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# MINUTES FOR THE MEETING OF COUNCIL MATTERS

# FRIDAY 23RD SEPTEMBER 2022 AT 6.30PM IN THE GUILDHALL

**Present:** Councillors B Piper (Chair), M Adams, J Hannam, J Hodgson, P Paine and E Price.

**Apologies:** None.

**In Attendance:** C Marlton (Town Clerk), C Bewley (Finance, HR and Lettings Manager).

# 1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

The Chair read a statement about how the meeting would be conducted and recorded.

There were no apologies received.

*The Committee will adjourn for the following items:*

PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were no members of the public present.

*The Committee will convene to consider the following items:*

# 2. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

**To approve the minutes of 11th July 2022 and update on any matters arising.**

The minutes were unanimously **AGREED** as an accurate record of the proceedings. There were no matters arising.

# 3. BUDGET MONITOR

**To consider the Budget Monitor.**

The Clerk explained that the year end expected figure has changed due to the notes outlined in the spreadsheet. However it is difficult to accurately forecast year end given possible delays to capital projects which would then suggest an underspend on the original budget.

It was unanimously **AGREED** to increase the Arts budget to accommodate additional spending on entertainment for the Christmas festival nights.

It was unanimously **AGREED** to allocate any underspend on the Civic Hall pillar painting project to the Gnome trail initiative that is proposed for the Christmas period.

It was unanimously **AGREED** to approve the budget monitor document as presented.

# 4. PROCEDURAL NOTE – COUNCILLOR EXPENSES

**To note the procedure relating to expenses and expenditure from the budget**.

Current policy: Items required by Councillors to carry out their approved duties must be ordered and paid for through the office in advance of the event.

1. Consider the payment of an expenses claim for refreshments as an exemption to the policy (£10.10 claimed by Cllr Hodgson)

This was unanimously approved. A separate claim for Councillor Hodgson for around £10 for refreshments was also unanimously approved.

1. Consider the payment of an expenses claim for Totnes Show tickets as an exemption to the policy (£30.00 claimed by Cllr Price)

This was unanimously approved.

Councillors noted that all expenditure, including refreshments, must be arranged in advance by the office administrators. The Clerk agreed to discuss the arrangements for meetings with the management team and administrators.

# 5. MAYOR’S ENGAGEMENTS AND BUDGET

**To consider the Mayor’s engagements since June 2022 and the current budget.**

This was reviewed and unanimously **AGREED**.

# 6. HEALTH, SAFETY AND WELLBEING POLICY

# To review the Health, Safety and Wellbeing Policy.

This was reviewed and unanimously **AGREED**.

It was agreed that the Finance, HR and Lettings Manager would consider adding a Safeguarding Policy to the policy scheme for future consideration.

# 7. PAY POLICY

**To review the Pay Policy.**

This was reviewed and unanimously **AGREED**.

# 8. EMPOWERING COMMUNITIES CONFERENCE

# To consider attendance at the Empowering Communities Conference on 7th November 2022.

This was reviewed and it was **AGREED** to fund an officer and Councillor place to the in-person event (priority being for the Mayor) and virtual attendance for all other Councillors and staff.

**9. TRESOC ENERGY CLUB PROPOSAL**

**To consider the Totnes Renewable Energy Society’s energy club proposal for use of the solar panels on the Civic Hall.**

It was unanimously **AGREED** to delay joining the TRESOC energy club at the current time due to the volatility of the market but to review this in 6 months time at the March Council Matters meeting.

**10. EXTERNAL AUDIT**

**To note the external auditor report on the Annual Governance & Accountability Return.**

This was noted.

**11. FSCS PROTECTION LEVEL FOR COUNCILS**

**To note that the Financial Services Compensation Scheme (FSCS) protection for bank deposits does not apply to councils with a budget greater than 500, 000 euros.**

This was noted. The Clerk explained that the opening of accounts to spread funds as previously decided was still advantageous from an interest perspective.

**12. ART UNDER CIVIC HALL**

**To:**

1. **Note the process and timelines in considering the expressions of interest for the artwork on the pillars under the Civic Hall;**

Noted.

1. **Consider granting the Clerk delegated authority to appoint the preferred artist.**

The committee concurred with the view of the Arts Working Group on the preferred contractor and **AGREED** unanimously that the Town Clerk should instruct said person to go ahead.

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# 13. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

**To note the date of the next meeting of the Council Matters Committee – Monday 10th October 2022 at 6.30pm in the Guildhall.**

Noted.

*The Committee will be asked to* ***RESOLVE*** *to exclude the press and public “by reason of the confidential nature of the business” to be discussed and in accordance with the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960. (CONFIDENTIAL by virtue of relating to legal and/or commercial matters, staffing and/or the financial or business affairs of a person or persons other than the Council)*

# 14. BANK STATEMENTS AND RECONCILIATIONS (Standing Item)

**To consider the bank statements and reconciliations for June, July [and August].**

These were reviewed and unanimously **AGREED**.

# 15. EASTGATE LEASE

**To consider the future requirement for the lease of Eastgate. The current lease expires in September 2023 (commercial).**

It was unanimously **AGREED** that the Town Clerk would approach the Duchy and existing groups who have storage to discuss further before tabling at a future meeting where a recommendation would be made to Full Council.

# 16. TOWN CLOCKS

# To review current and projected maintenance and repair costs.

It was unanimously **RECOMMENDED** to Full Council that given the legal issue identified with funding church property the Council would continue to service and maintain the Town Clock in Eastgate but not the Church clocks in town.

# 17. ELMHIRST PROJECT

# To review expenditure to date and current delegated authority limit to the Clerk.

It was unanimously **RECOMMENDED** to Full Council that the upper limit of delegated authority be raised to £65,000.

# 18. CIVIC HALL MAIN DOORS

# To consider replacing the Civic Hall doors at the top of the steps to match the doors at the ramp entrance (commercial).

It was unanimously **AGREED** to proceed with the replacement doors using the previously contractor, Five Star. The old doors will be removed and retained for future reuse.

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# 19. PURCHASE OF LIGHTING

**To consider the purchase of festoon lighting for underneath the Civic Hall (commercial).**

This was reviewed and unanimously **AGREED**.

# 20. STAFFING UPDATE

**For any general or urgent updates that required confidential sharing with Councillors**

None.

### 21. TOWN MAINTENANCE OFFICER VACANCY

**To consider the current Town Maintenance Officer vacancy.**

It was unanimously **AGREED** to ratify the appointment of the Town Maintenance Officer role on the spinal point requested with a compressed working pattern of Monday – Thursday, 8.15am – 5.30pm (30 minute break).

### 22. STAFF ATTENDANCE

**To note sickness and overtime balances.**

Noted. No concerns raised. It was also noted that the Town Clerk would meet a trigger for an absence review following her surgery.

Catherine Marlton

Town Clerk

26th September 2022