

NORMANTON TOWN COUNCIL



MINUTES OF THE FINANCE COMMITTEE

Held on Wednesday 6th March 2024 at 1:00pm at Normanton Town Hall

Present: Councillor A Bones
Councillor M Jennings
Councillor H Jones
Councillor B Mayne – Chairman
Councillor P Mayne
Councillor P Sampson
Councillor R Seal – Vice Chairman

D Johnston – Town Clerk & RFO

Absent: Councillor E Blezard
Councillor J Pritchard
Councillor K Wilson, JP

038. Apologies for Absence

RESOLVED that apologies be received on behalf of Councillor E Blezard, Councillor J Pritchard and Councillor K Wilson.

039. Members Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest recorded.

040. Minutes

RESOLVED that the minutes of a meeting of the Finance Committee held on Monday 22nd January 2024 (Minute Numbers 028-037; Page Numbers 7-10) be received as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

041. Small Grants

RESOLVED that the following grants totalling £1,000 be awarded.

Wakefield Wildcats Netball Club
£500.00
Towards the cost of match bibs.

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The Brig Bike Hub

£500.00

Towards the cost of maintenance equipment and tools for the free cycling maintenance workshops.

The balance of £627.51 would be earmarked for any other funding applications.

042. Internal Audit Report

Members received the internal audit report from Internal Audit Yorkshire. The report contained a number of small recommendations, many of which had already been actioned.

1. That the councils Scheme of Delegation and Committee Terms of Reference are reviewed to ensure that they are consistent with each other, and consideration be given to combine this into one core governance document setting out the delegated powers in accordance with the delegation arrangements.

Completed - Approved by Council 12th December 2023 Minute Number 131.

2. That formal purchase orders be issued by the RFO where it is appropriate to do so which clearly details the authorisation from council minutes or Financial Regulations. Where the role is carried out by the Clerk/RFO and expenditure is incurred by the RFO, the purchase order should be countersigned by another officer to ensure segregation of duties.

Completed - Purchase orders set up within the Scribe Accounting system with effect from December 2023. POs to be countersigned in every instance to ensure consistency.

3. That a suitably designed authorisation stamp be used for all invoices to evidence the payment control and authorisation checks in accordance with the Financial Regulations and to form an adequate audit trail that can be worked back to where the payment originated from.

Completed - Stamp in use with effect from 1st January 2024.

4. That the Financial Regulations are reviewed to ensure that any delegated authority to the Clerk to make payments is documented within Financial Regulations 5 and 6.

Completed - Included on the Finance Committee Agenda 6th March 2024 and for adoption at Council 12th March 2024.

5. That the council ceased the administration of the Mayors Charity until advice on Charitable Funds is obtained from the Local County Association.

Completed - Advice obtained from YLCA 7th December 2023. Proposed name change included on the Finance Committee agenda 6th March 2024.

6. That a contracts procurement timetable is created which identifies all regular and fixed term contracts, the contract period and total contract values and that future procurement is considered to ensure that the market is tested and best value for money is secured. Where it is appropriate to do so the council should consider fixed term contracts following any competitive tendering exercise.

Ongoing - Work has started compiling the information into one central spreadsheet.

7. That procedures and internal controls for the making of BACS payments is incorporated within the Financial Regulations.

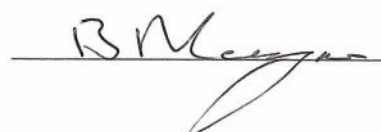
Completed - Included on the Finance Committee Agenda 6th March 2024 and for adoption at Council 12th March 2024.

8. That consideration be given for business continuity purposes for BACS payments to be set up in the absence of the RFO.

Completed - Included on the Finance Committee Agenda 6th March 2024.

9. That a list of direct debits and Standing Orders included the details of the payment date for payment control purposes.

Completed - Included on the Finance Committee Agenda 6th March 2024 and will be referred to Council in June 2024.



10. That in accordance with the Financial Regulations 5.6, the Clerk/RFO draws up a list of due payments which arise on a regular basis as the result of a continuing contract, statutory duty or obligation including Salaries, PAYE, Pension and regular maintenance contracts and the like for which council may authorise payment for the year provided that the requirements of regulation 4.1 (budgetary controls) are adhered to, provided also that a list of such payments shall be submitted to the next appropriate meeting of Council.

Completed - Included on the Finance Committee Agenda 6th March 2024 and will be referred to Council in April 2024.

11. That the council develops and adopts appropriate key holder, building access and security policies as part of its risk management arrangements and updates the risk register as required.

Ongoing - To be discussed by the Property Committee.

12. That the risk register incorporates a risk rating matrix which will assist in identifying the likelihood and impact of risks.

Completed - Included on the Finance Committee Agenda 6th March 2024 and will be referred to Council in April 2024.

13. That the review of effectiveness of internal controls be carried out by the Council prior to 31st March 2024 and the outcome and subsequent actions be formally reported to and recorded within the council minutes.

Included on the Finance Committee Agenda 6th March 2024 and Council Agenda 12th March 2024.

