



Newark TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of the Finance & General Purposes Committee held on Wednesday 26th July 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 (Ap) L Geary J Kellas D Ledger D Moore (Vice-Chairman) G Rix N Ross L Roulstone M Skinner M Spoons P Taylor
Apologies for Absence:	Councillors	S Dickinson
Officers Present:	Town Clerk	Matthew Gleadell
Taking Notes:	PA to the Town Clerk	Helen Crossland
	There were 4 members of the public present.	
Venue:	Council Chamber, Newark Town Hall	

FGP13/23/24 Minutes of the last meeting of the Finance & General Purposes Committee held on Wednesday 14th June 2023

The Minutes of the last meeting held on Wednesday 14th June 2023 were proposed by Cllr D Moore and seconded by Cllr N Ross. A vote was held and they were **AGREED**.

FGP14/23/24 Declarations of Interest

Cllr P Taylor declared a non-pecuniary interest as a District Councillor and said he would be remaining in the meeting and taking part.

All other District Councillors then declared this interest.

The Town Clerk informed Members that if they have declared that they are a District Councillor on their Register of Members Interests that are held at Castle House there was no need to declare this at every meeting.

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

FGP15/23/24 Street Collection Licences

It was proposed by Cllr D Ledger and seconded by Cllr E Cropper that Members **AGREE** to recommend to Newark and Sherwood District Council that the following application for a Street Collection Licence be **APPROVED**:

1. Barnardos on Saturday 12th August 2023.

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

FGP16/23/24 Monthly Payment Schedules 12/23, 01/24, 02/24 and 03/24

Cllr D Moore proposed and Cllr P Taylor seconded the Monthly Payment Schedules as follows:

Members **AGREED** that payment in accordance with Payment Schedule 12/23 in the sum of £358,932.07 (three hundred and fifty eight thousand, nine hundred and thirty two pounds and 07p) be **APPROVED**.

Members **AGREED** that payment in accordance with Payment Schedule 1/24 in the sum of £151,302.02 (one hundred and fifty one thousand, three hundred and two pounds and 02p) be **APPROVED**.

Members **AGREED** that payment in accordance with Payment Schedule 2/24 in the sum of £159,910.98 (one hundred and fifty nine thousand, nine hundred and ten pounds and 98p) be **APPROVED**.

Members **AGREED** that payment in accordance with Payment Schedule 3/24 in the sum of £141,336.19 (one hundred and forty one thousand, three hundred and thirty six pounds and 19p) be **APPROVED**.

FGP17/23/24 End of Year Outturn for 22/23 Financial Year

Cllr P Taylor began discussion on this item.

He suggested that perhaps a review of operating days at Newark Market should be undertaken in light of the outturn figures in the report.

He also suggested a review of the Public Conveniences to consider withdrawing the 20p charge for everyone.

Cllr P Taylor then asked the Committee to consider 'holding off' on the payment of the Twinning Association Grant (£550) as their accounts had still not been seen.

Cllr P Taylor then said that Twinning Association Annual accounts should also be submitted to HMRC.

The Chairman pointed out that depending on how they were constituted, there may be no legal obligation to do this.

Cllr D Ledger then spoke; she pointed out the if the Market should move to being only on a Wednesday and Saturday for instance, there was a danger that Newark would lose its identity – it is a 'Market Town'.

Trinning Association – their grant was for £550 – why was the Committee not looking at, for instance, the £5,000 that is granted to the CAB.

Cllr N Ross pointed out that this Agenda Item was accounting for the last financial year and not the discussion items developing.

He also felt that discussion about the tax liability of any organisation should not be recorded at this meeting.

Cllr M Skinner raised the fact that this had been said, and as such, should be recorded.

The Town Clerk then spoke; he informed Members that all of the items raised were on a very long list of Agenda Items for future Finance & General Purposes Committee meetings.

He reminded Members that if staff issues were going to be discussed, this should be done in a 'closed session'.

It was proposed by Cllr G Rix and seconded by Cllr N Ross that Members **NOTE** the End of Year Outturn for the 22/23 Financial Year.

