some cash to spend. He urged the assessment to go ahead – could they put solar panels on this building?.

Cllr G Rix pointed out that the church is going to have some solar panels and asked if this was a precedent.

Further details will be contained in a future report to the Finance & General Purposes Committee.

FGP34/23/24 Allotment Fees and Charges

The Chairman opened the debate on this item. She said she had done some rough calculations and to get anywhere near to breaking even on the figures provided, the cost would have to be 42.95 pence per square metre – an increase of 71.8%.

Cllr G Rix opposed subsidising the allotments. She said the Town Council should write to Robert Jenrick and bring it to the attention of the Secretary of State. Perhaps they might remove the statutory duty.

Cllr P Taylor thought the cost could be raised to 50p per square metre, and bring in a discount scheme for people who are on benefits and proposed this.

Cllr G Rix said there should be an increase to a reasonable rate.

Cllr D Ledger informed Members that last year, she had done this; it was not very well received by the allotment holders. She did not think it should be doubled this year.

Cllr Cropper pointed out that you cannot assume how much people can afford.

Cllr J Kellas asked what the reaction had been to the increase last year.

The Town Clerk reported that when the letter was sent out, there had been no response. At that stage, it was not an invoice.

Cllr D Ledger proposed an increase of 4%.

Cllr B Corrigan said that had already been a proposal, to raise the cost by 50% (to 50p per square metre) with a 50% discount for those who are eligible.

The proposal was seconded by Cllr L Roulstone; a vote was held and this was **NOT AGREED**.

Cllr D Ledger then proposed an increase of 4% which was seconded by Cllr E Cropper. Another vote was held and this was **NOT AGREED**.

Cllr B Corrigan then proposed a 10% increase, based on inflation. Cllr N Ross seconded the proposal; a vote was held and this was **AGREED**.

It was also **AGREED** that the amount charged should be 'rounded up' for administration purposes.

Cllr E Cropper asked the Town Clerk if the rationale behind the rise could be explained when the letter is sent out to the tenants. The Town Clerk agreed that this would be done. Cllr G Rix thought that the tenants should also be informed of the size of the subsidy.

FGP35/23/24 Councillor Email Addresses

Cllr M Skinner proposed that Councillor Email Addresses should be issued to all Members. It was suggested that if Members did not wish to use this email address, they could forward it to their personal/District Council email (autoforward).

Cllr N Ross seconded the proposal; a vote was held and this was **AGREED**.

FGP36/23/24 Cemetery Development Working Group

This Agenda Item was deferred to the next meeting of this Committee.

Prior to the next Agenda Item, Cllr P Taylor spoke. He said he was concerned that the Mayor's Car was being discussed in private; he thought the Press should be able to stay.

The Chairman reminded Cllr P Taylor that there were commercial reasons for that report to be an exempt item.

FGP36/23/24 Exclusion of the Press and Public

Cllr B Corrigan proposed, Cllr D Ledger seconded, that under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 (as extended by Section 100 of the Local Government Act 1972) the press and public be excluded from the next Agenda Item debate on the grounds that the Committee's remaining business involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006, and the public interest in disclosing the information.

The members of the public left the meeting.