



**Minutes of the Meeting of Sleaford Town Council held on
Wednesday 4th January 2023 at 7.00pm, at The Town Hall, Sleaford**

Present:

Cllr L Edwards-Shea – Chairman
Cllr J Thomas – Vice Chairman
Cllr B Allan
Cllr D Darmon
Cllr P Edwards-Shea
Cllr K Fernandes
Cllr H Lorimer
Cllr R Oates

Cllr M Offer
Cllr J Parry
Cllr S Shanahan-Kluth
Cllr M Smith
Cllr Ad Snookes
Cllr Al Snookes
Cllr D Suiter

Also in attendance: Mr Chris Pilkington (Town Clerk & Responsible Financial Officer) and Mrs Michelle Free (Senior Finance Officer).

23.1 Chairman's Welcome

The Chairman welcomed all to the meeting wishing councillors and staff a Happy New Year. She also made those present aware of her forthcoming Mayoral events. Namely the Burns Night event later in the month and the Poetry Slam event in February.

23.2 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for the meeting and reasons for absence from it had been received from Cllrs T Hayet and Melody Shanahan-Kluth.

RESOLVED: That the reasons for absence of Cllrs Hayet and Shanahan-Kluth be approved.

23.3 Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary and Other Interests

(a) To receive disclosures of any disclosable pecuniary interests for the purposes of Section 31 of the Localism Act 2011 and any other relevant interests under the Members Code of Conduct

None.

(b) To receive and decide upon requests for dispensations to councillors to take part in discussions and votes where they have declared disclosable pecuniary interests

None.

23.4 Appointment of Internal Auditor for the 2022-2023 Financial Year

The Clerk & Responsible Financial Officer spoke to his briefing noting that the Council needed to appoint an internal auditor for the 2022-2023 financial year and recommending that the Council appoint the Lincolnshire Association of Local Councils as the internal auditor for the year.

RESOLVED: That the recommendation of the Clerk & Responsible Financial Officer be accepted and the Lincolnshire Association of Local Councils be appointed as the internal auditor of the Council for the 2022-2023 financial year.

23.5 Draft Budget for the 2023-2024 Financial Year

The Senior Finance Officer presented the draft budget and accompanying briefing paper and explained that the purpose of the meeting was not to adopt the budget but rather to suggest revisions or amendments to it. A revised budget would then be presented to the Town Council meeting on 18th January at which the budget and precept demand for the 2023-2024 would be agreed.

A discussion then took place and suggested revisions included £5,000 for publicity costs associated with any neighbourhood plan referendum and £5,000 for related graphic design costs, £5,000 for publication of a revised town guide, £2,000 in total on memorials to the late Queen Elizabeth II and those who had died as a result of Covid-19, putting aside a suitable figure to provide a portaloos or the refurbishment of toilets at the cemetery and £30k for repairs to the lift at the Town Hall. Members felt that £900 towards an art collection was not required but that £4,900 be put aside to help fund the work of the local Citizens Advice Bureau. Additional funds for IT costs were also suggested.

Members expressed dissatisfaction with the current litter picking arrangements with North Kesteven District Council (NKDC) and the Clerk reported that he would raise the issue of the arrangement and income from it with NKDC.

The Senior Finance Officer noted that income from the Eastgate Car Park was the Council's biggest income stream after the precept itself and that the Council had recently agreed not to raise charges at it. A view was expressed that the income from the car park from before the Covid-19 pandemic was greater than the figure used in the draft budget.

Members discussed the request from the Sleaford Castle Heritage Group that the Town Council set aside £65,000 for the projects they were suggesting. Members felt that that amount in one year would put too much pressure on the precept and instead felt that setting aside £16,250 each year over four years was a better approach.

The Clerk & Responsible Financial Officer reported that he would bring proposals for revised Town Hall hire costs, cemetery charges and allotment rents to a future meeting of the Council but for budgeting purposes the current adopted charges needed to be used.

RESOLVED: That the draft budget be amended in line with the suggestions made and a revised version presented to the meeting of the Town Council on Wednesday 18th January 2023.