

04/25

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, 24th July 2025

Present: Councillors Susan Crooke-Williams, Paula Sivertsen, Marcus Themans, Daniel Thomas and Duncan White.

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

1. Apologies

Cllr Jill Robinson – away.

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 19th June 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 as well as outstanding maintenance issues.

6. Finance

- a. The RFO presented a written and verbal report. The end of year accounts had been submitted to the external auditor on 25th June and no queries had been received so far. The Clerk and RFO were working through issues raised in the internal auditor's report. CCLA had notified the Council that they would be increasing their charges by 0.03% effective from Sept 2025. The RFO had established that HMRC had refunded one VAT claim twice and this would need to be repaid; the overpayment of £5,926.87 also appeared in the balance sheet. Virements agreed had yet to be implemented. Members noted the report.
- b. Members noted the balance sheet as at 30th June 2025.
- c. Members noted the income and expenditure to 30th June 2025.
- d. Members reviewed bank reconciliations to 30th June 2025. **It was RESOLVED to approve the bank reconciliations to 30th June 2025.**
- e. **It was RESOLVED to approve payments from 20th June 2025 to date.**

7. Transfer of Funds between Bank Accounts

Councillors considered how the Council's funds were spread between banking institutions. **It was RESOLVED to leave funds in existing bank accounts and maintain the current arrangements.**

8. Guildhall

- a. Members noted that the application to the AHF for grant funding of £60,000 for the development phase of the Guildhall project had been submitted. The Clerk had responded to subsequent questions from the funder with input from Greenwood Projects and Councillors. The application would be considered by the AHF on 18th September.
- b. Councillors reviewed the accessibility audit of the Guildhall which had been carried out by the organisation AccessAbility on 3rd June 2025. The report highlighted areas where improvements to accessibility could be made. **It was RESOLVED to investigate options for marking the edges of the steps to the first floor of the Guildhall as well as an additional handrail for the staircase.**
 A copy of the report had been submitted to the NLHF to go with the funding application.

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9. Corn Exchange

Members noted the Energy Performance Certificates for the Corn Exchange and Library.

Current light bulbs would be replaced with LEDs as replacements were needed. The Clerk was asked to arrange for a check of the insulation in the roof space.

10. Operation of Corn Exchange Market

The RFO reported on her recent visit to the Corn Exchange market. She had spoken with the regular stallholders and requested that the areas around their stalls be kept tidy, with stock kept neatly by their stalls. The Dubelle pull up banner should be moved back to the Corn Exchange doorway. The Man's World 'A' board should also be moved away from the Corn Exchange forecourt.

Members noted that some produce was stored underneath the Buttermarket between market days, which was acceptable providing no problems were caused. A request had been received to site a 'fridge under the Buttermarket and Councillor Crooke Williams offered to look into this.

11. St Mary's Toilets

The Clerk reported that a member of the public had recently become locked in one of the cubicles at St Mary's public toilets. The local fire brigade had been called and had removed the lock to release the person inside. The Healthmatic cleaner had attended but was unable to open the door with his bypass key. It was later found that a pebble had been lodged inside the lock, which may have caused the problem.

The Clerk was asked to check with the local fire brigade whether it would be useful for them to have keys to the public toilets at St Mary's car park.

12. Sandbag Storage

Members noted that there was a store of sandbags on the pavement in the High Street next to Back Lane car park. These were exposed to the elements which caused them to deteriorate. Members considered a request from the Planning & Environment Committee for funding to purchase a store for the sandbags.

It was RESOLVED to allocate a budget of up to £400 for the purchase of a suitable storage unit for sandbags currently stored on the High Street, adjacent to Back Lane car park.

13. General Property Maintenance

The Clerk reported the following:

- The Cooke Clock door had been repaired although the repair was very visible. The Clerk was asked to speak to the contractor to see whether the appearance could be improved. A protective coat of varnish or similar might be beneficial and the Clerk would arrange this with the Council's handyman.
- The Council's pest control contractor was investigating options to deter the pigeons under the Corn Exchange. He had suggested a gel tray emitting a deterrent odour which could be placed in the area. A high-pitched sound emitter had recently been trialled but had not been effective in deterring the pigeons.

14. Cemetery Charges

Members reviewed the residency requirement applicable to cemetery fees with reference to those who had moved out of the area into residential care. **It was RESOLVED to obtain further details on proof of residency and to consider the management and conditions of burial at a future meeting.**

15. Additional Christmas Lighting

Members reviewed requirements for additional Christmas lighting.

It was RESOLVED to obtain quotations for a cross-street banner, similar to the current version, as well as for a pennant for the lamp post outside 23 High Street and for pennant lights on three more lamp posts at the Gaskell corner in a design similar to the existing.

16. Visit Shropshire Membership

Members were advised that Visit Shropshire were pressing for payment of this year's membership fee. Councillors suggested that the Project Lead contact the Wenlock Guild.

17. Date of next meeting

Members noted that the next meeting would be held at 7.00pm on Thursday, 11th September 2025 at the Corn Exchange, Much Wenlock.

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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.

18. Insurance Renewal

Members considered quotations for the Town Council insurance. **It was RESOLVED to accept the quotation from Zurich for a three-year contract with increased fidelity insurance of £1m.**

19. HR Support

Members considered quotations for HR Support for the Town Council. **It was RESOLVED to accept the quotation for HR Support Services from Worknest for a five-year agreement with a three-year break clause.**

20. Security at Corn Exchange and Guildhall

Members reviewed progress with changes to security arrangements for the Corn Exchange and Guildhall. An additional Councillor volunteer would be called for at the next full Council meeting.

It was RESOLVED to suspend Standing Orders to allow the meeting to continue past 9 pm.

21. Christmas Lights Installation

Members considered quotations for the installation of Christmas lights and anchor bolt testing. **It was RESOLVED to award a three-year contract for the installation of the Christmas lights and anchor bolt testing to Potters Electrical.**

It was RESOLVED to purchase 12 replacement Christmas tree decorations from Potters Electrical.

22. Street Lighting Electricity

- a. **It was RESOLVED to rescind the decision taken at the meeting held on 19th June to extend the contract with SSE for street lighting electricity for a further two years, following receipt of new information.**
- b. Members considered information on quotations for street lighting electricity. They noted that the conversion to LED lighting was expected to reduce energy costs.
It was RESOLVED to delegate the award of the supply contract for street lighting electricity to the RFO due to the time constraints on live pricing for electricity supply.

23. Library Lease

Members noted information on the time scale for renewal of the Library lease. **It was RESOLVED that the RFO should invoice the quarterly rental from July 2025 at the new rental rate proposed by Shropshire Council.**

The meeting closed at 9.20pm

Signed.....
Chairperson

Date.....