

**MINUTES OF THE FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE,  
28<sup>th</sup> June 2023 Held at Uppingham Town Hall, commencing at 6.05pm**

**FGP109/23 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

**Present:** Sam Findlay (chair), David Ainslie, Lindsay Cooper, Christine Edwards, Liz Clarke  
Town Clerk Sharon Coe was also in attendance.

2 member of the public.

**Apologies:** Mark Shaw

Proposed to accept apologies Cllr Ainslie, Seconded Cllr Edwards. **Resolved unanimously.**

**FGP110/23 DECLARATION OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS AND APPLICATIONS FOR DISPENSATION.**

Cllr Ainslie declared a non-pecuniary interest in item 9 and was granted a dispensation to speak.

**FGP111/23 AN OPPORTUNITY FOR THE PUBLIC TO SPEAK.**

A request was made that on item 11 that we don't increase the TH hire charges.

**FGP112/23 TO CONFIRM THE MINUTES OF THE FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE ON  
Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> December.**

Proposed Cllr Ainslie, Seconded Cllr Findlay– **Resolved unanimously.**

Cllr Cooper arrived at 6.15pm

**FGP113/23 TO CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING –**

- A TO REVIEW THE 2022/2023 INTERNAL AUDITOR REPORT AND 2022/2023 AGAR AHEAD OF COUNCIL ON THE 5<sup>TH</sup> of JULY AND CONFIRMATION THAT THIS YEAR UTC WILL BE THE SUBJECT OF AN INTERMEDIATE REVIEW DUE TO SIZE.**

Cllr Findlay led the committee through the headline details.

The question was posed did we precept correctly as we had a £19K surplus. This amount represented some grant income and without this we would have been around the £5K figure which represented value for the council taxpayers. The general reserves were now looking positive keeping in mind the pandemic where reserves had been spent. With prudent budgeting and careful management UTC were on track to reach their reserves target. An amount of £10K had been in the Ear Marked reserves for a potential judicial review on the NP and this should be able to go back into general reserves next year.

Cllr Findlay then reviewed the Internal Audit report going through page by page and recommendations made. The auditor noted that some of the recommendations from last year were brought forward due to the staffing issues and the Clerks long term illness.

Salient points:

Move to approving payments at Full Council before instructing the Clerk to pay.

Bank reconciliations and Purchase Ledger will be signed by the Chair of Council and Chair of F & G P and then filed with the Council Minutes.

Council Minutes will indicate the discussions held, not just the actions taken.

The Clerk will give Council the Purchase Ledger from RBS for approval each month with invoices attached.

The clerk to produce a list of S/O D/Ds to Council for preauthorisation for the financial year.

The Clerk to produce a preauthorisation list for regular bills i.e. Cleaner/Keyholder.

The Clerk will make suppliers aware of this procedure going forwards.

The VAT return had been amended to include an oversight.

Reviews of all charges will be documented accordingly.

Allotments and Cemeteries had clear processes.

The Clerk will collate payslips so that salaries can be tracked by Council.

Insurances should be reviewed by Finance and General Purposes Committee.  
Assets have been updated by the Clerk and she has removed some items.  
Risk Assessments should be reviewed and documented clearly.  
A Business Continuity Plan should be formulated, the Clerk was working on this together with various other documents for enhanced transparency which she had shared with the auditor at her visit. The Clerk has a meeting with a Health and Safety consultant imminently.

The Internal Auditor was happy to confirm that in all significant respects, the control objectives were being achieved throughout the financial year to a standard adequate to meet the needs of the authority.

The Finance and General purposes committee will review recommendations in six months' time to ensure compliance.

Proposed Cllr Findlay, seconded Cllr Ainslie – **Resolved unanimously.**

#### **RESOLUTION TO FULL COUNCIL**

That the AGAR is recommended to Council for approval.

To accept the review of the F & G P committee of the Internal Audit report with the addition control mechanism as mentioned previously.

Proposed by Cllr Findlay, seconded by Cllr Ainslie, **Resolved unanimously.**

#### **B TO RECEIVE THE EXTENSION GRANTED BY THE EXTERNAL AUDITOR TO COVER THE 5<sup>TH</sup> OF JULY MEETING**

The Clerk had obtained an extension to cover the meeting on 5<sup>th</sup> July.

Proposed Cllr Ainslie, seconded Cllr Clarke. **Resolved unanimously.**

#### **FGP114/23 TO CONSIDER THE RESPONSE FROM BARCLAYS BANK IN RESPECT OF THE COMPLAINT LODGED AND NEXT STEPS.**

The Clerk updated the committee on the present position. Barclays Bank had “upheld the complaint due to poor service and wrong information given, for your distress and inconvenience” they have offered a sum of £100.00 in compensation.

They have sent another form for completion, the committee felt that we should complete the next form as we need to get the taxpayers money released as soon as possible. The offer of compensation however was found to be patronising and unacceptable. This was causing a lot of work in the office.

