

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE **FINANCE & AUDIT COMMITTEE** HELD ON **WEDNESDAY 28<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2017** AT 7.00 P.M. AT THE TOWN HALL, GREAT WESTERN HOUSE, 9 DEVON SQUARE, NEWTON ABBOT

**PRESENT:** Councillors C N Parker (Chairman) Presiding  
D Corney-Walker (Vice-Chairman)

Councillors Mrs C Bunday Mrs A Jones (Mayor)  
Mrs J Cleave M Joyce  
C Coyle-Moore K Purchase (Dep Mayor)  
R Hayes Ms L Roberts  
M Hocking M E Ryan  
D Howe Ms L Sheffield  
R Jenks T Ward

In attendance: Inspector Adrian Woon Devon and Cornwall Police

Officers In Attendance: Philip Rowe – Town Clerk  
Sam Scott – Deputy Town Clerk  
Sally Henley – Town Development Manager  
Alexandra Robinson – Committee Administrator

85. **APOLOGIES**

None received.

86. **INTERESTS**

None declared.

87. **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting of the Finance & Audit Committee held on 15<sup>th</sup> February 2017 and the Special Meeting on 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2017 were received and signed as a correct record.

88. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

None.

89. **PRESENTATION – UPDATE ON LOCAL POLICE MATTERS**

The Chairman welcomed Inspector Adrian Woon and invited him to update Members on local Police Matters for the town. Inspector Woon thanked the Chairman and noted that whilst he had to report an increase in crime figures for the town, that the figures needed to be reviewed sensitively in the light of the new recording method following an inspection by the HMIC (Her Majesty Inspectorate of Constabularies) where all crime is now recorded. That, combined with an overall spike in crime following a few years of comparatively low figures, resulted in a somewhat distorted picture of crime locally.

Inspector Woon reported that 1914 incidents of crime had been recorded for Newton Abbot for the last 12 months a rise of 32%. He explained that crime had changed and expanded to include 'hidden crimes' such as over the internet and malicious communication via social media. These did not detract from the more obvious street crime but stretched police resources to cover all areas. He reassured Members that despite the sharp increase that the number of incidents were similar to those reported four years ago so his perception would be that Newton Abbot was no less a safe place in which to live and work.

Figures presented by Inspector Woon included:

- 1,914 reported incidents of crime an increase of 32%
- 294 incidents of violence with injury an increase of 27%
- 322 incidents of violence without injury an increase of 42% (includes malicious communications, via social media or text)
- 29 incidents of rape an increase of 45%
- 177 incidents of vehicle crime an increase of 153%

Inspector Woon gave background to the change in police resources for the area and reported that Devon and Cornwall Police had 1000 less staff than six years ago, which accounted for a reduction of 600 police officers and over the next four years there were planned reductions for PSCO's from the current 340 to 190 across the region. He emphasised that his team were no less committed to their role and officers were working double-shifts to ensure police matters were covered. In addition to these changes some front line police officers would be moved to armed response and these changes were based on financial cuts and the need to move resources to cope with the dramatic change in drug-related offences and violent crime nationally.

At a local level, Inspector Woon reported that he had particular areas for concern and had to target limited resources to cope with the following key areas:

- Vehicle crime, marked increase in theft from vans and cars (including high value items such as tools to often comparatively low items such as small change and sunglasses)
- Child sexual exploitation, working with peripatetic workers at fairgrounds and other employers of casual workers operating among vulnerable children
- Modern slavery, targeting high risk areas such as car wash outlets, nail bars and the recent expansion of 'pop-up' brothels offered, via the internet,
- Road policing, targeting speeding offences, uninsured and non-taxed vehicles
- Youth crime, groups of teenagers gathering and intimidating local residents leading to criminal activity and drug related crime, working with other agencies to support and resolve issues for the young people

Inspector Woon commended the working relationship with NAST (Newton Abbot Security Trust) and a recent visit by the PCC office had noted the 'uniqueness' and excellent service offered to the community. Other nearby towns had expressed an interest in the service. He added that NAST had developed considerably and now provided a safeguarding role and they were investigating the possibility of extending the service to work with the night-time economy.

