***High Wycombe Charter Trustees***

***Mayor’s Parlour, Wycombe Area Office, High Wycombe HP11 1BB***

*Town Clerk: Tel: 01494 421367 Secretary: Tel: 01494 475792*

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| ***Mayor 2025-26:*** | ***Cllr Majid Hussain*** |  | ***Email: Majid.Hussain@buckinghamshire.gov.uk*** |
| ***Town Clerk & Treasurer:*** | ***Mr Joe Bradshaw MVO*** |  | ***Email: Joe.Bradshaw1@buckinghamshire.gov.uk*** |
| ***Mayor's Secretary:*** | ***Miss. Sarah Martin*** |  | ***Email: Sarah.Martin@buckinghamshire.gov.uk*** |

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE CHARTER TRUSTEES**

**HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, HIGH WYCOMBE**

**ON WEDNESDAY 24 JUNE 2025**

**The meeting began at 6.05pm**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Present**  Cllrs Majid Hussain (Mayor), Arman Alam, Hazel Arthur-Hewitt, Mohammed Ayub, Chris Chilton, Lesley Clarke OBE, Ed Gemmell, Darren Hayday, Imran Hussain, Mahboob Hussain OBE JP, Mazamal Hussain, Catherine Oliver, Sarfaraz Raja, Trevor Snaith and Julia Wassell.  Joe Bradshaw (Town Clerk) and Sarah Martin (Mayor’s Secretary) were also in attendance. | |
|  | |
|  |  |
| 1. | The Mayor opened the meeting and invited Imam Sultan to read a prayer. |
| 2. | **Apologies**  The Town Clerk reported that apologies had been received from Charter Trustee Councillor Khalil Ahmed. |
| 3. | **Minutes of the last Charter Trustees Meeting held on 7 May 2025**  The Mayor asked Charter Trustees if they had any comments regarding the accuracy of the minutes that had been presented following the last meeting and also for their approval.  **It was resolved that the minutes of the meeting held 7 May 2025 be approved and were a true and accurate record of the meeting.** |
| 4. | **Matters arising from the last meeting.**  There were no matters arising.. |
| 5. | **Mayor’s Communications.**  The Mayor advised that he had been extremely busy since his election on 24 May 25 and highlighted a number of events that he had attended. A copy of those events is enclosed to these minutes. The Mayor also advised that all Charter Trustees have now received “hold the date” invitations for his Mayoral Year for a number of civic events.. |
| 6. | **Approval of Annual Accounts for Financial Year 2024/25.**  The Mayor advised that a copy of the Charter Trustees Annual Accounts Report for Financial Year 2024/25 was circulated to all Charter Trustees prior to the meeting. Furthermore, he advised that the bank statements, invoices, internal audit report and copies of all invoices had been made available for viewing in the Town Clerk’s Office. He reminded Charter Trustees the full set of accounts is still available for inspection prior to their approval. The Mayor confirmed that a notice of public rights and publication of the unaudited Annual Governance and Accountability Return for the accounts for the year ended 31 March 2025 was published on 2 June 2025 announcing that any person who is interested has the right to inspect and make copies of the accounting records for the financial year to which the audit relates and all books, deeds, contracts, bills, vouchers, receipts and other documents relating to those records have been made available for inspection by any person who is interested by contacting the Town Clerk. This information was published on the Mayor of High Wycombe website and the Charter Trustees Notice Board.  The Mayor then invited Charter Trustees to question the Town Clerk on any concerns or observations that they might have about the report or accounting statement/Annual Governance and Accounting Review prior to seeking their approval and dispatch to the external auditor. Charter Trustee Chris Chilton requested details of the internal auditor. The Town Clerk advised that Mr. Richard Mozley had been appointed as the Internal Auditor for the 2024;25 financial year and showed him a copy of the internal auditor’s report. Charter Trustee Catherine Oliver requested that 2024/25 be inserted on the front page of the report. This was actioned immediately by the Town Clerk.  A full copy of the Financial Report is enclosed to these minutes and a copy of the Accounting Statement which requires approval is shown below:  **Accounting Statements 2024/2025 for the Charter Trustees of High Wycombe**   |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | |  | **Year ending** | | |  | **31 March 2024** | **31 March 2025** | | Balances brought forward | £78,544 | £84,686 | | Precept or Rates and Levies | £59200 | £59,200 | | Total other receipts (see Note 1 below) | £12,624 | £3,101 | | Staff costs | £21,436 | £22,088 | | Loan interest / capital repayments | £0 | £0 | | All other payments | £44,246 | £46,016 | | Balances carried forward | £84,686 | £78,882  (see note 2) | | Total value of cash and short term investments | £84,686 | £78,882 | |  |  |  | | Total fixed Assets plus long term investments | £497,805 | £497,805 | | Total borrowings | 0 | 0 |   Notes:   1. Explanation of Variance: In year ending 31 Mar 24 we were able to sort out some software issues with HMRC which resulted in the Charter Trustees receiving a VAT refund of £12,200.31 (backdated by 5 years). The income we received in the year ending 31 Mar was £3101 which comprised of £798 of deposit account interest and £2303 in VAT refunds. 2. This balance includes £13K of Furlough funding which may need to be repaid to HMRC at a future date.   The Town Clerk certified that for the year ended 31 March 2025 the Accounting Statement in this Annual Governance and Accountability Return had been prepared on a receipts and payments basis following the guidance in the Government and Accountability for Smaller Authorities – a Practitioners’ Guide to Proper Practices and presents fairly the financial position of this authority.  The Mayor then sought the approval of Charter Trustees for the Accounting Statement shown above.  **It was resolved unanimously that the Accounting Statement for the Charter Trustees of High Wycombe for the financial year 2024/25 be approved.** |
