



## CHEPSTOW TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of meeting of the **Finance, Policy and Audit Committee** of Chepstow Town Council held on Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> June 2023 at 7.00pm

### Present:

**Chair:** Cllr J Rosser

**Councillors:** M Griffiths, P Griffiths, T Griffiths, N Meyrick, M Perkins (Remote), D Rooke, J MacTaggart,

**Apologies:** None

**In Attendance:** Mrs L Allen (Town Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer)  
Mrs A Sandiford (Deputy Town Clerk)

### 1. Election of Chair and Vice Chair

Nominations were sought.

#### Resolved:

That Cllr Joy Rosser be elected as Chair and Cllr Paul Griffiths be elected as Vice Chair of the Finance, Policy and Audit Committee for the year 2023-2024.

### 2. Declarations of Interest in Items on the Agenda

None

### 3. Apologies

None.

### 4. To Suspend Standing Orders

#### 4.1 Public Open Forum (15 minutes at the discretion of the Chair)

No members of the public were present.

### 5. Minutes

5.1 The Minutes of the Finance, Policy and Audit Committee Meeting held on 8th February were approved as a true record and signed by the Chair.

5.2 The Minutes of the extraordinary meeting of the Finance, Policy and Audit Committee Meeting held on 15<sup>th</sup> March 2023 were approved as a true record and signed by the Chair.

### 6. Matters Arising

Noted the report on matters arising from the minutes.

### 7. Review of Systems of Internal Control

In compliance with the Accounts and Audit (Wales) Regulations 2014, Members undertook a review of the Council's systems of internal control.

**Resolved:**

That having reviewed the Council's systems of internal control as per the recommended approach set out in the Clerk's report, the Finance, Policy and Audit Committee is satisfied that the Council's controls were:

- (a) operated during the year;
- (b) relevant and appropriate for the Council; and
- (c) not too onerous or disproportionate.

**8. Effectiveness of Internal Audit**

In compliance with the Accounts and Audit (Wales) Regulations 2014, Members undertook a review of the effectiveness of the Council's internal audit arrangements as per the recommended approach set out in the Clerk's report. It was noted that a review of the Terms of Reference for internal audit will be presented to Full Council. It was noted that the Terms of Reference for internal audit will be presented to Full Council for review.

**Resolved:**

That having reviewed the Council's effectiveness of Internal Audit arrangements, the Finance, Policy and Audit Committee is satisfied that the Council has met the expected standards and that these are effective.

**9. Internal Audit – Final Report 2022/2023**

Members considered the final report of the Internal Auditor in respect of the Council's accounts for the year ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023. It was noted that no further recommendations had been forthcoming since the interim annual audit.

**10. Annual Governance Statement for the financial Year End 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023**

Members considered the Annual Governance Statement / Checklist for the Financial Year End (page 2 of the Annual Return)

**Resolved:**

To complete the 'Yes' column in the Annual Governance Statement questions 1-8 and 'N/A' to question 9 for presentation to Full Council for approval.

**11. Insurance**

Noted that in consultation with the Chair of the Finance Committee, the Council has entered into a 3-year contract with its new provider Zurich at a fixed price of £6,219.45 (this will not increase except for changes to material facts, policy changes for sums insured, annual inflationary increase or higher rate Insurance Premium Tax (imposed by Government)).

**12. Annual Investment Strategy**

Members considered the Annual Investment Strategy prepared in line with the guidance issued by the Welsh Government as required under s15 of the Local Government Act 2003.

**Resolved:**

To adopt the Annual Investment Strategy.

**13. Investments**

Members further considered the report on potential investment accounts for the Town Council's reserves which, as requested at the last Finance, Policy and Audit committee, links to the provider's Ethical Policies.

**Resolved:**

To transfer £100,000 from each of the Unity Trust and CCLA accounts to invest £200,000 with The Charity Account for at a 1-year fixed rate of 3.5% and investigate Unity Trust Bonds for future reference.

**14. Cheque Signatories**

Members reviewed the Council's designated banking signatories and made no changes.

**Resolved:**

To confirm Council's designated bank signatories as follows:

Unity Trust Bank (current account) – Cllrs E Becker, M Griffiths, P Griffiths, J MacTaggart, D Rooke

Gateway Credit Union (investment) – Cllrs M Griffiths, D Rooke

Churches, Charities and Local Authorities (CCLA) (investment deposit fund) – as per Unity Trust.

**15. Earmarked Reserves**

Members considered the Earmarked Reserves balances and transfers made at year end:

<u>Budget Code</u>	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Reason</u>
1322	£14,900	Gatehouse sinking fund
1430	£ 2,500	War Memorial
1464	£29,800	Place Plan
1581	£12,700	Drill Hall sinking fund
2341	£ 4,300	Christmas lighting refurbishment

**Resolved:**

To transfer the balance of £29,800 from budget code 1464 Place Plan to General Reserves.

**16. Community Grants**

16.1 Members considered the revised Community Grant application form.

**Resolved:**

To approve the revised Community Grant application form subject to the addition of 'Monmouthshire' after 'Chepstow', where this refers to residents and the addition of a new item 6 requesting how the group will publicise how Town Council's contribution has benefited the project and community of Chepstow.