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

FGP18/23/24 Allocation of Underspend from 22/23 Financial Year

Cllr D Moore proposed, and Cllr N Ross seconded the recommendation contained in the Agenda Report. A vote was held and:

Members **AGREED** to re-allocate the underspend of £97,792.00 from the Town Hall Maintenance budget to the 23/24 financial year budget.

Members **AGREED** in the first instance to use the CIL funds for the Climate Change budget (as outlined in the Agenda Report), and to re-allocate the £45,000 underspend from that budget to the 23/24 financial year to use if necessary.

FGP19/23/24 Reserve Balances at the end of 22/23 Financial Year

Cllr P Taylor asked for it to be noted that the red font on a green background was very difficult to read on the paper copy.

Cllr G Rix proposed and Cllr S Crosby seconded the recommendation that Members **NOTE** the Agenda Report on this item.

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

FGP20/23/24 Quarter 1 Budget Monitoring Report for 23/24 Financial Year

Some questions were raised with regard to some of the proposed budget additions:

- What is the 'Bunting' element ?
 - The Town Clerk responded that this is the costs for the contractor to install the bunting around the town.
- Funds allocated for recruitment of staff is an Agenda Item for this meeting.
- Are these additions going to mean the budget has to be revised?
 - The Town Clerk responded that these additions would not be possible if he had not identified some savings and additional income in other areas.

Cllr M Spoors then proposed, Cllr T Collier seconded the recommendation; a vote was held and Members **NOTED** the Agenda Report and the proposed budget additions detailed therein (page 66) were **APPROVED**.

FGP21/23/24 Climate Change Working Group Recommendations

Cllr E Cropper began discussion of this item; she pointed out that in paragraph 2.3 'Bikeability' was the name of the scheme, but it was put on by VIA.

Cllr N Ross pointed out that is now the second quarter of the year; the Climate Change Working Group (CCWG) would need to bring some more recommendations to this Committee to spend some of the allocation monies (**FGP18/23/24** above).

Cllr G Rix then spoke; she said she had never seen the proposal before and wanted it to be taken back to the CCWG for further discussion.

The Chairman asked the Town Clerk if she could propose an amendment to the recommendation; he responded that she could give the group delegated authority to move forward with this proposal.

The Chairman proposed that the CCWG be granted the budget of £3630 to put on the courses but at the CCWG discretion as to which courses to offer and also how the decision is made as to how the criteria is met.

Cllr L Geary spoke against this proposal; she suggested that the Committee agree, in principle, to these courses being delivered; she also proposed that the other courses be offered to people on low incomes. Some time and effort needs to be put into 'finding' people and encouraging people to take part.

Cllr M Skinner was concerned as to who would be getting this benefit and thought there was definitely some more work to be done.

The Committee was considering devolving a significant amount to the CCWG.

Cllr L Geary said that anyone who received Council Tax benefit could be offered the courses. She agreed that more money should be devolved to the CCWG and that they should be meeting as soon as possible.

The point was that we provide things for the benefit of the community.

Cllr P Taylor agreed that the CCWG should meet, certainly in the next month, but hopefully in the next two weeks.

He also agreed that they should be given more money – the CCWG needs to be coming up with some plans that will make a real difference. Because of the amount of money there is available they could go for some bigger projects – solar power for example.

Cllr T Collier spoke in favour of the original amendment as it was limited to education and in budget. He then opposed the amendment because he opposed the remit of the group regarding the aim of net-zero and so opposed the devolution of money to it unless and until the aim is amended and voted against it.

It was noted that the group has £27,000 of CIL money available to it which must be spent in the current financial year.

Cllr N Ross proposed that the first two quarters of the £27,000 CIL budget be allocated and the CCWG be given delegated authority to spend those funds as they determine.

Cllr P Taylor seconded the proposal.

The Chairman said that the CCWG should use the delegated authority as they see fit although she thought that some Members wanted to specify that it should be used for education and training.

A query was raised as to whether this authority could be given within the Standing Orders of Newark Town Council.

Cllr N Ross proposed the figure of £13,000 but thought that the specification for its use should be up to the CCWG.

Cllr D Ledger said that if this is decided, the whole of the CIL funds should come under the remit of the CCWG.

She proposed that the full £27,000 be delegated to the CCWG to spend as they wish, if it is within the remit of that group, and that they must meet within the next 2 to 4 weeks (subject to holidays) to progress the work of the group.

