



Newark TOWN COUNCIL

FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE MINUTES

Minutes of the Meeting of the Finance & General Purposes Committee held on Wednesday 22nd November 2023 in the Council Chamber, at the Town Hall.

Membership Present:	Councillor	B Corrigan (Chairman)
	Councillors	P Ball 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 P Taylor
Apologies for Absence:	Councillors	No Apologies
Officers Present:	Town Clerk	Matthew Gleadell
Taking Notes:	Executive Assistant	Helen Crossland
	There was one member of the public and one member of the press present.	
Venue:	Council Chamber, Newark Town Hall	

FGP55/23/24 Minutes of the last meeting of the Finance & General Purposes Committee held on Wednesday 18th October 2023

The Amended Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 6th September 2023 were brought back to the meeting and signed by the Chairman.

The Minutes of the last meeting of the Finance & General Purposes Committee held on Wednesday 18th October were proposed by Cllr B Corrigan, seconded by Cllr N Ross. A vote was held and they were **AGREED**.

FGP56/23/24 Declarations of Interest

Cllr N Ross declared a prejudicial interest in Agenda Item 9 and would not take part in any discussion on that item (he would leave the meeting).

Cllrs D Moore, S Crosby, P Taylor and J Kellas declared a non-pecuniary interest in Agenda Item 9.

Cllr T Collier declared a pecuniary interest in Agenda Item 7.

Cllr D Ledger declared a non pecuniary interest in Agenda Item 14.

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

FGP57/23/24 Receive and Note the Minutes of the Events, Arts, Culture and Twinning Working Group held on Thursday 5th October 2023

The Minutes of the Events, Arts, Culture and Twinning Working Group held on Thursday 5th October 2023 were proposed by Cllr B Corrigan, seconded by Cllr P Taylor, then **RECEIVED** and **NOTED**.

FGP58/23/24 Verbal Report from Chairman of the Events, Arts, Culture and Twinning Working Group

Cllr Tom Collier verbally updated Members with regard to the last meeting of the Events, Arts, Culture and Twinning Working Group which was held on Wednesday 8th November 2023.

He reported that at this second meeting of the group, the main item for discussion was Newark Festival; he went through some figures (in the previous minutes noted above).

The outcome of their discussion was to support the 'Hockney Hustle' company and continue with the Brass Explosion on the Bank Holiday.

If the Castle was not available, they would support a free event in the Market Place.

Cllr Collier said he had now been told that the Castle might be available, but his opinion was that the group should stick with their decision. If having a smaller event, bearing in mind the cost of living crisis, did not prove popular, they could go back to having a Festival the following year.

Christmas next year – some thought needs to be given about how to promote this.

Book Festival – they are looking for more support from the Town Council. The group might include other areas of the Town Hall, including some stalls but they do not want to make them dependant on Newark Town Council. The group were looking to refer the Book Festival to the new funding forms that are being talked about now.

FGP59/23/24 Monthly Payment Schedule 06/24 & 7/24

Cllr B Corrigan proposed, and Cllr P Taylor seconded the Monthly Payment Schedules 06/24 and 07/24

Members **AGREED** that payment in accordance with Payment Schedule 06/24 in the sum of £125,299.93 (one hundred and twenty five thousand, two hundred and ninety nine pounds and 93p) and Payment Schedule 07/24 in the sum of £299,103.33 (two hundred and ninety nine thousand, one hundred and three pounds and 33p) be **APPROVED**.

FGP60/23/24 Annual Grants

Prior to discussion of this item, Cllr I Brown requested a Named Vote.

Cllr L Geary declared an interest as she was a member of the Twinning Association (item 3).

Cllr T Collier declared an interest in CAB

The Chairman then went through the sums of money being given as Annual Grants.

1. CAB - £5,000

Cllr P Taylor proposed, Cllr M Spoors seconded, that this grant be paid.

A Named Vote was held, as follows:

Cllr	FOR	AGAINST	ABSTAIN	ABSENT
P Ball	√			
I Brown	√			
D Campbell	√			
T Collier			√	
B Corrigan	√			
E Cropper	√			
S Crosby	√			
S Dickinson	√			
L Geary	√			
J Kellas	√			
D Ledger	√			

D Moore	√			
G Rix	√			
N Ross	√			
L Roulstone	√			
M Skinner	√			
M Spoors	√			
P Taylor	√			
TOTAL	17		1	

Members **AGREED** to pay this Annual Grant.

2. **St Mary Magdalene Church - £1,850**

Cllr P Taylor began discussion on this item; he asked what this payment was for – there are a lot of churches in Newark, why do we support one and not another?

Cllr D Ledger said she had been led to believe that this grant was something to do with the Civic Events that are held there on behalf of the Town Council. Cllr I Brown agreed with this.

Cllr B Corrigan asked if the Town Council paid for any events at the church. She thought it would be preferable for the church to invoice Newark Town Council for events.