| 7. | **Election of 2 Additional Members to the Standing and Finance Sub-Committee.**  The Mayor advised that at the Standing and Finance Sub Committee held in the Mayor’s Parlour on Thursday 19th June that the 6 members who had attended had been unable to agree on the selection of a Chairman. On the advice of the Town Clerk the Mayor decided to announce that the meeting be reconvened within the next 3 weeks so that a Chairman could be appointed and the agenda that required attention could be taken forward. He also advised that by having 2 additional members it would ensure that there was sufficient Charter Trustees present to deal with the agendas at the meetings rather than face a situation where only 3 or 4 members were present as had happened at some of the sub-committee meetings in the past. Charter Trustee Sarfaraz Raja was concerned at the way that the meeting had been conducted and felt that Charter Trustees needed to be made aware of some of the issues. Following an open and heated but healthy debate and exchange of views the Town Clerk apologized for his part in the process and advised that he should have briefed the Mayor in advance of the meeting to ensure that he sought a proposer and a seconder for the selection of the Chairman. The Mayor sought the approval to amend the Charter Trustees Handbook to change the number of members of the sub-committee from 7 to 9 – including the Mayor and Deputy Mayor (and confirmed that the Mayor and Deputy Mayor would be able to vote at the meetings). He advised that the sub-committee should only need to meet 3 or 4 times in a routine Mayoral year. Charter Chris Chilton proposed and Mazamal Hussain seconded the proposal.  **It was resolved that the Charter Trustees Handbook be amended to increase the size of the Standing and Finance Sub Committee from 7 members to 9 members (including the Mayor and Deputy Mayor).**  The Mayor then asked for 2 Charter Trustees to volunteer to join the Standing and Finance Sub Committee. Charter Trustees Arman Alam, Darren Hayday and Julia Wassell all volunteered to join the committee. Given that only 2 sub-committee members were required it was agreed that a secret ballot should take place to decide which of the 3 Charter Trustees should join the sub-committee.  **Following the secret ballot, it was resolved that Charter Trustees Arman Alam and Darren Hayday be elected onto the Standing and Finance Sub-Committee.** |
| 8. | **Commemoration of the 80th Anniversary of VJ Day on 14 August 2025.**  The Mayor asked the Town Clerk to brief Charter Trustees on the plans for VJ Day on 14 August. The Town Clerk advised that despite the planning by the Mayor’s Secretary of a large number of events for VE Day (including a VE80 walk, piping at the Guildhall, Church Service, Fish & Chips Supper and bell ringing at All Saints Church and a Beacon Lighting ceremony at Tom Burts Hill that the turnout by Charter Trustees and the general public had been disappointing at the majority of those events. Despite having £2.4K of the £5K budget remaining the Town Clerk had recommended to the Mayor that he participates fully in the activities organized by others on VJ Day including those events planned by the Royal British Legion and the Royal Artillery Association but that they should not ask the Mayor’s Secretary to organize any events on behalf of the Charter Trustees. The Town Clerk also advised that he was also liaising with the Royal Star and Garter Home about the possibility of holding a VJ80 Afternoon Tea funded by the Charter Trustees and he that he would brief the members of the Standing and Finance Sub-Committee when they next meet to update them on the plan. Charter Trustee Julia Wassell asked if the Town Clerk could make contact with one of her constituents about the VJ Day plans and also asked whether some of the VE/VJ day budget might be spent on a display in the Memorial Garden. The Town Clerk confirmed that he would take both items forward. |
| 9. | **Annual Review of Mayor’s Secretary’s Salary.**  The Mayor asked the Town Clerk to brief Charter Trustees on the annual review of the salary of the Mayor’s Secretary. The Town Clerk advised that the Local Government Association had made a recommendation of 3.2% increase for all staff but confirmation of the rise had not been communicated’ there had been delays leading up to the Comprehensive Spending Review. He also advised that Buckinghamshire Council had advised their staff advising them that a 3.25% increase had been agreed and would be paid in July 2025. The Town Clerk advised that he had briefed members of the Standing and Finance Sub-Committee ahead of the next meeting in so that the pay increase is reflected in the July payroll.. |
| 10. | **Any Other Business.**  Charter Trustee Lesley Clarke requested that procedures for Charter Trustees processing be tightened up – especially when they are leaving church. Charter Trustee Ed Gemmell suggested that more should be made of the procession of the Charter Trustees through the town and suggested that a drummer or similar should be included every time that the Charter Trustees process through the town at civic engagements. The Town Clerk advised that he would take both suggestions forward. |
| 11. | **Date of next meeting.**  The next meeting of the Charter Trustees of High Wycombe is currently scheduled for Tuesday 9 September 2025 at 6 pm. |
|  | |
| **The meeting closed at 6.52 pm** | |

