MINUTES OF THE FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE MEETING HELD AT 8.00PM ON MONDAY 23RD FEBRUARY 2026 AT THE CIVIC HALL, POYNTON

PRESENT

Chairman: Cllr P Oakes
Cllrs: D Belcher, L Clarke, S Lees, M Sewart, T Swatridge
Officers in attendance: Haf Barlow (Town Clerk), Kate McDowell (Deputy Clerk) and Sally Shaw (Administrative Officer)

56. 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.

57. Questions from members of the public

There were no members of the public present.

58. Apologies for absence

Cllr M Beanland and Simon Lees

59. Declarations of disclosable pecuniary or other interests

There were no declarations of interest.

60. To approve the minutes of the previous meeting held on 1st December 2025

**RESOLVED: That the minutes of the 1st December 2025 are an accurate record of the meeting and are approved (5 for, 1 abstentions).**

61. Urgent items of business

The Chair requested that two urgent items relating to the allotments and planter sponsorship are added to the agenda as a decision will be required before the next committee meeting.

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

61.To note that there are no outstanding items the action log for 2025-2026

**RESOLVED: It is noted that there are no outstanding items on the action log for 2025-2026 (NC).**

62. To receive and consider the Income and Expenditure Report for Q3

The Income and Expenditure Report and a report on significant variances was shared with Members. The Clerk highlighted a number of significant variances. Members noted that refund due as a result of the CCTC not working.

**RESOLVED: That the report on income and expenditure and significant variances is received (NC).**

63. To receive and consider the outturn and virements report.

The Clerk explained the colour coding on the report. At present it was estimated that there would a budget surplus of approximately £60,000 at the end of the financial year. However, this figure should be treated with caution as six weeks remained.

The surplus is mainly a result of savings due to unfilled posts and the reduction of business rates on appeal.

Members noted that there was likely to be an overspend in the budget for electricity for streetlights. The Clerk explained that there had been changes to the unmetered electricity supply and costs had increased. There was limited competition in this market at present. A number of the streetlights on Warren Lea would be converted to solar. If this was successful, the Town Council could potentially roll this out to further areas in order reduce energy costs.

The list of virements was noted. These could be authorised by the Clerk.

Members discussed the movements to and from reserves and the reserves forecast at the end of the financial year. Some additional spending from CIL had now been recommended by FIED for approval. These were £3,000 for signage at Woodside, £200 to repair the ground under a bench at Deva Park, £300 for a skip to clear out Barnaby Store, £500 for planters, and £500 for sand and bark for flower beds.

Members discussed the provisional allocations of any budget surplus.

**RESOLVED: That the report on outturn, virements and reserves is received.**

**RESOLVED: That the virements and movements to and from reserves, including the recent recommendation of FIED in relation to CIL funding are noted by the F&GP Committee and recommended to Town Council for approval.**

**RESOLVED: That subject to available budget surplus, the following allocation is recommended to Town Council: Election costs £3,000, Neighbourhood Plan £20,000,**

**challenging Adlington New Town £20,000, Poynton Show £800, and any remaining to General Reserves (NC).**

64. To receive the internal controls review carried out by Cllr Tim Swatridge for January 2026.

**That the internal controls review carried out by Cllr Tim Swatridge for January 2026 is received (NC).**

65. To receive and consider the report from Cheshire Pension fund on the pension valuation.

Members noted that the contribution rate, which is currently 21.5%, will reduce to 20.5% next year and then reduce further to 19.5% and then 18.5% in future years.

**RESOLVED: That the report on the Cheshire Pension fund valuation is received (NC)**

66. To receive and consider the GDPR action plan.

The Clerk highlighted the completed and outstanding items on the action plan. A full data audit has now been completed. Personnel files going forward with be electronic only. Paper files are in the process of being scanned and then logged and destroyed.

Councillors agreed that GDPR training would take place on 16th March before Town Council.

**RESOLVED: That the action plan is received. The Clerk will send an invite to councillors to attend GDPR training (NC)**

67. To approve the draft Publication Scheme.

The Clerk highlighted a small number of amendments to the Publication Scheme.

**RESOLVED: That the draft Publication Scheme is approved (NC).**

68. To receive and consider the report on assertion 10 and agree the recommendations to Town Council.

This was an update to the Clerk's previous report on assertion10. The website provider had confirmed that the website met the current content accessibility guidelines however, they recommended that a website "MOT" was undertaken to check on the accessibility of the documents that the Town Council uploads to the website.

The Clerk had undertaken a review of the recommendations on information which should be published and had prepared a draft document, containing the information that is required. This should be recommended to Town Council for approval.

**RESOLVED: That the report from the Clerk is noted and appendix A is recommended to Town Council for approval**

**RESOLVED: That the Clerk amends the accessibility statement for the website and arranges for a website MOT (NC)**

<u>69. To receive, consider and agree the precept media release.</u>

**RESOLVED: Subject to some minor amendment the precept media release is approved (NC)**

<u>70. To consider and agree the proposed fees and charges for the Town Council services including Civic Hall hire.</u>

Members noted the recommendation not to increase the fees for the room hire. Members debated the fee for hiring the "Teams Room" equipment. It was noted that the equipment had been purchased with the support of a grant from Cheshire East.

**RESOLVED: That the Fees and Charges are approved and that the Teams Room is charged at £10 per session (NC).**

<u>71. To receive and consider the payment lists from November, December 2025 and January 2026.</u>

It was noted that the minus figure in the Cambridge Saver Account was to reverse and administrative error when the interest had been added twice on the accounting system.

**RESOLVED: That the payment lists from November 2025 totalling £94,943.83 (current account) £50,000 (deposit account), December 2025 £59,323,34 (current account) £50,000 (deposit account) and January 2026 £37,652.41 (current account) £50,000 (deposit account) are approved. (NC)**

<u>72. To note that the Chair has verified the bank reconciliation for November, December 2025 and January 2026.</u>

**RESOLVED: That the bank reconciliation is noted (NC).**

<u>73. To note the SO51 decision</u>
<u>To fund the CSAS Course for the new Council Community Support Officer</u>

**RESOLVED: That the decision under SO51 to fund the CSAS Course is noted (NC).**

74. To receive and consider the request from Elan Homes to sponsor planters in the Town.

Elan Homes have expressed an interest in sponsoring planters in the Town. They were unclear if they would be willing to sponsor new planters or if it was just sponsoring plants in existing planters. Members were concerned regarding a possible conflict of interest that might arise if Elan submitted further planning applications in the Town.

**RESOLVED: That the Clerk writes to Elan to thank them for the offer but declines on the basis that it might be perceived to be a conflict of interest (NC).**

75. To receive and consider an update from the Clerk on the allotment legal fees

The Town Council had previously agreed to pay for the vendors legal fees which were estimated to be £1,000. It is now estimate that the work will take 8 hours and the estimated cost has now risen to £2,360 plus VAT and disbursements.

**RESOLVED: That the Town Council agrees to pay for the legal fees up to a maximum of 8 hours at a cost of £2,360 plus VAT and disbursements (NC).**

76. Communication Messages

**RESOLVED: That communication messages regarding the precept and no change in the room hire fees are agreed (NC)**

Meeting end time: 8.54pm

Signed………………………………………..

Dated…………………………………………