14. That the Financial Regulations include internal controls for managing electronic payments received through the Square Terminal.

Completed - Included on the Finance Committee Agenda 6th March 2024 and for adoption at Council 12th March 2024.

15. That the Financial Regulations 'payment of salaries' be updated to include internal controls for the RFO to retain overall responsibility for the outsourced payroll service.

Completed - Included on the Finance Committee Agenda 6th March 2024 and for adoption at Council 12th March 2024.

16. That a confirmatory letter be issued by the council or staffing committee to employee A confirming the changes to pay scale. A signed copy to be appended to the original contract of employment and retained on file.

Completed - 5th December 2023.

17. That a confirmatory letter be issued to employee B confirming the changes to the pay grading and that a signed letter be appended to the original contract of employment and retained on file.

Completed - 5th December 2023.

18. That Financial Regulations section 7 'payment of salaries' includes internal controls for payments relating to overtime.

Completed - Included on the Finance Committee Agenda 6th March 2024 and for adoption at Council 12th March 2024.

19. That the Financial Regulations include internal controls for the processing of Members and Mayors Allowance.

Completed - Included on the Finance Committee Agenda 6th March 2024 and for adoption at Council 12th March 2024.

RESOLVED that the Internal Audit report be received, and the recommendations noted, and action taken as appropriate.

043. Review of the Effectiveness of Internal Controls

Members carried out a review of the effectiveness of internal controls. Members were mindful of the guidelines contained in the Practitioners Guide on Governance and Accountability.

Members identified the need to carry out in house quarterly internal audit checks and agreed that any two members of the Finance Committee who are not bank signatories would carry out this task.

RESOLVED that the Effectiveness of Internal Controls be reviewed and that a system be established for quarterly internal audit checks to be carried out.

044. Risk Management Assessment

The Risk Management Assessment had been reviewed and included a risk matrix along with colour coded priority rankings as recommended.

RESOLVED that the Risk Management Assessment be reviewed and approved.

045. Business Continuity

RESOLVED that the Administrative Officer be set up to make online payments with the bank in the absence of the Town Clerk.

RESOLVED that the Administrative Officer be set up as an additional card holder to the Lloyds Multi-pay account so that purchases can be made in the absence of the Town Clerk subject to an overall limit of £2,000 and a transaction limit of £1,000.

RESOLVED that Financial Regulations are updated to reflect this change.

046. Mayors Fundraising

RESOLVED that the name of the Mayors fundraising be changed from 'Mayors Charity' to 'Mayors Appeal' in line with advice from YLCA.

047. Financial Regulations

RESOLVED that the Financial regulations be reviewed and updated to reflect the recommendations from the Internal Auditor.

048. Review of Direct Debits

RESOLVED that the list of Direct Debits be reviewed and approved.

049. List of Regular Payments

RESOLVED that the list of regular payments for approval in advance be approved.

050. Review of Insurance Policy

Members considered the insurance renewal including event cancellation insurance for Party @ Haw Hill Park, Gala Weekend and Christmas Lights Switch On.

A number of proposed changes were made and referred back to the Insurer to enable quotes to be prepared.

RESOLVED that the insurance cover is reviewed and updated.

051. Potts Terrace Grass Cutting

RESOLVED that the Service Level Agreement for the maintenance of the land at Potts Terrace be approved at a cost of £418.84 for the 2024/25 financial year.

052. Hanging Baskets 2024-25

Members considered quotes for the provision of Hanging Baskets for summer 2024 and Spring 2025.

There was still some uncertainty about the testing of lamp post columns which was a legal requirement of Wakefield Council / Amey Streetlighting. The column testing was to be charged at £100.00 per column over and above the standard quantity of 65 columns.

It had been difficult to identify a sufficient number of columns that hadn't previously been failed and many columns hadn't been tested before so their status was unknown. Members would review the results of the column testing before agreeing to test any more columns and may need to consider reducing the number of hanging baskets if columns had failed.

RESOLVED that an additional 15 columns were to be tested at a cost of £1,500.00 through Amey Streetlighting.

RESOLVED that the summer 2024 floral display contract be awarded to First Impressions for the planting of flower beds, planters, and flower tower with confirmation of the number of hanging baskets to be confirmed following the columns testing results being provided. The total cost of the contract being £7,300.38 + VAT (including 80 hanging baskets).

RESOLVED that the spring 2025 floral display contract be awarded to First Impressions for the planting of flower beds, planters, and flower tower with confirmation of the number of hanging baskets to be confirmed following the columns testing results being provided. The total cost of the contract being £4,355 + VAT (including 80 hanging baskets).

053. Payroll Provider

Members considered quotes for the provision of Payroll services.

RESOLVED that a three-year contract be awarded to Lofthouse Chartered Accountants on the basis of the quote dated 4th March 2024.

054. Promotional Items

Members considered several quotes for the supply of promotional pens and pencils from the existing budget of £1,200.00.

RESOLVED that 1000 pencils and 1000 pens be purchased from JC One at a cost of £682.00 + VAT.

In the absence of any further business, the Chairman thanked everyone for their attendance and closed the meeting.

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