CHARD TOWN COUNCIL

The Guildhall, Fore Street, Chard, Somerset TA20 1PP
01460 239567 www.chard.gov.uk
Mayor: Cllr Bates Temporary Proper Officer: Neil Bloomfield

FINANCE & AUDIT COMMITTEE

Minutes of the Finance & Audit Committee which was held on Tuesday 4th September 2024 at 7.00pm in The Guildhall, Fore Street, Chard TA20 1PP.

PRESENT: Cllr Baker, Cllr Bulmer, Cllr Eggins, Cllr Hassan, Cllr A Kenton, and Cllr J Kenton, Cllr Richter, Cllr Williams (Chair),

OFFICERS PRESENT: Neil Bloomfield, Temporary Proper Officer / Town Clerk, Helen Nathanson Locum Responsible Finance Officer (RFO), Beverley Newman Democratic Service Officer (DSO).

2024/21 Apologies for absence
None

2024/22 Declarations of interest
The following Declarations of Interest were made:

- Cllr Bulmer in relation to agenda item 2024/27 points 3 Cllr Bulmer's wife is involved with the Community Hub & 5 Cllr Bulmer is on the Committee
- Cllr Eggins in relation to agenda item 2024/27 point 3 in his capacity as a Director for the Community Hub
- Cllr J Kenton in relation to agenda item 2024/27 point 4 due to her capacity as a Somerset Council Cllr
- Cllr Baker in relation to agenda item 2024/27 point 4 to his capacity as a Somerset Council Cllr.

Proposed Cllr Williams Seconded Cllr Eggins
Unanimous
Resolved: Suspend Orders to allow Public Participation (with apologies from Cllr Williams overlooking this part of the meeting at the start).

Public Participation Time:

Proposed Cllr Williams Seconded Cllr Eggins
Unanimous
Resolved: To reinstate Standing Orders

Proposed Cllr Williams Seconded Cllr Eggins
Unanimous
Resolved: To reinstate Standing Orders

Proposed Cllr Williams Seconded Cllr Bulmer
For: 7 Abstain: 1

Resolved: To move agenda items; 2024/27, point 5 & 2024/28 to the start of the meeting to avoid unnecessary waiting by members of the public who had come to talk about their grant application / request for funding.

Proposed Cllr J Kenton Seconded Cllr Richter
For: 4 Abstain: 4
Resolved: It was suggested that future recipients of the Chard Town Council Community Grants could be asked to provide evidence of how the grant money had been spent. It was agreed to discuss this in more detail at the next meeting of the Grants Sub-Committee.

Proposed Cllr Williams Seconded Cllr Baker
Unanimous
Resolved: Suspend Orders to allow representatives of the Chard Horticultural and Craft talk about their application.

Decision: to award a grant of £650

£350 for hire of the Guildhall for the event

£150 to cover the PL and printing

Total - £500

Two representatives of the Chard Horticultural and Craft provided more information about how this event will support Chard Community and how every penny they receive counts in terms of being able to continue to put on this event.

Proposed Cllr Williams Seconded Cllr Eggins
Unanimous
Resolved: Reinstate Standing Orders

2024/27 Grant Funding Point 5 Chard Horticultural and Craft Show

Proposed Cllr Bates Seconded Cllr Eggins
Unanimous
Resolved: The Committee resolved to award a grant of £650 to the Chard Horticulture and Craft Show, which was made up of £350 for the hire of the Guildhall and £150 to cover Public Liability Insurance and printing.

Proposed Cllr Williams Seconded Cllr Baker
Unanimous

2024/28 **Resolved:** Suspend Orders to allow representatives of the Chard Area Youth Committee to give an oral request for funds from the Council (in support of their written request for funds)

Two representatives of the Chard CAYC gave a detailed account of the financial difficulties being faced, making it clear that processes had now changed to achieve a more efficient system and to remain financially self – sufficient in the future. The monies being requested now were to support them in a transient and vulnerable time.