16.2 Members considered the community grant report and an application from:

**a) Monmouthshire County CAB** - £21,339 towards the employment of a financial inclusion project worker to assist with the backlog of clients within Chepstow.

**Resolved:**

To defer this item pending more specific information from Monmouthshire County CAB on the number of current and projected clients living in Chepstow, in particular, and to request it considers setting up a surgery in the Bulwark or Thornwell area.

**17 Policies**

17.1 Members considered the below policies, following a recommendation from the recent Health and Safety visit by the Town Council's provider, Peninsula.

**RESOLVED:**

To adopt the following:

- a) Stress Management Policy
- b) Well Being Policy
- c) Alcohol and Drugs Policy

## 18. Standing Orders

Members noted that the revised Model Standing Orders, which account for the legislative changes made in 2021, have now been received from One Voice Wales.

### **RESOLVED:**

That Cllr M Griffiths, Town Mayor and Cllr J Rosser, Chair of Finance, Policy & Audit Committee liaise with the Clerk and Deputy Clerk to review the revised Model Standing Orders and make recommendations to Full Council.

## 19. Old Library Building

The Clerk verbally updated Members on the new tenancy of the Old Library Building. It was noted that the lease had been signed on 1<sup>st</sup> June 2023 and that a few minor issues with the roof and door locks were still ongoing.

## 20. Report on emergency spend

Members noted expenditure under Financial Regulation 3.3 *“The Clerk may incur expenditure on behalf of the Council which is necessary to carry out any repair replacement or other work which is of such extreme urgency that it must be done at once, whether or not there is any budgetary provision for the expenditure, subject to a limit of £7,500. The Clerk shall report the action to the appropriate committee as soon as practicable thereafter”*:

### **Resolved:**

To ratify the following spend under Financial Regulation 3.3:

#### Gatehouse (LGA 1972, s111)

Roof repairs - £550.81

Boiler replacement - £3,700

Fire alarm Zone Plan - £545.74

5-year fixed electrical safety inspection - £1,585

*(this includes 6 x replacement emergency lighting units and faulty extraction fan)*

#### Old Library (LGA 1972, s111)

Deep clean - £68.00

Essential works to investigate leak and blocked drains £125

New drain plugs, grates and guards to stop drains blocking £120

Old Library replacement lock £110.00

#### Ancillary

Defibrillator pads - £165.06 (PHA 1936, s234)

Replacement hanging baskets - £645.00 (LGA 1972s 145)

Replacement blind Citizens Advice Bureau - £76.33

Gazebo legs - £418.08 (LGA 1972, s45)

## 21. Mayoral Allowance

Members noted the Mayoral allowance of £1,200 set aside in 2023-2024 budget. The Mayor advised Members of provisional community events planned for the year ahead, including a community event and a quiz night.

### **Resolved:**

To pay the Mayoral allowance of £1,200 on production of receipts/proof of expenditure, under the provisions of ss34(5) Local Government Act 1972.

**22. Riverbank Public Toilets refurbishment**

Members noted that three quotations have been received through the Welsh Government's Sell to Wales website and considered setting up a small working party to review the quotations and recommend to Full Council an appropriate contractor to undertake this work.

**Resolved:**

To nominate Cllrs J Rosser, D Rooke and M Griffiths to review the quotations in conjunction with the Clerk in order to recommend to Full Council an appropriate contractor to under refurbishment of the Riverbank Public Toilets.

**23. Hearing Loop and Hybrid Enhancement**

Members considered quotations for the installation of a hearing loop and hybrid enhancements in the Council Chamber.

**a) Hearing Loop**

**Resolved:**

To accept Quote 1 from Audio Visual Direct for the supply and installation of a hearing loop system in the Chamber at a cost of £1065 + VAT (*LG&E(Wales) Act 2021*).

**b) Hybrid Enhancement**

**Resolved:**

To request a demonstration of equipment and customer reference details to allow Members to test the quality of the proposed equipment prior to making a decision in this matter.

**24. Items for Next Meeting**

- Small Grants application form and guidance – *Cllr J Rosser*
- Bunting/promotional items – *Cllr T Griffiths*

**25. Date of Next Meeting**

The next ordinary meeting of the Finance, Policy and Audit Committee will take place in the Council Chamber and via Zoom at 7.00pm on Wednesday, 8<sup>th</sup> November 2023.

**26. Exclusion of Press and Public**

**Resolved:**

To exclude the press and public for the discussion of Item 27. Summer flower watering owing to the confidential and sensitive nature, this is in accordance with section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960.

**27. Summer Flower watering**

Members considered the quotation for the watering of the summer floral displays for the 2023 season – *confidential letter forwarded separately*.

**Resolved:**

To approve quotation from Simon Field for £15,000 for the watering of the summer floral displays for the 2023 season (*LGA 1972, s144*).

**CLOSE: This completed the business of the meeting at 20:45.**

**SIGNED CHAIR PERSON:** \_\_\_\_\_ **DATE:** \_\_\_\_\_