The Chairman thanked Inspector Woon for his informative update and invited questions from Members, who raised points on the following matters:

- ❖ Obstruction on the highway to be initially referred to Devon County Council unless immediate risk of obstruction or harm to pedestrians or drivers,
- ❖ Neighbourhood Watch noted increased vehicle crime and damage to vehicles,
- ❖ The reduction in PCSOs was planned to allow for increase in Police Officers,
- ❖ Noted that incidents reported by NAST directly via the Airwaves Radios Police were not automatically recorded included on the crime figures unless formally reported via 101 (preferably by email),
- ❖ Police officers have to manage local increased crime with reduced resources,
- ❖ Appropriate punishment for youth crime to prevent a perception that no consequences for actions,
- ❖ Road offences and speeding,
- ❖ Local perception of personal safety and visible police officers,
- ❖ Community Safety Partnership to include Town Council in local involvement,
- ❖ Local incidents and overall appreciation for the existing officers and police team,
- ❖ Use of Police Cadets to enhance the service.

The Chairman thanked Inspector Woon for answering an extensive range questions and for his continued efforts to operate under difficult circumstances. Whereupon Inspector Woon left the meeting.

#### 90. **TERMS OF REFERENCE**

The Committee gave due consideration to the Terms of Reference for the Finance and Audit Committee. Accordingly, it was;

**AGREED** that the Terms of Reference for the Finance and Audit Committee, be hereby approved and adopted.

#### 91. **SUB-COMMITTEES/WORKING PARTIES/FORUMS**

##### **A. STRATEGIC PLANNING FORUM – 24<sup>th</sup> MAY 2017**

Arising from the consideration of the report of the meeting it was,

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Strategic Planning Forum – held on 24<sup>th</sup> May 2017 be hereby approved and adopted;

#### 92. **WAR MEMORIAL**

The Chairman invited the Town Clerk to update Members on progress on the planned refurbishment of the War Memorial. The Town Clerk made the following key points:

- ❖ An application had been made to Teignbridge District Council for Listed Building Consent,
- ❖ The specification for the Schedule of Works had been referred for specialist advice on which elements were a matter of priority,
- ❖ Grant Funding would be sought to meet the costs of the refurbishment.

The Clerk informed Members that a revised schedule of works would be returned to Committee for approval and adoption prior to the commencement of works.

Accordingly it was,

**AGREED** that the Finance and Audit Committee noted the work undertaken to date by the Town Clerk, on behalf of the Council, in respect of the refurbishment of the War Memorial.

93. **NEWTON'S PLACE PROJECT UPDATE**

The Chairman invited the Town Clerk to provide an update to Members on the Project. The Clerk reported that he had received an informal, verbal notification from the Heritage Lottery Fund that the Council would be successful in its application for funding. He informed that the Grants Officer would attend a meeting on Thursday 29<sup>th</sup> June at which he would gain further details. The Chairman thanked everyone involved for their efforts and hard work to date and then invited Councillor Mike Ryan, Chairman of Newton's Place Project Board to add any comment.

Councillor Ryan emphasised that once the project was launched it would embark on the Development Phase and would undertake the preparatory design work over a 9-12 month period prior to the Delivery Phase as defined as the refurbishment of the building and works to the interior prior to the opening of the new community space. He added that following competitive interviews, Lorna Turner had been re-appointed as Project Co-ordinator.

94. **INCOME AND EXPENDITURE**

A. The Committee received the Income and Expenditure Statements for February, March, April and May 2017 (previously circulated). The Deputy Town Clerk had responded to questions in advance directly and the Chairman invited further questions from Members. He noted that following a request from the Internal Auditor, that once the statements had been approved by Members he would sign each page as a formal record.

**28<sup>th</sup> February 2017**

<b>Opening Balance</b>	£201,069.47
Misc. Income	£ 5,628.54
VAT Refund	£ 12,096.90
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>£218,794.91</b>
<b>LESS:</b>	
Expenditure	£ 68,297.92
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>£ 68,297.92</b>
<b>BALANCE at 28<sup>th</sup> February 2017</b>	
<b>Business Call &amp; Current Account:</b>	<b>£150,496.99</b>