Proposed Cllr Williams Seconded Cllr J Kenton
Unanimous
Resolved: Reinstate Standing Orders

2024/28 Chard Area Youth Committee (CAYC)

Proposed Cllr Bates Seconded Cllr Richter
Unanimous
Resolved: Given the significant amount of funds requested, it was agreed that the Committee would form a Task & Finish Group to consider the request in more details. Members of the CAYC would be invited and the Group would meet before the Full Council meeting on 16th September so that it could make a recommendation to Council.

2024/27 Grant Funding Points 1-4

1. Proposed: Cllr J Kenton Seconded: Cllr Eggins
Unanimous
Resolved: Wellington Community Counselling (WCC)
Councillors queried the hourly rate for the service, which appeared to be different on the website and on the application. They were also keen to understand whether or not WCC had been successful in gaining the match funding, which was essential to the success of the whole project. The RFO was asked to speak to WCC to confirm this and to invite representatives to the next meeting of the Grants Sub-Committee, if they wished to speak to councillors. The application was therefore deferred to the next meeting of the Grants Sub-Committee.

2. Proposed: Cllr Baker Seconded: Cllr Richter
Unanimous
Resolved: It was resolved to award a grant of £637.50 to the Chard Bowling Club.

Cllr Eggins and Cllr Bulmer declared a pecuniary interest and left the meeting at 19.55

3. Proposed: Cllr Baker Seconded: Cllr A Kenton
Unanimous
Resolved: Councillors supported the application in principle but considered that it would sit better within the CTC Grants Policy if it were submitted by the PTFA of Avishayes School, rather than by an unconnected organisation. It was therefore agreed to ask for the application to be re-submitted for consideration at the next Grants Sub-Committee meeting or for the September Council meeting if possible.

Cllr Eggins and Cllr Bulmer re-joined the meeting 20.06

4. Proposed: Cllr Eggins Seconded: Cllr Bulmer
Unanimous
Resolved: After discussion, it was resolved to award a grant of £1000 to the Chard Reservoir Local Nature Reserve Volunteers Group.
For: 6 Abstain: 2

2024/23 Committee Meeting Minutes.

Proposed: Cllr J Kenton Seconded: Cllr Baker
For: 7 Abstain: 1
The following amendments to be made to the June Finance & Audit draft minutes:

- "2024/13 **Appointment of members to Task & Finish Policy Group**.

The following committee members agreed to be on the Task & Finish Policy Group ...."

- "2024/14 **Appointment of members to the Finance & Audit Grants Subcommittee** following agreed to be members of the Finance & Audit Grants Sub-committee ..."

Proposed: Cllr J Kenton Seconded: Cllr Hassan
Unanimous
Resolved: As a matter arising, councillors were asked if anyone else would like to join either of the above groups. Cllr Eggins was nominated to join the Policy T&F Group and Cllrs Richter and Hassan were nominated to join the Grants Sub-Committee. These nominations were approved by the Committee.

2024/24 Income & Expenditure.
Council noted the Income and expenditure report.

2024/25 Earmarked reserves.
Council noted the Earmarked reserves.

Cllr Hassan left the meeting to go to work at 20.27

2024/26 Budget Setting
It was agreed to hold two Budget Workshops which would be open to all councillors as training sessions: the RFO was asked to arrange those dates. Committees would also be asked to start thinking about their own budget requirements and the Finance and Audit Committee would also start this process.

2024/27 & 28 see above

2024/29 Internal Audit.
Council noted the retirement letter of the Council's Internal Auditor.

The RFO had contacted an independent IA, based in East Anglia, who would be happy to carry out the interim audit on a one-off basis, following which the RFO would present quotes for a more formal arrangement for future audit. This was agreed by the Committee.

2024/30 Date of next meeting
Committee agreed the next meeting of the Finance & Audit Committee could be TBC subject to discussion with the Chair of the Finance & Audit Committee, Cllr Williams and the RFO and once agreed that it would be held in the Guildhall, Fore Street, Chard TA20 1PP commencing at 19.00

There being no other business the Chair thanked committee members for their attendance and closed the meeting at 20.40.

CHAIR: _____ **DATE:** 6/6/25