

MINUTES of the MEETING of the FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE held at THE COUNCIL OFFICES, THE GROVE, SWANSCOMBE on THURSDAY 2 NOVEMBER 2023 at 7.00PM

PRESENT: Councillor Lesley Howes – Chairman
Councillor Lorna Cross – Vice-Chairman
Councillor Ann Duke
Councillor Peter Harman
Councillor Richard Lees
Councillor Hazel Stephens

ALSO PRESENT: Graham Blew – Town Clerk
Martin Harding – Assistant Town Clerk / RFO

ABSENT: There were none

248/23-24. **ARRANGEMENTS AND CONSTRAINTS REGARDING FILMING OR RECORDING THE MEETING.**

The Chairman explained the arrangements and constraints relating to the filming or recording of the meeting.

249/23-24. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.**

An apology for absence was submitted by Councillor Anita Barham, due to other commitments,

An apology for absence was submitted by Councillor Emma Ben Moussa, due to health reasons.

Recommended: That the reason for absence, for the Councillors listed, be formally accepted, and approved.

250/23-24. **SUBSTITUTES.**

There were none.

251/23-24. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST IN ITEMS ON THE AGENDA.**

Councillor Lorna Cross declared a prejudicial interest in agenda item 10, application B, as she is a volunteer at the Swanscombe Food Cellar.

As per Standing Order 34 c) the Chairman adjourned the meeting at this point to allow members of the public to address the meeting in relation to the business being transacted at the meeting.

252/23-24. TO RECEIVE ITEMS DEEMED URGENT BY THE CHAIRMAN / MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES.

There were none.

253/23-24. TO CONFIRM AND SIGN THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 14 SEPTEMBER 2023.

Recommended: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 14 September 2023 were confirmed and signed as a true record.

254/23-24. MONTHLY BANK RECONCILIATIONS.

In accordance with Financial Regulation 2.2 a member of the council other than the Town Mayor or a cheque signatory is required to be appointed to verify the bank reconciliations produced by the RFO for all the council's accounts on a regular basis. Councillor Ann Duke was appointed (minute 30/23-24).

Recommended: That the bank reconciliations for September 2023 be noted.

255/23-24. BANK TRANSFERS.

In accordance with Financial Regulation 5.5 (c) Members were provided with a list of bank transfers undertaken for September 2023

Recommended: That the bank transfers undertaken for September 2023 be approved.

256/23-24. TO RECEIVE FINANCE STATEMENTS AND PASS ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT.

In accordance with Financial Regulation 5.5 (a) Members were provided with details of all receipts and payments for authorisation for September 2023.

Recommended: That the receipts and payments for September 2023, as per the annexed list, be approved.

257/23-24. SUMMARY OF ACCOUNTS.

Members were provided with details of the Flex-Budget Report balanced to 30 September 2023.

Recommended: That the summary of accounts to 30 September 2023 be noted.

TOWN CLERK & RESPONSIBLE FINANCIAL OFFICER'S (RFO) REPORT.

258/23-24. APPLICATIONS FOR FUNDING FROM THE TOWN COUNCIL

Members considered the applications, and, after discussion, it was agreed that the following funding be awarded from the 2023 - 24 budget:

- Hi Kent - £500.00
- Food Cellar - £500.00

Officers were instructed to request a meeting with Hi Kent to further discuss the delivery of their services within the Town, and ways in which the Town Council could support this through into 2024 and onwards.

Recommended: That the funding, as detailed above, be awarded.

259/23-24 FINANCIAL RISK ASSESSMENTS (FRA) FOR 2023 – 2024

The FRA Working Group met on 25 October 2023 to undertake a review and Members considered the report from the Working Group which detailed recommended adjustments to the FRA's from 2023 – 2024 onwards.

Members considered the report/ notes from the Working Group meeting which would form part of the recommendation to full Council (*7 December 2023*), to enable the Estimates 2024 - 2025 to be drafted for consideration, and then approval by the Finance and General Purposes Committee and Special Town Council at their meetings on 11 January 2024

Recommended: That the report from the FRA Working Group be submitted to full Council on 7 December 2023 for approval and inclusion in the Estimates 2024 – 2025.

260/23-24 **ANNUAL ESTIMATES FOR 2024– 2025.**

Officers had begun work on the Annual Estimates for 2024 – 2025 earlier in the year and members were first asked for any suggestions in July (minute 120/23-24), with an agreed deadline of 31 August 2023, which were then duly considered at the Town Council meeting on 19 October 2023.

The Town Council meeting on 7 December 2023 would need to consider the draft Annual Estimates 2024 – 2025 which would then pass to be approved and endorsed by the full Council in January 2024 before setting the Council Tax Base for the 2024 – 2025 financial year.

Recommended: That the item be noted

There being no further business, the Meeting closed at 7.55 pm.

Signed: _____ Date: _____
(Chairman)