**Mayoral Engagements 25th May – 24th June 2025**

25th May – FrogFest

29th May – Energie Fitness Launch Party

1st June – Mayor of Chesham’s Civic Service

4th June – High Wycombe Town Twinning Association AGM

7th June – High Sheriff’s Outdoor Fun Day at Woodrow High House, Amersham

12th June – BNU Art and Design Summer Show

13th June – Visit to Wycombe Food Hub

14th June – Deputy Mayor opened the Festival of Well Being.

Mayor attended the Young at Heart Club

17th June – RAF Annual Reception

21st June – Mayor’s Celebration Dinner

23rd June – Armed Forces Flag Raising Ceremony

******

***High Wycombe Charter Trustees***

***Mayor’s Parlour, Wycombe Area Office, High Wycombe HP11 1BB***

**Annual Accounts for Financial Year 2024/25**

Every year the Charter Trustees of High Wycombe produce an annual statement of account which describes its financial activities over the preceding 12 months. The accounting year runs from 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025. The Charter Trustees publishes its accounts to a full meeting of the Charter Trustees as soon as possible after the financial year end and before they have been externally audited. The Charter Trustees are required to report on its financial arrangements in its annual governance statement. This statement together with the annual accounts and return is submitted to our external auditors for inspection. Details of the arrangements for the annual audit are published on the Charter Trustees notice board outside the Mayor’s Parlour in High Wycombe and on the website on an annual basis. The internal audit was carried out by Mr Richard Mozley during the period 2 to 4 June 2025. The external auditor is PKF Littlejohn. In January 2024 the Charter Trustees set a budget of £66,000 for the FY24/25 and agreed a precept of £59,200. In July 24 it was agreed that the budget be increased to £71,000 to cover the costs of the 50th anniversary of High Wycombe becoming a Charter Trustee town. A copy of the budget statement is enclosed.