The Town Clerk responded that he had spoken to a previous Councillor who said that that the church used to apply every year for a grant and received it. This led to the decision that it was agreed to put it into the 'annual grants' budget so that they received it automatically.

Cllr M Spoors thought it should be a budget payment, not from the grant scheme.

Cllr N Ross pointed out that it was the church used by Newark Town Council and they put on a lot of events for us. Perhaps it should be called something else, not a grant.

Cllr G Rix said it would be unfair to not pay this but supported Cllr M Spoors in that we should be funding it from a separate budget.

Cllr L Geary supported the request.

Cllr I Brown said that it was our church, and they put quite a lot of events on for the people of Newark. It was not a lot of money for the amount of civic events that we have.

Cllr B Corrigan proposed that *'the Town Council look to liaise with the church to see what money is changing hands and for what purpose'*.

A heated exchange followed between Cllr I Brown and Cllr B Corrigan with regard to various committee/working group

memberships and the lack of notice Cllr I Brown felt she was given to make a decision on whether she wanted to be on any of them.

A Named Vote was held as follows:

Cllr	FOR	AGAINST	ABSTAIN	ABSENT
P Ball	√			
I Brown	√			
D Campbell	√			
T Collier	√			
B Corrigan	√			
E Cropper	√			
S Crosby	√			
S Dickinson	√			
L Geary	√			
J Kellas	√			
D Ledger	√			
D Moore	√			
G Rix	√			
N Ross	√			
L Roulstone	√			
M Skinner	√			
M Spoors	√			
P Taylor	√			
TOTAL	18			

Members **AGREED** to pay this Annual Grant.

3. **Twinning Association - £550**

The Chairman said she was unsure if it was right to be giving this money now that there is a sub-committee (Arts, Culture, Events and Twinning Working Group).

Cllr J Kellas pointed out that when this Committee had decided the Terms of Reference for that group, it was not a replacement for the Twinning Association.

Cllr N Ross said he would support the payment of this grant this year, but there should be some more governance around this; this should the caveat around giving this grant in future years.

Cllr P Ball thought it had been made clear that the Twinning Association do not want Newark Town Council involvement.

Cllr G Rix agreed with Cllr P Ball.

Cllr P Taylor pointed out that discussions have already been had about the way this council had been treated.

Cllr D Ledger said that as it had already been budgeted for, the Town Council should honour these payments, then look at how these are budgeted for in the years going forward. She did not think that the Twinning Association should be 'singled out' this year.

Cllr J Kellas then spoke. He informed Members that the Twinning Members had not said they did not want Newark Town Council involvement, they just did not want 'representation' on their Board.

Cllr S Crosby did not think it should be paid.

Cllr M Spoors pointed out that there are new financial pressures on Newark Town Council since this was agreed.

Cllr I Brown then spoke; she said that the Twinning Association was there whether Newark Town Council liked it or not. She thought that Past Mayors should be asked what the Twinning Association beings back to Newark, and how much it costs the Town Council to send delegations of people on Twinning Visits.

A Named Vote was held as follows:

Cllr	FOR	AGAINST	ABSTAIN	ABSENT
P Ball	√			
I Brown	√			
D Campbell			√	
T Collier			√	
B Corrigan		√		
E Cropper	√			
S Crosby		√		
S Dickinson	√			
L Geary			√	
J Kellas	√			

D Ledger	√			
D Moore			√	
G Rix		√		
N Ross	√			
L Roulstone		√		
M Skinner	√			
M Spoors		√		
P Taylor		√		
TOTAL	8	6	4	

Members **AGREED** to pay this Annual Grant.

FGP61/23/24 Syerston Way

This item was discussed briefly; then owing to the sensitive nature of some of the information the Town Clerk said he would prefer to talk about this in 'closed session'.

A vote was held and it was **AGREED** to move the discussion to the end of the meeting following the Exclusion of the Press and Public.

FGP62/23/24 Kiddey Stones

Cllr N Ross left the meeting have declared an interest earlier.

All other Newark & Sherwood District Councillor declared a non-pecuniary interest in this item.

Cllr D Ledger began the debate on this item; she did not think the Kiddey Stones should go to Castle House.

Cllr D Moore said the stones would need to be built into the brickwork or put on top of a wall. The question was, where could they safely be put.

Cllr P Taylor informed the Committee that the idea of Newark & Sherwood District Council doing this was that they were committed to public art. Passing visitors who see them might then also come to the museum here to see work by the same artist.

Cllr M Skinner thought that Castle House might not be the best place, but at least they would be seen.

Cllr I Brown did not think they should go to Castle House. She said the Town Council had not been informed where they would be placed or asked to go and have a look at the site. She said that sometimes she thought the Newark Town Council gave too many things to Newark & Sherwood District Council. Who would be paying for it, where will they go and was it safe?

