Chard Town Council

The Guildhall, Fore Street, Chard, Somerset TA20 1PP

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Mayor: Cllr Jason Baker Executive Officer: Paul Russell

FINANCE & AUDIT COMMITTEE

Minutes of the Finance & Audit Committee held on Tuesday 26th October 2021 commencing at 7.00pm in The Guildhall, Fore Street, Chard TA20 1PP.

PRESENT: Cllr Mrs Bates (Chair), Cllr Baker, Cllr Bulmer, Cllr J Kenton, Cllr Mrs Morrison and Cllr Williams.

OFFICERS PRESENT: Locum Town Clerk.

Public Participation Time
There were no members of the public present. No matters were raised.

2021/11 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE
Apologies were received and accepted from Cllr Carnell (work), Cllr Eggins (work), Cllr Mrs O'Brien (illness) and Cllr Mrs Wootton (holiday).

2021/12 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST
The following Declarations of Interest were made:

- Cllr Baker (Personal): Chard Carnival Committee, Town Team and item 2021/18(c);
- Cllr J Kenton (Personal): Town Team.

2021/13 TO RESOLVE TO EXCLUDE MEMBERS OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC
Proposed: Cllr Morrison Seconded: Cllr Williams

For: Cllr Bates, Cllr Bulmer, Cllr Morrison and Cllr Williams**.**

Abstention: Cllr Baker and Cllr J Kenton.

Committee **RESOLVED** that, in accordance with Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded during the discussion of the matters referred to in the items listed under 2020/11, on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information, as defined in the respective paragraph of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act, and the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

An explanation was requested as to why the Unitary Authority Draft Report had been included under confidential items. The Town Clerk explained that this was a briefing paper and did not contain any input as yet from elected members. Any services that Chard Town Council might wish to take on would be subject to contract and must be formally approved by members.

2021/14 COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

Proposed: Cllr Baker Seconded: Cllr Bulmer

For: Cllr Bates, Cllr Baker, Cllr Bulmer, Cllr Morrison and Cllr Williams**.**

Abstention: Cllr J Kenton.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Policy and Resources Committee meeting held on Monday 27th July 2021 be agreed and signed as a correct record.

2021/15 TOWN CLERK'S REPORT

Committee received the following report:

(a) **New Streetlighting –** Revised street lighting designs to replace the existing street lights in Fore Street and Howards Row were provided to Committee. It was noted that this would be a Full Council agenda and the images would be forwarded to all Members for information.

(b) **Future Chard Strategy Consultation –** Committee noted that this has been taking place in the Guildhall over the past few days.

(c) **Photographs of Previous Mayors –** Committee agreed to recommend to Full Council that the Town Council would retain the artefacts in the Guildhall. Council Officers would engage with the Museum for advice on maintaining this unique collection. It was further agreed to try to identify those photographs without names on them using local knowledge available.

2021/16 FINANCIAL MATTERS

(a) **Financial Report –** Following discussion, Committee noted the quarterly financial report relating to the first six months of Council business.

(b) **Internal Audit Report –** Committee noted the Internal Audit report and Action Plan. It was agreed to receive an update on the implementation of the action plan at its next meeting in January 2022.

2021/17 COMMITTEE MATTERS

(a) **Budget 2022/2023 –** Committee noted that work had commenced on the 2022/23 budget with a series of informal workshops being held.

It was agreed to develop a simplified version of the budget with specific Committee responsibilities and who had authority to spend, and the ensure that the Amenities & Events Committee had an opportunity to consider its budget responsibilities.

The following timetable for the development of the budget was agreed:

Date	Action	Committee
8th November 21	Review staffing element of the draft budget by Committee with relevant recommendations going to Full Council.	HR & Personnel Committee
8th November 21	Full Council to consider recommendations from HR & Personnel Committee.	Full Council
TBA	Workshop 2 to review amended budget following initial workshop.	Informal
10th January 22	Adoption of Final Budget	Full Council

(b) **Work Plan Update Report –** Committee noted the updated Committee Work Plan. The following items were raised:

- Disperse Office – This item had not yet been completed as discussions were ongoing;
- Changing Place provision – SSDC had secured a grant towards delivering one of these facilities in Chard with financial support from the Town Council;
- Neighbourhood Plan – This item would need to be considered in the future by the new Council;
- It was agreed to request a copy of the final Future Chard document currently being developed by SSDC to help inform the development of the next Strategic Plan of Chard Town Council.

2021/18 GRANTS

(a) **Grant Applications –** Committee noted the Grant Sub-Committee report dated 5th August 2021 regarding the three annual grants.

Chard Carnival Committee Application
Proposed: Cllr Williams Seconded: Cllr Bulmer

For: Cllr Bates, Cllr Bulmer, Cllr J Kenton, Cllr Morrison and Cllr Williams**.**

Abstention: Cllr Baker

RESOLVED to ratify the Annual Grant to the Chard Carnival Committee of £1,000.

Chard Town Team Application
Proposed: Cllr Morrison Seconded: Cllr Bulmer

For: Cllr Bates, Cllr Bulmer, Cllr Morrison and Cllr Williams**.**

Abstention: Cllr Baker and Cllr J Kenton.

RESOLVED to ratify the Annual Grant to the Chard Town Team of £1,000.

Chard Museum
Proposed: Cllr Baker Seconded: Cllr Williams
Unanimous

RESOLVED to ratify the Annual Grant to the Chard Museum of £1,000.

Committee agreed to formally appoint a Grants Sub-Committee at its next meeting.

(b) **Grant Application Criteria and Application Form –** Committee reviewed the revised criteria and application process.

Proposed: Cllr J Kenton Seconded: Cllr Baker
Unanimous

RESOLVED to adopt the revised Community Grant Fund application form and to develop a separate simplified form for those wishing to apply for an Annual Grant.

It was agreed that in future any revisions would be included in the report.

(c) **Christmas Trees –** Committee considered the proposal to subsidise the purchase of Christmas Trees to be erected outside business premises in the town centre.

Proposed: Cllr Morrison Seconded: Cllr Williams

For: Cllr Bates, Cllr Bulmer, Cllr J Kenton, Cllr Morrison and Cllr Williams**.**

Abstention: Cllr Baker

RESOLVED:

- To support town centre businesses to purchase Christmas Trees who had previously been part of this scheme in Chard town centre subject to a minimum part donation from businesses of £10 per premises;
- That this support would be for this financial year only and would be reviewed again during the 2022/23 financial year;
- To provide a maximum of £2,500 funding to be taken from the Grants allocation.

2021/19 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Committee noted that the next meeting of the Finance & Audit Committee would be held on Tuesday 25th January 2022 in the Guildhall, Fore Street, Chard TA20 1PP commencing at 7pm.

2021/20 CONFIDENTIAL MATTERS

As certain items to be discussed included the consideration of exempt information it was **RESOLVED** under Item 2021/13 that, in accordance with Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded during the discussion of the matters referred to in the items

listed below, on the grounds that they would involve the likely disclosure of exempt information, as defined in the respective paragraph of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act, and the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information.

(a) **Transition to Unitary Draft Report –** Committee noted the initial draft report regarding the transition to unitary authority in Somerset. An item would be placed on the next Full Council agenda to set up a Task & Finish Group to consider what, if any, services Chard Town Council might wish to explore further.

(b) **Budget 2022/23 –** Committee noted the initial amendments to the draft budget currently being developed following the first workshop meeting.

There being no other business the Chair thanked Members for their attendance and closed the meeting at 8:54pm.

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CHAIR: **DATE:**