

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, 25th March 2025

Present: Councillors David Fenwick, John O'Dowd, Marcus Themans and Duncan White.

In attendance: Trudi Barrett – Town Clerk, Janet Evans – Responsible Financial Officer (RFO)

1. Apologies

Cllr Susan Crooke-Williams – prior engagement, Cllr Christian Toon – work commitment.

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 21st January 2025 be APPROVED and signed as a true record.

5. Town Clerk's report

Members noted the Clerk's report on action taken since the last meeting. Installation of the CCTV on the public toilets was scheduled for 9th April.

6. Finance

- a. The RFO presented a written and verbal report. Two large payments would be made before the year end for Gaskell grounds maintenance and Neighbourhood Plan expenses. The RFO advised that the remaining funds from the Neighbourhood Plan grant of c. £500 would need to be repaid to the funder but a further application for this amount of funding could be made in the next financial year.

Greenwood Projects invoices for January and February had already been received but had been budgeted for in the 2025/26 budget. A March invoice was also expected. **It was RESOLVED to pay the January to March invoices from Greenwood Projects from the Council's property reserve.**

A donation had been received from a stallholder who attended the Christmas lights switch-on. All donations made at the lights switch-on event had been passed to the Cavalier Centre.

£230 raised at a Church Soup Lunch for a Poetry Trail in the old cemetery would be retained until needed.

- b. Members noted the balance sheet as at 28th February 2025.
- c. Members noted the income and expenditure to 28th February 2025.
- d. Members reviewed bank reconciliations to 28th February 2025. **It was RESOLVED to approve the bank reconciliations to 28th February 2025.**
- e. **It was RESOLVED to approve payments from 22nd January 2025 to 17th March 2025.**
The RFO was asked to review cost savings following the completion of the street lighting LED conversion programme.

7. Proposed Virement of Funds and Movement to Earmarked Reserves

Members considered the report from the RFO on virements and movements to earmarked reserves.

It was RESOLVED to approve the recommended virements within the 2024/25 budget and year end movements to earmarked reserves.

8. Internal Audit

Members reviewed the outcome of the interim internal audit 2024/25 carried out by JDH Business Services Ltd and considered responses to the matters raised.

It was RESOLVED to note the interim internal audit report and to present this to full Council with recommended responses to matters raised by the auditor.

9. Financial Risk Assessment

Members reviewed the updated Financial Risk Assessment. **It was RESOLVED to approve the updated Financial Risk Assessment as at March 2025.**

10. Asset Register

Members reviewed the updated Asset Register as at 31st March 2025. **It was RESOLVED to approve the updated Asset Register as at 31st March 2025.**

11. Guildhall

Members received an update on progress with the Guildhall Project. Members of the working group and Greenwood Projects had met the Site Manager of Wenlock Priory and an Inspector from Historic England the previous week to discuss the Guildhall project. Both meetings had been positive.

The local MP and Headteacher at William Brookes School had also been approached for letters of support. The Civic Society was preparing a letter of support.

Members noted that the next meeting with Greenwood Projects would be held on 3rd April. Prior to this meeting, documents to hand should be reviewed to enable feedback to be provided to the consultant.

12. Christmas Lights

Members considered requirements for replacement and additional Christmas lights. **It was RESOLVED to seek quotations for the following:**

Merry Christmas cross street banner

Additional pennant displays for the steel street light columns on the upper High Street coming from the Gaskell corner.

It was RESOLVED that the cross-street lights would be retained for two years to allow funds for replacement to be built up.

The RFO would seek quotations for a two-year contract for installation and removal of the Christmas lights as well as for eye bolt testing.

13. General Property Maintenance

- a. Advice had been received on damage to the high-level masonry at the front of the Corn Exchange, which had been passed on to the contractor. A further inspection would be arranged when the Christmas lights were installed, or sooner if access could be arranged.
- b. Members noted that it was necessary to split the electricity supply at 10 High Street to enable the ATM supply to be metered separately.

14. Cleaning and Maintenance of Public Toilets

Members noted correspondence from Healthmatic regarding an increase in costs for the cleaning and maintenance of the public toilets from 1st April 2025.

15. Market Stall Charge

Members reviewed the charge for hire of stalls in the Buttermarket under the Guildhall for the fruit and vegetable market. **It was RESOLVED to approve a rate of £150 per week for three-day hire of stalls for the fruit and vegetable market in the Buttermarket.**

16. Signage for Windmill Hill

The Clerk recommended that this item be referred to full Council for a decision to ensure a quorum.

17. Visit Shropshire Membership

Members noted that the current year's membership of Visit Shropshire would expire at the end of March and considered the renewal of membership at a cost of £1,500.

It was RESOLVED that the Council would contribute £750 towards silver membership of Visit Shropshire providing the remaining £750 of the membership fee be paid by Much Wenlock traders.

18. Certificate for Freeman of the Town

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the purchase of a Freedom Scroll for Mr Eric Humphries from Shaw & Son.

19. Date of next meeting

Members noted that the date of the next meeting would be set at the re-convened Annual Town Council meeting on 22nd May 2025.

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.

20. End of Year Finance System Close-down

Members considered quotations for the end of year finance system close-down. It was **RESOLVED** to arrange for Steve Durrands to carry out the end of year finance close-down at a cost of £475.

21. Linden Lodge

- a. Members noted correspondence from Balfours.
- b. Members noted the outcome of the recent gas safety inspection at Linden Lodge. It was **RESOLVED** to approve the quotation for a replacement thermostat at a cost of £182.58 including VAT.

It was **RESOLVED** to suspend Standing Orders to allow the meeting to continue past 9.00 pm.

22. Correspondence from Tenant of The Corn Exchange

Members considered correspondence from a tenant of the Corn Exchange regarding internal improvements. It was **RESOLVED** to approve and permit the internal improvements to the intermediate office outlined in the letter.

23. Lighting under the Corn Exchange

Members considered installation of an additional floodlight under the Corn Exchange.

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the installation of an additional floodlight under the Corn Exchange and a timer to switch off all lights at the end of the evening at a cost of £497.38 + VAT.

24. HR Support

It was **RESOLVED** to defer consideration of HR support to the next meeting.

25. Street Lighting Electricity

Members noted that the current contract for street lighting electricity would expire on 31st March 2025 and considered quotations to hand. It was **RESOLVED** to extend the contract with SSE for a further four months after which time it was expected further options would be available.

26. Energy Contracts

Members considered quotations for gas and electricity supply from April 2026. It was **RESOLVED** to defer a decision on gas and electricity supply from April 2026 until the summer pending more information

27. Library Lease

No further information had been received on proposals for renewal of the lease for the library premises. The Clerk was asked to continue to press the relevant legal officer at Shropshire Council.

28. Much Wenlock Museum

Members considered recent correspondence regarding Much Wenlock Museum. It was **RESOLVED** that the Council was open to further discussions after the local elections.

The meeting closed at 9.20 pm.

Signed.....
Chairperson

Date.....