This was seconded by Cllr L Geary; a vote was held, and this was **AGREED**.

FGP22/23/24 Account Signatories

Members **AGREED** to the amendment of the mandate instructions for the CCLA Property Fund and NatWest Bank Accounts as detailed in the Agenda Report and below.

The CCLA Property Fund account mandate will be changed to add the Chairman and Vice-Chairman, Cllrs B Corrigan and D Moore, of the Finance & General Purposes Committee as signatories. The mandate instructions will also be changed to require two signatures – one being an Officer and other a Councillor.

The online banking facility will be altered to adopt the advice of the auditor and will involve a third online account user, Janet Hemsall.

The NatWest Accounts mandate will be changed to have three Councillors (the Mayor, Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Finance & General Purposes Committee) on List A and three Officers (the Clerk, Operations Manager and Finance Manager) on List B.

Those persons are Cllr P Ball, Cllr B Corrigan and Cllr D Moore (List A) and M Gleadell, S Alcock and K Wood (List B).

Members **AGREED** that any online logins by Councillors should be on a Newark Town Council email address.

Any written instruction on the account (such as a cheque) will require two signatures, one from List A and one from List B (as above).

FGP23/23/24 Cemetery Development Plans

Cllr D Ledger thought it would be hard to find land that would be good enough (soil condition etc) and she was also afraid that the children's burial area would just 'get lost' in any new plans.

Cllr L Geary proposed that the Town Council look at working with partners; we could also go forward with the children's burial area in the existing cemetery.

Cllr D Moore agreed that the children's burial area was very important. He made mention of the Highfields site as being a possibility for a new burial area.

Cllr I Brown suggested that all Councillors should go and visit Bramcote Crematorium where they have an excellent area.

Cllr P Taylor supported the proposals, and also looking for potential partners. He agreed that a proper children's burial area was essential. The proposal should be strengthened to get this done as soon as possible.

The Town Clerk pointed out that depending on how much space was required for a children's burial area, this would reduce the area left in the current cemetery.

Cllr P Taylor acknowledged the point but thought that it was wise to put pressure on the Town Council to move this forward.

The Chairman noted that there would still be costs associated with maintaining the lodge.

Cllr I Brown asked how any new 'group' would be set up – how many Councillors from which group etc.

The Town Clerk went through a list of people that would/might be interested in assisting with any new project, that would work alongside Councillors.

Cllr M Spoors asked what the capacity would be of the planned children's burial area.

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.

Cllr J Kellas asked if a children's burial area could be incorporated into any new plans, as well as accommodating the idea now.

Cllr P Taylor said that a children's burial area did not have to cost a lot of money – it was just an area for parents to go to.

Cllr M Skinner suggested that it might be an idea to go to the cemetery before the planned meeting on 16th August.

The Town Clerk reminded Members that there was a bat survey due to be done at the end of August and the time was fast approaching when he would have to let people know whether or not this was still required.

A few Members thought that this item needed more time to be thought about, and further discussed.

Cllr L Geary proposed, Cllr D Ledger seconded, that proposal 1.1 be agreed, with an amendment as follows:

'but to continue with the creation of a children's burial area in the existing cemetery'.

Members then **AGREED** to abandon the previously resolved Cemetery development plans and **RESOLVED** to focus effort and resource into investigating 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 amendment as above was then voted on, and this was **AGREED**.

The Town Clerk agreed to organise the trip to the cemetery on 16th August before the informal meeting.

The Chairman proposed, Cllr P Taylor seconded recommendation 1.2 in the Agenda Report and it was **AGREED** to create a focussed Task and Finish Working Group for this purpose, with the terms and remit of such a group to be agreed at a later date.

FGP24/23/24 Recruitment Clarification: Museum Curator and Administrative Assistant

Members **NOTED** the already established and agreed intent to recruit a part time Museum Manager/Curator and additional administrator.

FGP25/23/24 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.

FGP26/23/24 Appendix to Agenda Item No 13

This report was background information to Agenda Item 13 and no further action was required.

Meeting Closed:	9.45pm	Next Meeting:	Wednesday 6 th September 2023
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