The Charter Trustees of High Wycombe have the responsibility for ensuring that there is a sound system of internal control, including arrangements for the preparation of the Accounting Statements. I confirm to the best of my knowledge and belief, with respect to the Accounting Statements for the year ending 31 March 2025 that:

1. The Charter Trustees have put in place arrangements for effective financial management during the year, and for the preparation of the accounting statements.
2. The Charter Trustees have maintained an adequate system of internal control including measures designed to prevent fraud and detect fraud and corruption and reviewed its effectiveness.
3. The Charter Trustees took all reasonable steps to assure themselves that there are no matters of actual or potential non-compliance with laws, regulations and Proper Practices that could have a significant financial effect on the ability of this authority to conduct its business or manage its finances.
4. The Charter Trustees have provided proper opportunity during the year for the exercise of electors rights in accordance with the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations.
5. The Charter Trustees have carried out an assessment of the risks facing this authority and taken appropriate steps to manage those risks, including the introduction of internal audit controls.
6. The Charter Trustees have maintained throughout the year an adequate and effective system of internal audit of the accounting records.
7. The Charter Trustees took appropriate action on all matters raised in reports from internal audit.
8. The Charter Trustees considered whether any litigation, liabilities or commitments, events or transactions, occurring either during or after the year end, have a financial impact on this authority and, where appropriate, have including them in the accounting statements.

The Internal auditor has certified that:

1. Appropriate accounting records have been properly kept throughout the financial year.
2. The Charter Trustees complied with its financial regulations, payments were supported by invoices, all expenditure was approved and VAT was appropriately accounted for.
3. The Charter Trustees assessed the significant risks to achieving its objectives and reviewed the adequacy of arrangements to manage these.
4. The precept or rates requirement resulted from an adequate budgetary process; progress against the budget was regularly monitored; and reserves were appropriate.
5. Expected income was fully received, based on correct prices, properly recorded and promptly banked; and VAT was appropriated accounted for.
6. Salaries to employees and allowances to members were paid in accordance with the Charter Trustees approvals and PAYE/NI requirements were properly applied.
7. Asset and investments registers were complete and properly maintained.
8. Periodic bank account reconciliations were properly carried out during the year.
9. Accounting statements prepared during the year were prepared on the correct accounting basis agreed to the cash book, supported by an adequate audit trail from underlying records and where appropriate debtors and creditors were properly recorded.
10. The authority published the required information on a website up to the date at the time of the internal audit in accordance with the relevant legislation.
11. In the year covered by this AGAR the authority correctly provided for a period for the exercise of public rights as required by the Accounts and Audit Regulations evidenced by a notice on the website.

I have enclosed a copy of the Accounting Statement 2024/25 which will be included in the Annual Governance and Accountability Return Form 3 which will be submitted to the External Auditor once the Charter Trustees have approved the Accounting Statements.





**Accounting Statements 2024/2025 for the Charter Trustees of High Wycombe**

It is certified that for the year ended 31 March 2025 the Accounting Statement in this Annual Governance and Accountability Return has been prepared on a receipts and payments basis following the guidance in the Government and Accountability for Smaller Authorities – a Practitioners’ Guide to Proper Practices and presents fairly the financial position of this authority.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Year ending** | |
|  | **31 March 2024** | **31 March 2025** |
|  |  |  |
| Balances brought forward | £78,544 | £84,686 |
|  |  |  |
| Precept or Rates and Levies | £59200 | £59,200 |
|  |  |  |
| Total other receipts (see Note 1 below) | £12,624 | £3,101 |
|  |  |  |
| Staff costs | £21,436 | £22,088 |
|  |  |  |
| Loan interest / capital repayments | £0 | £0 |
|  |  |  |
| All other payments | £44,246 | £46,016 |
|  |  |  |
| Balances carried forward | £84,686 | £78,882  (see note 2 below) |
|  |  |  |
| Total value of cash and short term investments | £84,686 | £78,882 |
|  |  |  |
| Total fixed Assets plus long term investments | £497,805 | £497,805 |
|  |  |  |
| Total borrowings | 0 | 0 |

Notes:

1. Explanation of Variance: In year ending 31 Mar 24 we were able to sort out some software issues with HMRC which resulted in the Charter Trustees receiving a VAT refund of £12,200.31 (backdated by 5 years). The income we received in the year ending 31 Mar was £3101 which comprised of £798 of deposit account interest and £2303 in VAT refunds.
2. This balance includes £13K of Furlough funding which may need to be repaid to HMRC at a future date.

