

**NOTES OF A MEETING OF THE FINANCE COMMITTEE**

**HELD IN THE MAYOR’S PARLOUR**

**ON WEDNESDAY 13 OCTOBER 2021**

**The meeting began at 4pm**

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| **Present:**Cllrs: Andrea Baughan (Mayor), Lesley Clarke OBE (Deputy Mayor), Mahboob Hussain, Majid Hussain, Nabeela Rana, Katrina Wood and Joe Bradshaw (Town Clerk)  |
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| 1. | **Welcome and Introductions**The Mayor opened the meeting and thanked everyone for attending the meeting at such short notice. |
| 2. | **Apologies**The Town Clerk reported that Tony Green had sent his apologies. |
| 3. | **Minutes of Last Meeting and Matters Arising**The minutes of the last meeting were agreed as a true and accurate record and there were no matters arising which do not appear in the agenda below |
| 4. | **Appointment of Chairman**Katrina Wood proposed that Lesley Clarke be appointed as Chairman of the Standing Sub-Committee and this was agreed unanimously by all those present. |
| 5. | **Terms of Reference for Finance Sub-Committee**The Town Clerk reported that he was surprised that the members of the Finance Sub-Committee did not have Terms of Reference given that the committee had the delegated financial responsibility on behalf of the Charter Trustees to ensure that Council Tax payers money was protected and that all accounting procedures were followed. The Town Clerk agreed to prepare Terms of Reference for the approval of the Finance Committee at their next meeting in January 2022. The TORs would reflect the current financial responsibilities of the Charter Trustees laid down by the external auditor. |
| 6. | **Bank Balance and Spend Forecast to 31 March 2022**The Town Clerk reported that the bank balance as at 12 October 2021 was currently £106,271.75. The Town Clerk advised that there would be spending on the Remembrance Sunday event, Annual Reception, purchase of Past Mayor/Past Consort badges, purchase of Cadet badges as well as the salary for the Mayor’s Secretary, allowances for the Mayor and Deputy Mayor and honorariums for the 4 officers during the remainder of the financial year with a projected expenditure of around £25K and estimated that the end of year balance would be around £80K. |
| 7. | **Payment of Overtime to the Mayor’s Secretary**The Town Clerk advised that when the new Mayor’s Secretary was appointed to her position in August that her weekly hours had been reduced from 25 hours to 20 hours – a decrease of 20% on salary costs. It was felt that the new incumbent would be able to easily cope with the demands of the post on the reduced hours by the introduction of improvements to working practice and more reliance on the ICT systems that support event management. There is a line in the contract which authorises the Finance Committee to approve overtime on the occasions when the Town Clerk feels that additional hours are required to complete tasks. (These might be in support of the major events such as the Annual General Meeting/Annual Reception, Battle of Britain Church Service and Remembrance Sunday Parade and Service). The Town Clerk advised the committee that he had asked the Mayor’s Secretary to work overtime to clear out some of the unnecessary paperwork and other items that were cluttering the office when she first arrived and also to work overtime in support of the Battle of Britain 2021 Church Service which was passed to the Charter Trustees at short notice by Buckinghamshire Council. There will, of course, be the flexibility for the Mayor’s Secretary to take “time-off-in-lieu” and have flexible working during the quieter periods. Lesley Clarke recommended that the Finance Committee give the Town Clerk the authority to approve reasonable overtime payments and to keep the finance committee informed when he does so. |
| 8. | **Setting of 2022/23 Precept**The Town Clerk advised that he was likely to receive a request from Buckinghamshire Council for the Charter Trustees to set the precept for the 2022/23 Council Tax Year in January 2022. He advised that given the current healthy state of the bank account that the Charter Trustees may not require to increase the precept to support the Mayoralty in FY 22/23 and might even consider a reduction in it when they meet to agree review the budget. The committee agreed that given the very healthy state of the bank account that a reduction of the precept should be considered and presented to the Charter Trustees for their approval at the January meeting. |
| 9. | **Any other business**During the discussions about the setting of the precept Lesley Clarke asked what other measures could be made to bring down the balance of the bank account given that there were limitations on what the Charter Trustees could spend the money on and felt that the Charter Trustees were being financially irresponsible by holding on to a large amount of public money that they could not spend. The Finance Committee agreed that the Town Clerk should investigate whether the furlough money that we had received from HMRC could be returned; the Town Clerk agreed to prepare a short brief for Charter Trustees for discussion at the meeting of the Charter Trustees on 23 November. |
| 4. | **The meeting closed at 5.05pm**C:\Users\jbradsh1\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\Temporary Internet Files\Content.Outlook\3DTP4IIA\IMG_6378.jpg

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| **Joe Bradshaw****Clerk and Treasurer****to the High Wycombe Charter Trustees****Joe.Bradshaw1@buckinghamshire.gov.uk****Mobile: 07702-485133** |

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