

MINUTES OF THE FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE MEETING HELD AT 8.00PM ON MONDAY 21<sup>st</sup> JULY 2025 AT THE CIVIC HALL, POYNTON

PRESENT

Chairman: Cllr P Oakes

Cllrs: M Beanland, D Belcher, L Clarke, S Lees, M Sewart, T Swatridge

Officers in attendance: Haf Barlow (Town Clerk), Kate McDowell (Deputy Clerk)

1. To note if anyone attending or present at the Committee meeting declares that they are making or intends to make an audio recording and/or film the meeting.

The Clerk confirmed that the meeting is recorded for the purpose of minute taking and the recording is deleted when draft minutes are agreed. There were no other declarations of a recording at the meeting.

2. Questions from members of the public

There were no members of the public present.

3. Apologies for absence

All members of the committee were present.

4. Declarations of disclosable pecuniary or other interests

Cllr Clarke declared an interest in agenda item 13 as the part owner of a commercial property on Park Lane and will withdraw from the meeting when this item is discussed.

5. To approve the minutes of the previous meeting held on 12<sup>th</sup> May 2025

**RESOLVED: That the minutes of the 12<sup>th</sup> May 2025 are an accurate record of the meeting and are approved. (5 for, 2 abstentions)**

6. To receive and consider the action log for 2025-2026

The Clerk gave members an update on the two outstanding items on the action log

**RESOLVED: That the action log for 2025-2026 is received. (NC)**

7. To receive the Income and Expenditure Q1 report for 2025

The Clerk drew Member's attention to a second colour coded report, highlighting and explaining significant variances between actuals and budget. It was noted that the sundry expenditure was over budget as it included items for the Town Council's biodiversity

project. No budget had been allocated to this project. This has now been identified as a key Town Council's project. Members discussed the project and agreed to vire £1,000 from the Town Improvement Earmarked Reserve to set up a new budget line for the project.

**RESOLVED: That the Income and Expenditure Q1 report for 2025 and the report on significant variances is received. The virement of £1,000 from the Town Improvement Earmarked Reserve to set up a new budget line for the Biodiversity Project is approved. (6 for, 1 abstention)**

8. To receive the internal controls review carried out by Cllr Tim Swatridge for May 2025

Cllr Swatridge gave a brief overview of the last internal control check.

**RESOLVED: That the internal controls review carried out by Cllr Tim Swatridge is received. (NC)**

9. To note the purchases of three replacement computers, including set-up at a cost of £2,305 and the purchase of an iPad at a cost of £1,020

**RESOLVED: That the purchases of three replacement computers, including set up at a cost of £2,305 and the purchase of an iPad at a cost of £1, 020 is noted. (NC)**

10. To consider whether the Town Council should terminate its Payroll contract with Dataplan.

The Clerk gave members an overview of the problems experienced with Dataplan in the last six months, including failure to pay pension and AVC contributions on time. Customer services appear to have no interest in resolving the issues. Members discussed alternatives including moving payroll in-house or using the services of another company. If possible, the Clerk should endeavour to obtain early release from the notice period.

**RESOLVED: That the Clerk is given authority to terminate the contract with Dataplan. That the Clerk investigates alternative suppliers, arrangements will be approved by members under Standing Order 51. (NC)**

11. To consider and agree to fund an ecological report to support the planning permission for the new allotments

The Clerk advised members that they would need to undertake a preliminary environmental assessment and a biodiversity net gain calculation in order to apply for planning permission for the new allotments. Quotes have been obtained, and these were shared with Members.

**RESOLVED: That the preliminary environmental assessment and the net gain calculation to be carried out by Arbtech is agreed. (6 for, 1 abstention)**

12. To consider and approve the FIED request to fund replacement fencing on Park Lane and Middlewood Road using funding from the Community Infrastructure Levy and to agree to waive the financial regulations to obtain three quotes (If appropriate)

The Clerk gave members an update advising that the FIED committee had requested that the Town Council should replace the broken fencing on Park Lane and Middlewood Road on a “without prejudice” basis. The fences belong to Cheshire East, who claim to have no funds to replace them. The Clerk advised two quotes have been obtained, a further two companies were approached but did not send quotes.

**RESOLVED: That the Town Council proceed and approve the request. (NC)**

13. To consider and recommend to the Town Council to approve the FIED request to fund decorative lighting on Park Lane from the Community Infrastructure Levy and to agree to waive the financial regulations to obtain three quotes.

*Cllr Clarke withdrew from the meeting.*

The Clerk gave an overview to members, advising two quotes were obtained on the recommendation of Macclesfield and Alderley Edge Town and Parish Councils.

**RESOLVED: That the FIED request to fund decorative lighting on Park Lane and tree shaping from the Community Infrastructure Levy and to agree to waive the financial regulations to obtain three quotes is agreed. (NC)**

*Cllr Clarke returned to the meeting.*

14. To authorise the use of CIL funds for:

- a. Repairs to benches on Park Lane.
- b. To decorate the bus stop at Fountain Place as part of the biodiversity project up to a maximum of £1,000.

**RESOLVED: That the use of CIL funds for:**

- a) Repairs to benches on Park Lane
  - b) To decorate the bus stop at Fountain Place as part of the biodiversity project up to a maximum of £1000
- are approved. (NC)**

15. To receive and consider the payment lists from April, May and June 2025

Members discussed the payments.

**RESOLVED: That the payment lists from April, May June 2025 are received April the sum of £309,013.96, May sum of £69,542.38 and a transfer of £50,000 from deposit to current account, June sum of £146, 951.39 and a transfer of £150,000 from deposit to the current account. (NC)**

16. To note the bank reconciliation for April, May and June 2025 as verified by the Chairman and note the remedial action regarding the incorrect credit card payment.

The Clerk advised members of the remedial action taken regarding the incorrect credit card payment.

**RESOLVED: That the Chair has verified the bank reconciliations for April, May, and June 2025. That the remedial action regarding the incorrect credit card payment is noted (NC)**

17. Additional items

The Chair advised members there were two items to be added to the agenda under SO19. An email regarding the change of ownership of the CCLA and the second an update regarding the recent HR contract signed by the Clerk.

**RESOLVED: That the above two items are added to the agenda under SO19(NC)**

18. To receive an email regarding the change of ownership of the CCLA

Members noted that the transfer of the business would have to be approved by the Regulator and the Clerk would monitor the situation and update councillors as appropriate.

**RESOLVED: That the notification is received. (NC)**

19. To receive an update from the Clerk on the new HR providers, Citation

The Clerk gave an overview of the new HR software management system and the issue regarding the variable staff holidays. Members discussed moving the staff holiday year and the Clerk was asked to undertake discussions with staff.

**RESOLVED: That the update from the Clerk is received and the Clerk discusses the leave arrangements with staff. (NC)**

20. Communication Messages

**RESOLVED: That communication messages regarding fences and lights are agreed. (NC)**

21. To resolve to exclude the press and public on the grounds that publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

**RESOLVED: That the press and public be excluded on the grounds that publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted. (NC)**

22. To review a report from the Clerk on the legal agreements for the potential new allotment site purchase

Members reviewed the report regarding the purchase of the allotment site.

**RESOLVED: That the report from the Clerk is received. If required, the Council agrees to pay £750 for a report on the value of the land. (NC)**

Meeting end time: 9.15pm

Signed.....

Dated.....