

HUNGERFORD TOWN COUNCIL

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MINUTES of the **F&GP Meeting** held on Wednesday 13th November 2024 at 7.00pm in the Library, Hungerford.

Present: Cllrs Winser, Simpson, Carlson, Fyfe, and Cole. Also, present (not a voting member of the committee) Cllr Coulthurst, Clerk and RFO.

FGP20240088 Apologies for absence – None

FGP20240089 Declarations of interest – Cllr Cole (Heritage Forum)

FGP20240090 Minutes - To approve and sign the minutes of the F & GP meeting on 11th September 2024.

Proposed: Cllr Winser

Seconded: Cllr Simpson

Resolution: Minutes were agreed as a true record. One abstention.

FGP20240091 Receive an update on actions – Cllr Cole is reviewing reply from insurers. Clerk's appraisal will take place tomorrow. Other actions are complete or on the agenda.

FGP20240092 Propose acceptance of bank reconciliation for September

Proposed: Cllr Simpson

Seconded: Cllr Carlson

Resolution: Acceptance of bank reconciliation totalling £349,612.94 as accurate for September.

Proposed: Cllr Carlson

Seconded: Cllr Cole

Resolution: Acceptance of bank reconciliation totalling £520,303.48 as accurate for October.

FGP20240093 Propose acceptance of cashflow.

Proposed: Cllr Simpson

Seconded: Cllr Winser

Resolution: Accept cashflow as presented.

FGP20240094 Consider opening of a CCLA Public Sector Deposit Fund – Rate of interest of yield tracker 4.89%. Refer to information provided.

Proposed: Cllr Winser

Seconded: Cllr Simpson

ACTION: Resolution: RFO to open an account with CCLA with a transfer from Barclays of £150k. Money would be instant access through a Barclays account. Top up Newbury Building society with £15k and Nationwide with £10k. It was noted CCLA is not protected by FSA however it is widely used by other councils and by the diocese.

FGP20240095 Outcome of review of following Internal Controls by Councillors: These have all been completed by the following councillors and were found to be in order.

- Annual review of contracts (where appropriate) – Cllr Simpson
- Orders placed in accordance with Financial Regulations – Cllr Coulthurst

- Regular scrutiny of financial records and proper arrangements for the approval of expenditure – Cllr Winser
- Payments supported by invoices, authorised and minuted – Cllr Coulthurst
- Regular scrutiny of income records to ensure income is correctly received, recorded and banked – Cllr Simpson
- Scrutiny to ensure precept recorded in the cashbook – Cllr Simpson
- Monthly reconciliation of Corporate Credit Card – Cllr Simpson

FGP20240096 Internal Control document – Allocate items to councillors for review. Each item was considered individually, and it was agreed most have check systems in place already. (*see notes for details*)

- Regular budget monitoring – (*reviewed at Full Council*)
- Regular reconciliation of bank accounts verified and signed off by a non-signatory Councillor (*completed at F&GP meetings*)
- Reporting of inter-bank transfers reported to Parish Council – (*within the bank recs*)
- Contracts of employment for staff – (*Cllrs Simpson and Winser review these*)
- Staff contractors annually reviewed – (*office review and bring to committee in Jan*)

ACTION: Scrutiny of grants awarded and declared in cashbook – (*Cllrs Simpson and Winser will look at these tomorrow*)

FGP20240097 Review of following policies:

- **Code of Conduct alongside any corresponding change to standing orders**

Proposed: Cllr Winser

Seconded: Cllr Simpson

Resolution: It was agreed discussion at a Full Council Part 2 should take place before any committee votes in a chair. The prospective new chair should be present at that discussion to answer any questions, except during exceptional circumstances.

ACTION: Clerk to draft text to include the above in the standing orders. Add to the Full Council agenda for December to agree.

- **Equal Opportunities** – Cllr Carlson has reviewed the policy and suggested minor amendments.
- **Environmental Policy** – Cllr Carlson has reviewed the policy and suggested minor amendments.

ACTION: Clerk to make amendments to the above policies as suggested.

ACTION: **Training Policy** – Clerk to review.

ACTION: **Social Media Policy** – Cllr Reeves is yet to review this.

FGP20240098 Update on obtaining leasehold of Bridge St War Memorial gardens. Info retrieved from Berkshire Archives has been passed to our solicitor. Further specific documents were requested and more info from the archives was sent to our solicitor in September.

ACTION: Clerk to continue to chase up response from solicitor.

FGP20240099 Consider allocation of funds to late Grant Applications and two alterations

These were considered by the committee.

Proposed: Cllr Simpson

Seconded: Cllr Carlson

Resolution: Grant £100 (minimum required for the Good Exchange) to St Lawrences instead of the £50 agreed. Do not pay £400 to Hungerford Shed; hold in earmarked reserves instead. Grant £50 to the Heritage Forum. Grant £1500 to the Chamber of Commerce for the Extravaganza. One abstention.

ACTION: RFO/DC to allocate the above grants.

FGP202400100 Agree passing on of financial saving to Smarten Up Hungerford. SUH will be maintaining the container at Bridge St War Memorial from now on. There is a slight reduction in monthly charge from existing contractor that could be passed on to them.

Proposed: Cllr Winser

Seconded: Cllr Simpson

ACTION: Resolution: RFO to arrange £15 a month saving to be passed onto SUH up to the end of this financial year.

FGP202400101 Earmarked Reserves – Propose re-allocation of £1,000 from Skate Park fund to Speed Indicator Devices (SID).

Proposed: Cllr Winser

Seconded: Cllr Carlson

ACTION: Resolution: RFO to transfer £1,000 from Skate Park to SID line in earmarked reserves.

FGP202400102 Consider amendments to Action Plan – Refer to existing document on HTC website. The action plan for F&GP was discussed and changes made. Refer to amended spreadsheet attached. HTC still has questions relating to devolution. What are the statutory minimum services that WBC provide and when are they carried out. Can HTC check WBC's contractors deliver these. This will be discussed at December Full Council.

ACTION: RFO to add in a budget allowance for devolution.

Confidential PART 2

The public and press may be excluded from the meeting on the grounds that publicity might be prejudicial to the public interest as per the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960.

FGP202400103 Receive report to note staff toil and holiday – These were noted.

FGP202400104 Update on appraisals and training. The last outstanding appraisal will be carried out tomorrow.

FGP202400105 Update on debtors. There are no outstanding debts.

FGP202400106 Note backdated pay rise as per the confirmed Local Government Service pay agreement. This was noted.

FGP202400107 Agree calculation of salary hourly rate to change from 52 weeks to 52.143 weeks from April 2025 as recommended by NALC to comply with NJC. This was agreed.

FGP202400108 Consider proposed draft F&GP budget for 2025-26 – Refer to spreadsheet. Committee went through the draft budget line by line. A couple of amendments were made.

ACTION: Clerk to check if the £2,000 Housing Needs Survey can come out of the existing NDP funds or if further money needs to be allocated.

ACTION: Clerk to speak to insurers to check cover for employee helpers.

Proposed: Cllr Winser

Seconded: Cllr Simpson

Resolution: Agree draft F&GP budget figure £246,350 net.

Meeting closed 8.55pm