The committee wishes the Clerk to write to Barclays confirming that UTC find your response patronising and unacceptable however our duty at this time is our duty to the taxpayers. We are therefore facilitating the completion of the additional form, but we are reserving the right to take further action for recovery of damages.

Proposed Cllr Ainslie, seconded Cllr Edwards **Resolved Unanimously**

#### **FGP115/23 TO CONSIDER AN UPDATE ON THE BANKING SIGNATURES PROCESSES AND UP TO DATE POSITION.**

Cllr Ainslie overviewed his visit to Lloyds Bank in Leicester to try and resolve the issues being faced with the signing mandate on the accounts. A paper mandate had been signed previously adding Cllr Findlay to the account. Lloyds denied receiving this, when a copy of this form was produced, they refused to accept this. New forms will be signed again at Full Council and then taken to the Branch to resolve this issue. The Clerk will obtain the necessary forms.

Proposed Cllr Ainslie. Seconded Cllr Clarke **Resolved Unanimously**

#### **FG116/23 TO FORMALISE THE SETTING UP OF A MEETING WITH THE NEXT STEPS FOR THE BOWLS CLUB**

The Clerk informed the committee that although this had been agreed to meet with the Bowls Club in the council pre-election, now that the committees had been re-established for the new financial year this could now take place.

The Clerk was asked to facilitate this meeting.

Cllr Cooper asked that item 9 be moved to the end of the agenda. Agreed by the Chairman.

**FG117/23**

**TO CONSIDER A PROPOSAL FOR AN ADMINISTRATION PROJECT WITHIN THE TOWN HALL.**

The Clerk outlined the issues experienced and asked that a temporary project be approved so that the matter may be addressed. This was not possible given the hours in the office and workloads. Various options were considered. This is a project lasting no more than 14hrs a week for 3 months. There is a budget implication, but the Chairman agreed this would be possible.

**RESOLUTION TO FULL COUNCIL**

Proposed that Mr D Coe be engaged at minimum wage for an initial period of 1 month (8 days) to scope and start this project.

Proposed Cllr Ainslie, Seconded Cllr Edwards. **Resolved unanimously.**

**FG118/23**

**TO CONSIDER A REVIEW OF THE CHARGES FOR THE CEMETERY/ALLOTMENTS/TOWN HALL CHARGES.**

A discussion took place and Cllr Findlay also suggested the market was reviewed, all charges would then be reviewed annually.

The Clerk will review these charges and bring back her recommendations with comparatives to this committee for further discussions.

Proposed Cllr Findlay, seconded Cllr Edwards **Resolved unanimously.**

**FG119/23**

**TO CONSIDER AN EXPENSES REQUEST FROM THE CLERK.**

The Clerk wished that her expenses request be considered.

Proposed that these be accepted by Cllr Ainslie, seconded by Cllr Findlay. (4 for, 1 abs)

**FGP120/23**

**TO CONSIDER A SIX-MONTHLY AUDIT AND SET DATES FOR THE BUDGET PREPARATION FOR THE FORTHCOMING YEAR.**

The Clerk will book in a six-monthly audit visit from the Internal Auditor. The Budget preparatory meetings will commence in October 2023.

Proposed by Cllr Findlay, seconded Cllr Edwards. **Resolved Unanimously.**

**FGP121/23**

**TO CONSIDER THE FORMAL LEASE FOR THE POLICE OFFICE, UNDER THE LANDLORD AND TENANT ACT 1954.**

The Clerk overviewed the license that had been put in place when the Police moved to the front office, this now had to be replaced with a formal lease which she presented to the committee as it was not a delegated authority that she could enact.

**RESOLUTION TO FULL COUNCIL**

That the Clerk instruct the Council's solicitor to include a provision within the contract that the lease be reviewed after three years.

Proposed Cllr Ainslie, seconded Cllr Findlay **Resolved unanimously.**

**Cllr Cooper left the meeting at 7.45pm**

**FGP/122/23**

**TO CONSIDER THE UPTO DATE POSITION WITH REGARD TO THE LAND OWNED BY UTC (BLOORS LAND)**

The chairman talked through the three options available.

Each proposal was carefully considered, and all were thought to be visionary and well worthy of further exploration. However, two proposals were not financially costed out at this present time and would benefit from some extra time to put together a firm costed proposal.

**RESOLUTION TO FULL COUNCIL**

That we accept the offer from Uppingham School whereby they enter into a three year 'agreement to lease' the land, for an upfront rent of £25,000 and in which the School would maintain the land (hedge and grass management)

The Clerk will make sure the contract is professionally written and include options such as public access for dog walkers etc. This is the fairest option to all involved and would allow the council to use this money for the good of the community.

**PROPOSED** Cllr Findlay, seconded Cllr Edwards **Resolved Unanimously.**

**Meeting closed at 7.55pm.**

Signed ..... **Chairman of F & G P**

Dated.....