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MUCH WENLOCK TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of a
FINANCE & ASSET MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE
meeting held at the Corn Exchange, Much Wenlock
at 7.00 pm on Tuesday, 22nd November 2022

Present:

Cllrs. David Fenwick, John O'Dowd, Marcus Themans, Chris Tyler, Linda West, Duncan White.

In attendance:

Trudi Barrett – Town Clerk, Diane Barlow – Responsible Financial Officer (RFO)

1. Apologies

None.

2. Disclosure of pecuniary interests

Members were reminded that they are required to leave the room during the discussion and voting on matters in which they have a disclosable pecuniary interest, whether or not the interest is entered in the Register of Members' Interests maintained by the Monitoring Officer.

3. Dispensations

None requested.

4. Minutes

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting of the Finance and Asset Management Committee held on 26th October 2022 be **APPROVED** and signed as a true record.

5. Town Clerk's report

The Clerk provided a written and verbal report. Progress had stalled with obtaining quotations for repairs to the Corn Exchange and Councillors requested that quotations be obtained for dealing with the area above the door to the Council office which had been affected by water ingress. The Clerk reported that the hole in the tarmac at the end of the passage under the Corn Exchange, which had been a trip hazard, had been filled earlier in the day.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Town Clerk's report be **NOTED**.

6. Finance

- a. The RFO presented a written and verbal report. She advised that the Christmas lights installation had been carried out on the previous Sunday by Potters Electrical and all had gone well.

Income to 31st October, excluding the precept, was £45,521, which was 45.64% above budget for the time of year. Expenditure for the same period was £142,582, which was 12.7% below budget for the time of year. However, large invoices for the Christmas lights installation and library charges were expected.

The RFO advised that Shropshire Council had still to complete its review of transitional rate relief for the current financial year, although this would be completed by the beginning of December. It was likely that the Town Council would receive some rate relief for the Guildhall.

Members noted the report.

- b. Members noted the balance sheet as at 31st October 2022.
- c. Members noted the income and expenditure to 31st October 2022.
- d. Members reviewed the bank reconciliations to 31st October 2022. It was **RESOLVED** to approve the bank reconciliations to 31st October 2022.
- e. It was **RESOLVED** to approve payments from 27th October 2022 to date.

7. 2023/24 Budget

Members considered the fourth draft of the budget. It was noted that the actuarial review of the Shropshire County Pension Fund had been undertaken recently and that the employer's contribution rate would be increasing from 19.9% to 24.0%. The RFO had amended the budget to take account of this additional expenditure and had also adjusted other budget headings so that the overall precept increase proposed remained the same.

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the fourth draft of the budget for recommendation to full Council. It was noted that the draft budget would be presented to full Council in January, by which time the tax base for the next year would be known.

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8. The Guildhall Project – Renovation and Future Use

The Clerk advised that work to the beam at the rear of the Guildhall would commence the following day. The work was expected to take three days and the scaffold would be removed on 28th November.

9. 10 High Street

Due to difficulties over access, the refurbishment work and air conditioning repair had been postponed. A new date for the refurbishment work was awaited and was likely to be in January.

10. Testing of Street Light Columns for Christmas Lights Display

The RFO reported that, following negotiation, Shropshire Council had undertaken the required testing of the street light columns for the Christmas lighting at the Gaskell corner. It was noted that the Town Council would be required to test the columns next year but this could be planned for.

11. Part-night Street Lighting

Members considered a report on part-night street lighting. Information had been obtained from E.ON Highways Lighting and Shropshire Council. Members were positive about the energy and cost savings that could be made by conversion of suitable street lights, subject to the necessary risk assessments. **It was RESOLVED to undertake a detailed analysis of the costs and benefits of part-night lighting.**

12. Olympian Trail Interpretation Panels

Members considered a report on the Olympian Trail interpretation panels. They noted the poor condition of the panels and the need to remove the panel at the Gaskell corner. It was thought that the panels might have a printed underside that could be turned upwards. Councillor Themans undertook to check the panel at the Gaskell corner and to determine whether it had a printed underside. If this was not the case, the panel and support would be removed.

13. Thank you for Grant Award

Councillors noted a thank you letter from the Wenlock Olympian Games Live Arts Festival for the Town Council grant. A letter of thanks had also been received from the Windmill Trust.

14. Date of next meeting

It was noted that the next meeting of the Finance & Asset Management Committee would be held on Tuesday, 24th January 2023 at 7.00pm at The Corn Exchange.

PUBLIC BODIES (ADMISSION TO MEETINGS) ACT 1960

Pursuant to Section 1(2) of the above Act it was **PROPOSED, SECONDED** and **RESOLVED** that, due to the confidential nature of the business to be transacted, the public and press should not be present.

15. 2 Burgage Way

It was noted that the buyer for 2 Burgage Way had withdrawn and that marketing of the property would recommence. The Clerk would make arrangements for the disposal of the washing machine in the property and for checking the fire alarm.

16. 10 High Street

Members noted information regarding arrangements for management of the ATM. Further details were awaited.

17. Request for additional lighting on Pinefields footpath

Members considered a request from STAR Housing for additional lighting on the footpath from Pinefields Close to Victoria Road. **It was RESOLVED to write to STAR Housing to ask what contribution they might make towards the provision of lighting and to investigate cost-effective options for pathway lighting.**

18. Swift Boxes

On the recommendation of the Planning & Environment Committee, **it was RESOLVED to purchase four swift boxes for installation on the Corn Exchange or adjacent buildings.**

The meeting closed at 8.30 pm

Signed.....
Chairman

Date.....