



Arundel Town Council

MINUTES OF THE
FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING

Held on Wednesday 3rd May 2023
at the Town Hall, Maltravers Street, Arundel at 7pm

PRESENT: The Mayor Tony Hunt, Councillors Michael Tu and Robin Lovell

CHAIRMAN: Michael Tu
TOWN CLERK: Carolyn Baynes
RFO: Andy Beams
BOOKKEEPER: Roisin O'Neil

0 Members of the Public

MINUTES

	1. PRELIMINARIES
F110	(a) Apologies for Absence There were apologies for absence from Councillors Bradley and Standing.
	(b) Public Questions - 15 minutes will be allowed for questions from the Public, answers may be supplied in writing at the Chairman's discretion. There were no public questions.
	(c) Declarations of Interest - by members of the council in matters on the agenda. There were no declarations of interest.
	2. MINUTES The minutes of the meeting held on the 21 st February 2023 were approved.
	3. UPDATES ON AGREED ACTIONS
F111	(a) F90/F85 – Finance training for our staff: no progress had been made since the previous meeting. <i>Actions:</i> <i>i. It was agreed that the priority would be to give the Town Hall Events Manager and her deputy training in all the Sage processes relating to weddings and events. This training could best be delivered by Sue Roderick, and a plan for providing the training would be prepared (Town Clerk).</i> <i>ii. Cllr. Lovell would also attempt to receive the training so that a Councillor understood the process (Town Clerk, Cllr. Lovell).</i> <i>iii. Other Staff: some general financial training would be arranged for other senior staff, which would include Sage training which was not specific to weddings and events. This will either be delivered by someone from Mulberry & Co. or from online training modules, which Cllr. Lovell will evaluate. (Action: Town Clerk, Cllr. Lovell)</i> <i>iv. RFO: subject to confirmation of whether the Town Clerk or another member of staff would assume the RFO responsibilities in 2024, RFO training would be organised for the second half of the year (Action: Town Clerk, RFO)</i>



	<p>(b) T3097/T3009 New Bank Accounts: The Council has completed the paperwork required for the opening of the Boom Community bank account, but they have been very slow in completing the opening of the account. The Cambridge & Counties Bank had advised us that the 95-day account was no longer available, and the RFO would identify alternatives.</p> <p><i>Actions</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Boom Bank would be chased to complete the new account set-up (Town Clerk) ii. United Trust: following investigation by the RFO, the meeting agreed to recommend to Council that we establish a 90-day account with United Trust (Cllr. Tu).
4. UPDATES FROM CHAIRMAN AND RFO	
F112	There were no updates from the Chairman or RFO.
5. ASSET REGISTER REVIEW	
F113	<p>(a) To review the Asset Register</p> <p>The Asset Register was reviewed, and a number of updates were agreed. These would be made by the Town Clerk and it was AGREED that the amended Asset Register would be submitted to the May Council for approval.</p> <p>The RFO drew attention to the difference between the Asset Register, where all items are recorded at their original purchase price throughout their life and a valuation for insurance purposes which would entail identifying the current value of assets. It was AGREED to recommend to Council that a valuation be arranged within the next 3 months. The RFO suggested that we consider reappointing the firm which did the previous valuation or seek a recommendation from Zurich Insurance.</p>
6. ENERGY REGISTER REPORTING	
F114	<p>(a) To review the Energy Register Reporting</p> <p>Not surprisingly, in 2022/23 energy costs for the Town Hall were higher than budget and the previous year. The nature of the building was not optimum for energy efficiency.</p> <p>It was AGREED that we should ask the Town Hall Manager:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) to develop a process for identifying energy usage and the cost of energy in the Town Hall , each month, and to include this in her monthly report to Council. This should begin in her July report. (b) To investigate whether there were ways we could increase the efficiency of our buying and using energy in the building, possibly by using an external consultant.
7. Q4 AND YEAR END ACCOUNTS REVIEW	
F115	<p>(a) To review the Q4 and Year End Accounts</p> <p>The latest draft of the 2023/24 accounts was reviewed. Expenditure was £1, 517 higher than in the year-end estimate given to the April Council Meeting, and the deficit for the year was £35, 144 <u>prior</u> to using the Town Hall Restoration ear-marked reserve to part-pay for the £95,000 capital expenditure incurred by the roof repairs. It was noted that there should be an additional accrual for legal expenses in relation to the Caen Stone Court and EV charging work done.</p>



	<p>The Committee considered and AGREED the Q4 and Year-End Accounts, and the Farmers Market Accounts.</p> <p>(a) To create a new reserve with the balance of the payment from Blueprint Pictures (circa £9,500) which had not been used for the 'Community Warm Hubs' in the winter. This money was specifically provided by Blueprint to be used for the benefit of the community.</p> <p>(b) To allocate £39,000 from the Town Hall Restoration reserve for the roof works</p> <p>The Chairman had done an analysis of the rising staff costs and questioned whether the Council was properly monitoring and recording the number of hours being worked and getting value from the expenditure. Other members of the committee believed that the staff on many occasions were under-recording their hours, and that the output in 2022/23 had been outstanding. However, it was agreed that at the Chairman's request that the HR Working Group be asked to review the efficiency of the processes being used to monitor staff and contractor hours.</p>
	8. IT STRATEGY AND SUPPORT
F117	<p>(a) To review IT Strategy and Support</p> <p>Our IT support has given notice, and we need to replace them. RFO to ask the Littlehampton Town Clerk whom they currently use and Mayor to investigate who provides support services for Arundel Castle and the Norfolk Estate.</p> <p>It was noted that we had not progressed with the IT Strategy. The Mayor suggested that rather than just taking a top-down 'systems' approach, we should start by asking the staff what they wanted from the IT system that would enable them to work more efficiently.</p>
	9. HR
F118	<p>(a) Confidential business.</p> <p>The Town Clerk proposed that due to the confidential nature of the business to be transacted under Agenda Item 9 – matters affecting staff – the press and public should be excluded from this part of the meeting.</p> <p>Matters relating to staff members were considered. The Committee AGREED to make a PROPOSAL to Full Council under Confidential Business.</p>

Meeting closed: 10:04

Minutes signed as a true record

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Mayor of Arundel - Councillor Tony Hunt

Date: