

MUCH WENLOCK TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of a
FINANCE & ASSET MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE
meeting held at the Corn Exchange, Much Wenlock
at 7.00 pm on Thursday 11th September 2025

Present: Councillors Susan Crooke-Williams, Jill Robinson, Paula Sivertsen, Marcus Themans and Daniel Thomas

In attendance: Janet Evans – Responsible Financial Officer (RFO).

1. Apologies

Cllr Duncan White – recovering from surgery.

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 24th July 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 RFO reported a mis-coding of Rialtas software costs which would be corrected. It was noted that: pension auto-enrolment was completed in July; the VAT refund overpaid by HMRC had been repaid; recent museum and library lease invoices (to 30th September) had been paid; the invitation to apply for community grants had been issued and the interim internal audit would commence in November. Cllr Jill Robinson offered to assist with the annual review of the asset register.
- b. Members noted the balance sheet as at 31st August 2025.
- c. Members noted the income and expenditure to 31st August 2025.
- d. Members reviewed bank reconciliations to 31st August 2025. **It was RESOLVED to approve the bank reconciliations to 30th June 2025.**
- e. **It was RESOLVED to approve payments from 25th July 2025 to date.**

7. 2026/27 Budget

Members considered arrangements for drafting the 2026/27 budget. **It was RESOLVED that the RFO and Clerk should prepare a first draft of the 2026/27 budget for consideration at the next meeting.**

Cllr Themans commented that having a separate budgetary meeting following presentation of the first draft of the 2025/26 budget had been useful. **It was RESOLVED to hold a separate budgetary meeting following presentation of the first draft of the 2026/27 budget.**

8. Document Retention/Destruction

It was RESOLVED to approve the disposal of selected financial documents, in accordance with the Council's Document Retention Policy.

9. Guildhall

- a. The members noted that the NHLF funding application for the Guildhall was to be determined by the funder on 10th September. The RFO had contacted NHLF on 11th September but no decision or response had been received ahead of this meeting.
- b. Members noted that the AHF funding application for the Guildhall was due for consideration on 18th September.

10. Loan of Chair from Guildhall

Members considered a request from Get a Word in Edgeways to borrow a carved chair from the Council Chamber in the Guildhall for the storytelling festival between 10th and 12th October 2025.

It was RESOLVED to allow the loan of the carved chair with the proviso that suitable insurance, security and transport arrangements were proven to be in place by Get a Word in Edgeways.

11. Sandbag Storage

It was RESOLVED to allocate an additional budget of up to £100 for the purchase of a suitable storage unit for sandbags currently stored on the High Street, adjacent to Back Lane car park (this is in addition to £400 previously approved, see minutes of 24th July 2025).

12. General Property Maintenance

- The Town Clerk/RFO would follow up contact the with the pest control contractor regarding pigeons under the Corn Exchange.
- The Town Clerk/RFO would direct the handyman towards general environmental matters raised by Cllr Sivertsen in her email of 10th September and action where appropriate.

13. Damaged Tree at Cemetery

- a. Members noted that one of the Queen's Green Canopy trees in the old cemetery had been vandalised and could not be saved.
- b. **It was RESOLVED to plant a locally sourced, replacement tree which should be smaller than the one damaged in order that it would be more able to establish itself in the winter.**

14. Cemetery Charges – Residency Requirement

Members reviewed the residency requirement applicable to cemetery fees in relation to those who had moved out of the area into residential care.

It was RESOLVED to amend the residency requirement applicable to cemetery fees to include the following wording, with effect from 1st November 2025:

'Resident fees apply where the person to be interred was a resident of Much Wenlock parish at the time of death or immediately prior to entering a registered hospital, hospice, nursing home or other care provision outside of Much Wenlock. Proof of prior residence may be required at the discretion of the Council. Fees for persons who do not qualify as residents will be charged at the non-resident rate.'

15. Review of Fees and Charges

Members reviewed the following fees and charges:

- a. Room hire for Mary Webb Room and Guildhall.
- b. Market stall hire.
- c. Cemetery fees.
- d. Commission on Guildhall sales.

It was RESOLVED to increase the hourly charge for rental of the Guildhall to £20 per hour and to increase all Cemetery Fees by 2.5% with effect from 1st April 2026.