Cllr L Geary was in favour of putting them there.

Cllr B Corrigan said the first thing she had thought of was there should be CCTV on the site. Also, that the Town Council should 'loan' the stones, not give them. She did not want them to be just 'plonked' somewhere.

Cllr G Rix then spoke; she said there were other sites – the College for instance. Kiddey worked there for 40 years.

Cllr P Ball thought that giving them to Newark & Sherwood District Council seemed to be the best idea.

Cllr J Kellas did not think there was enough information being presented to the Committee to enable a decision to be made. He agreed with Cllr I Brown.

It could be a 'joint' idea where we could work together. The Civil War Museum and Twinning Association have talked about a joint venture (grouping visits within the town together for tourists).

Cllr M Spoors pointed out that Newark Town Council had allowed these stones to be stored under tarpaulins until they decided where they would like them to be. Newark & Sherwood motivation was the same as Newark Town Council.

Cllr B Corrigan then proposed 'Newark Town Council is willing to consider this in principle but would want more details about where they would be sited and what security measure would be in place, before they make the decision and that N&SDC should meet all costs involved.'

Cllr G Rix said there was no mention of the word 'loan' from Newark & Sherwood District Council.

Cllr M Skinner proposed that an initial agreement could be looked at – ten to fifteen years for instance.

Cllr P Taylor agreed with Cllr Skinner and seconded the proposal.

The Town Clerk asked if Members would want a veto at a later stage.

Cllr L Geary said this needed to be decided and agreed with the Town Clerk. Newark Town Council should say yes in principle but need to be included in the process.

Cllr D Moore said more details were required about costings and he would like to see some 'mock up' drawings on this. We like the idea but need the details from the District Officer please.

Cllr I Brown asked if there would be a time limit for the District to have them; if they needed to be moved again it should be up to them to do it.

FGP63/23/24 Town Hall Flags

Cllr N Ross began discussion on this item and went through the report in the Agenda.

Cllr D Moore felt that it should be 'all or nothing'.

Cllr N Ross said he would be happy to just have the Union flag; he was not a fan of 'dual flagging'.

Cllr P Taylor said that although people said yes to this on the first day, there were still atrocities going on every single day.

Cllr G Rix thought there should not be any political stance.

Cllr M Skinner said it should be Cllr N Ross who makes the decision, as the Leader of the Council.

Cllr M Spoors also thought it should only be the Union flag that should be flown from the Town Hall.

Cllr I Brown suggested that a committee should be called together to make these decisions.

Cllr L Geary said that the Town Council should not be prevented from flying the flags of our twin towns when necessary.

Cllr E Cropper proposed the recommendations contained in the Agenda report; this was seconded by Cllr B Corrigan.

The Town Clerk then spoke; he talked to Members about his reasons for not flying the Israeli flag (security of staff/public/building). He also suggested that 'the Leader to consult with other groups' be included in the recommendations.

1. Members **AGREED** that, in line with N&SDC, an Israeli flag should **NOT** be flown from the Town Hall.
2. Members **AGREED** that all future decisions to fly flags or light the Town Hall in particular colours would be taken on a case-by-case basis having regard to relevant advice from HM Government and security professionals at the time.

The Leader of the Council will also consult with other groups.

3. Members **AGREED** that established flag changes as detailed in the report continue.
5. Members **AGREED** that the Union Jack be flown at all times as the principal flag.

In cases of agreed solidarity, additional flag pole and uplighting on the balcony should be utilised and not the principal flag pole.

FGP64/23/24 Meet Your Councillor Event

Cllr M Skinner asked at what point would this 'cross over' with political campaigning – he had concerns about this.

Cllr B Corrigan said she understood those concerns.

Cllr E Cropper thought that more information was required about the nature of the event.

Cllr M Spoors agreed with Cllr M Skinner – any event could be problematic and could become political.

Newark & Sherwood Community Team would like to link up and support anything arranged, particularly in relation to the gypsy/traveller community.

Cllr P Taylor said it was Councillors responsibility to meet the people; he did not support the use of any funds to do this.

Cllr G Rix suggested that the 'label' of this be changed – perhaps call it 'an information sharing event'?

Cllr D Moore said this could open a can of worms.

Cllr L Geary suggested that the AGM which is held in the Spring each year could be utilised and encourage members of the public to attend. Councillors could have a stall on the market in the meantime to advertise this day.

The Chairman then suspended Standing Order 4 (4) and extended the meeting for 30 mins. This was seconded by Cllr N Ross; a vote was held, and it was **AGREED**.

Cllr B Corrigan then said that she thought perhaps she had been naïve in thinking that this would be a good idea and accepted what had been said.

Cllr N Ross asked if the risks would outweigh the benefits of such an event.

Cllr B Corrigan then proposed, Cllr L Geary seconded, that an event should not take place. A vote was held this was **AGREED**.

FGP65/23/24 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.