**CHARTER TRUSTEES OF HIGH WYCOMBE BUDGET STATEMENT – FY 2024/25**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  |  | | **Payments** | **Receipts** | **Budget** |
| **Code** |  | **Budget Heading** | **£68,104.41** | **£62,301.04** | **£71000.00** |
| 1 |  | Mayor's Allowance (net) | £7,200.00 |  | £7,200.00 |
| 3 |  | Deputy Mayor Allowance (net) | £1,480.00 |  | £1,480.00 |
| 4 |  | Town Clerk's Honorarium (staff costs) | £7,500.00 |  | £7,500.00 |
| 6 |  | Officer's Honorarium | £1,500.00 |  | £1,500.00 |
| 7 |  | Mayor's Secretary's salary p-r (staff costs) | £15,008.80 |  | £15,000.00 |
| 8 |  | Rent - Secretary's Room | £4,521.44 |  | £4,600.00 |
| 8a |  | Parking Permit - Secretary | £17.40 |  | £300.00 |
| 9 |  | Insurance Premium | £2,771.87 |  | £2,700.00 |
| 11a |  | Regalia, repairs, pennants, badges, brooches, plaques, goblets | £684.00 |  | £1,500.00 |
| 11b |  | Robes and uniforms - purchase and repairs | £1,035.00 |  | £1,040.00 |
| 11c |  | Scrolls, scribing and engraving | £476.00 |  | £500.00 |
| 12 |  | Honorary Burgess appointments | £0.00 |  | £1,000.00 |
| 13a |  | Mayor Making Catering | £5,115.35 |  | £4,000.00 |
| 13b |  | Mayor Making Other Expenses | £1,573.04 |  | £1,600.00 |
| 13c |  | Mayor Making - Hire of Guildhall/Town Hall | £300.00 |  | £500.00 |
| 13e |  | Remembrance/Battle of Britain wreaths | £445.00 |  | £500.00 |
| 13f |  | Remembrance/Battle of Britain Catering | £1,781.13 |  | £2,500.00 |
| 13g |  | Remembrance/Battle of Britain : other expenses | £4,204.00 |  | £4,000.00 |
| 13i |  | Town Hall/Riverside Club Refreshments | £379.14 |  | £500.00 |
| 14a |  | Postage | £44.09 |  | £100.00 |
| 14b |  | Subscriptions | £154.25 |  | £150.00 |
| 14c |  | Printing / Stationery | £939.43 |  | £1,000.00 |
| 15 |  | Audit Fee | £478.00 |  | £500.00 |
| 16 |  | Equipment,furniture,fittings, repair and maintenance etc. | £1,260.00 |  | £- |
| 17 |  | Conferences,committees and travelling | £0.00 |  | £200.00 |
| 20b |  | photography Mayor | £162.00 |  | £30.00 |
| 21 |  | Pension | £1,512.88 |  | £1,500.00 |
| 22 |  | ICT and Website fees | £230.40 |  | £250.00 |
| 24 |  | HMRC (PAYE/NI) | £4,384.87 |  | £3,600.00 |
| 25 |  | Payroll Services | £1,369.20 |  | £750.00 |
| 26 |  | Miscellaneous and Contingency Costs | £1,577.12 |  | £5,000.00 |
| 98 |  | Income – Other (VAT refunds) |  | 2,302.58 |  |
| 99 |  | Income - Precept |  | 59,200.00 |  |
| 100 |  | Income - Interest from 32 day notice a/c |  | 798.46 |  |
|  |  |  | **£68,104.41** | **62,301.04** | **£71,000.00** |