It was RESOLVED that room hire for the Mary Webb Room, market stall hire and commission on Guildhall sales should remain at current rates.

16. Fridge for Buttermarket

Cllr Crooke-Williams reported that Much Wenlock Fruit and Vegetables had enquired about the possibility of keeping a fridge in the Buttermarket. There was sufficient room for a fridge in the gaol and any cabling requirements would be arranged and paid for by Much Wenlock Fruit and Vegetables.

It was RESOLVED to allow a fridge to be installed in the Buttermarket gaol by Much Wenlock Fruit and Vegetables and that a standing fee would be calculated to cover electricity used.

Councillors requested that the Town Clerk/RFO should meet with the stallholders to discuss the operation and plans of the vegetable market.

17. Visit Shropshire Membership

Members were advised that Visit Shropshire were pressing for payment of this year's membership fee.

The RFO confirmed to Councillors that the Town Council would pay for the membership on receipt of 50% of the fee from the market traders.

18. Date of next meeting

Members noted that the next meeting would be held at the Corn Exchange at 7.00pm on Thursday, 16th October 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.

19. Printing of Olympian Trail Leaflet

Members considered quotations for a reprint of 2,000 copies of the Olympian Trail leaflet and an offer to pay half the cost from the Wenlock Olympian Society. It was **RESOLVED** that an order should be placed with Shropshire Printing for 2,000 copies of the Olympian Trail leaflets and that the Town Council would cover the full cost.

20. Noticeboard for Cemetery

Members considered quotations for a new noticeboard for the cemetery. It was **RESOLVED** to place an order with Sign and Poster for noticeboard Option B (Triangular Top), supply and installation. The preference was for the noticeboard to not be silver in colour and other colour options should be investigated.

21. Smoke Detectors for Corn Exchange

It was **RESOLVED** that the Town Clerk should provide additional information on quotations for smoke detectors for the Corn Exchange and refer this item to the next meeting.

22. Linden Lodge

- a. Members reviewed the property inspection report for Linden Lodge dated 5th August 2025 and noted repairs already undertaken.
- b. Members considered quotations for a structural survey. It was **RESOLVED** to place an order for a structural survey of Linden Lodge with Mark Dady Associates Ltd.

23. Christmas Lights Installation

- a. It was **RESOLVED** to formally approve the purchase of the cross-street banner and three pennant lights for lamp posts (two at the Gaskell corner and one in the High Street), as agreed by email between meetings.
- b. It was **RESOLVED** to approve costs for the installation of the additional Christmas lights and testing of street lighting columns and to place the order with Potters Electrical Ltd.

24. Street Light Repairs

Members considered quotations for street light repairs.

It was **RESOLVED** to:

- a. Replace the Bulkhead light under the Corn Exchange as per Quotation 46096 from E.ON.
- b. Arrange replacement of the damaged concrete pole in Queen Street, having checked whether a new lantern is required, and to place the order with E.ON (not exceeding the price of Quotation 46798).
- c. Order a replacement black painted steel column, reusing the existing lantern, for the damaged pole outside Queen Street toilets (Quotation 46798).
- d. Place the order to replace a concrete pole with a steel pole on the footpath between Southfield Road and New Road (Quotation 46840)

25. Electricity Contract for Mary Webb Room

Members considered quotations for electricity supply for the Mary Webb Room.

It was **RESOLVED** to remain with the current supplier (E.ON) for the Mary Webb Room electricity but to change to a fixed contract to March 2029.

26. Gas and Electricity Supply

- a. Members noted that gas and electricity supply contracts for the Corn Exchange, Guildhall and Cemetery were due for renewal on 31st March 2026. It was **RESOLVED** to arrange new contracts now.
- b. It was **RESOLVED** to take out 36 month agreements on four electric meters and two gas meters with E.ON Energy, to run until March/April 2029, with provisos that a) prices had not increased substantially between quotations being received and order being placed; b) that there were no or nominal penalty charges should the contracts be ended before the end of the period.

27. Library Lease

It was noted that the Town Clerk had contacted Shropshire Council on 11th July and been advised that there would be a further 6-8 week delay for the legal department to review this lease.

The meeting closed at 8.39 pm.

Signed.....
Chairperson

Date.....

DRAFT