**30<sup>th</sup> April 2017**

<b>Opening Balance</b>	£ 55,457.17
1 <sup>st</sup> Tranche of Precept and Council Tax Support Grant	£336,852.40
CIL Income	£ 18,835.46
Misc. Income	£ 1,928.35
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>£443,073.38</b>
<b>LESS:</b>	
Expenditure	£ 48,016.04
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>£ 48,016.04</b>
<b>BALANCE at 30<sup>th</sup> April 2017</b>	
<b>Business Call &amp; Current Account:</b>	<b>£395,057.34</b>

Balances as at 30<sup>th</sup> April 2017

Current Account	394,368.84
Business Call Account	668.50
Petty Cash Account	200.00
Imprest Account	2,152.89

<b>Total Cash in hand at bank</b>	<b>£397,410.23</b>
<b>Total:</b>	<b>£397,410.23</b>

**31<sup>st</sup> May 2017**

<b>Opening Balance</b>	£395,057.34
VAT Reclaim	£ 20,733.22
Misc. Income	£ 3,146.02
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>£418,936.58</b>
<b>LESS:</b>	

Expenditure	£ 68,509.89
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>£ 68,509.89</b>

**BALANCE at 31<sup>st</sup> May 2017**  
**Business Call & Current Account: £350,426.69**

Balances as at 31<sup>st</sup> May 2017

Current Account	219.00
Business Call Account	350,207.69
Petty Cash Account	200.00
Imprest Account	2,278.37

**Total Cash in hand at bank £352,905.06**

**Total: £352,905.06**

Accordingly, it was,

**RESOLVED** that the statements of income and expenditure for February, March, April and May 2017 as submitted to the Committee be hereby approved and signed by the Chairman of the Finance and Audit Committee.

**B. Financial Budget Comparison** – The Committee received and noted the Financial Budget Comparison summary and report which detailed Income and Expenditure by Account for the period 1<sup>st</sup> April 2016 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2017 (previously circulated). Following a detailed discussion among Members, they gave their consideration to the Reports presented by the Town Clerk and Deputy Town Clerk Accordingly, it was;

**RESOLVED** that the budget and accounts reports as detailed by Account be noted.

**C. Annual Pay Award for 2018/19** – The Chairman introduced the NJC pay claim for 2018-19 and accompanying submission made to the Local Government Commission, (previously circulated). Arising from NALC's request for feedback on the NJC Pay Claims 2018-19 the Committee gave consideration to the 5% claim. Members gave due consideration to the document and the implications for the salary budget and Precept. Accordingly it was,

**RESOLVED** that:

- (a) that NALC be informed that Newton Abbot Town Council notes the NJC Pay Claim 2018-2019 for an increase of 5% plus removal of some spinal points, which would have the effect of increasing the Town Council's Precept by 1% and that the Council would accept any national agreement reached as a result of the pay claim;

(b) that the Mayor writes to the Government, copied to the Newton Abbot MP, expressing Newton Abbot Town Council's support for the removal of the 1% cap on public sector pay.

**D. Grass Cutting Contract 2017/18** – The Chairman invited the Town Clerk to update members on the contract for grass cutting for 2017. The Clerk reported that he had liaised with the Mayor, Deputy Mayor, and both Chairmen of the Finance and Audit and Policy and Resources Committees to seek a resolution to the renegotiation of a contract for 2017.

The Clerk reported that he sought quotations from; South West Garden Maintenance (the previous contractor for DCC), Teign Housing and Skanska (the newly appointed DCC contractor). During the lengthy delay in appointment of a new contractor the Clerk commissioned a single grass cut to ensure the amenity of the town was maintained. Following receipt of the quotations Skanska were appointed as the contractor for 2017 based upon the cost of the service and would make two further cuts this season. Concerns were raised among Members about the poor quality of the cut and the overall service provided by Skanska in regards to grass-cutting. The Clerk informed the Committee that he had arranged to meet with the contractor to discuss proposed costs and service delivery for 2018 contract, at a meeting in the autumn, prior to the budgets being prepared. Therefore following considerable discussion it was;

**RESOLVED** that

a) the Committee authorised the action taken by the Town Clerk on behalf of the Council to date, in respect of the Grass-Cutting Contract for 2017;

b) the Committee would review the budget for the contract for 2018 at the annual budget review in the autumn.

**95. LATE CORRESPONDENCE**

None

**96. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting of the Finance & Audit Committee would be held on Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> November 2017.

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Chairman