



## Minutes of the Policy and Finance Committee Meeting

On 11<sup>th</sup> October 2021

6:30pm via Zoom

(Due to the COVID-19 pandemic it was not possible for Council to meet in person)

**Delegation of Duties:** From May 2020 to 6<sup>th</sup> May 2021, the Emergency Coronavirus Act allowed Councils to meet and make resolutions via remotely technology. However, the Government decided to discontinue this from 6<sup>th</sup> May 2021 onwards. Therefore, on 12<sup>th</sup> April 2021, Full Council resolved to delegated all decisions to the Acting Town Clerk (other than those that by law cannot be delegated). It was also resolved to continue holding meetings, but due to being unable to make direct resolutions remotely, all decisions made by Councillors will be recommendations to advise the Acting Town Clerk in their decision making.

**Present:** Councillors L Johnson (in the Chair), P Astell, D Jack, D Healy, C Hopkins, D Horsley and A Willis

**In Attendance:** Matthew Snowden (Acting Town Clerk) and Libby Woodhouse (Administrative Officer)

### 26/21: Introduction

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting, explained that the meeting was being live-streamed on YouTube via Zoom, and took a roll-call of Councillors present.

The Acting Town Clerk explained Delegation of Duties.

### 27/21: To Receive Apologies for Absence.

Apologies were received from Councillor T Astell (there were no substitutes).

### 28/21: Declarations:

**28.1: To record declarations of interest by any member of the council in respect of the agenda items listed below. Members declaring interests should identify the agenda item and type of interest being declared.**

There were no declarations of interest.

**28.2: To note dispensations given to any member of the council in respect of the agenda items below.**

There were no dispensations.

**29/21: To note the minutes of the Policy and Finance Committee Meeting held on Monday 6<sup>th</sup> September 2021 (previously circulated, approved and signed Full Council on Monday 20<sup>th</sup> September 2021).**

The Committee noted the Minutes of the Policy and Finance Committee Meeting held on Monday 6<sup>th</sup> September 2021 that had been approved at Full Council on Monday 20<sup>th</sup> September 2021.

**30/21: Payments:**

**30.1: To review Current Account payments made between 1<sup>st</sup> September 2021 and 30<sup>th</sup> September 2021 (see attached).**

Date:	Beverley Town Council 2021/22		Page 1		
28/09/2021					
Time:	Current Account				
11:38					
List of Payments made between 01/09/2021 and 30/09/2021					
Date Paid	Payee Name	Reference	Amount Paid	Authorized Ref	Transaction Detail
01/09/2021	Geoff Simpson Holdings	SO	420.00	Code 4180 FC110121	Unit 2 Rent
01/09/2021	Hellbeck IT	DD	164.19	Code 4481 FC 110121	365 Lic, IT Support, Backup
01/09/2021	Business Stream	DD	28.99	Code 4120 FC 110121	Office Water
10/09/2021	KRL Group Limited	DD	197.95	Code 4405 FC 110121	Photocopier/maintenance
14/09/2021	Allstar Business	DD	23.73	Code 4300 FC110121	Fuel
20/09/2021	Yorkshire Bank Credit Card	20092021	241.72		Clear credit card
20/09/2021	Timpeons	DEBIT CARD	29.50	Code 4120 FC110121	Key Cutting
21/09/2021	Eon next	DD	110.84	Code 4680 FC110121	CCTV Toll Cam 3
21/09/2021	Eon next	DD	444.76	Code 4120 FC 110121	Office electricity
21/09/2021	Public Sector Deposit Fund	5042	200,000.00		EMR Reserves Account
21/09/2021	Public Sector Deposit Fund	5043	150,000.00		EMR Reserves Account
23/09/2021	National Association of Local	EP	77.27	Code 4026 FC11012021	PA Conf Dec 2021
23/09/2021	Anti Freeze (York) Limited	EP	1,368.00	Code 4647 FC 110121	August Watering
23/09/2021	Countrywise Water Coolers Ltd	EP	48.25	Code 4120 FC 110121	Water Cooler/Water
23/09/2021	ERNLLCA	EP	72.00	Code 4026 FC110121	Office training courses x2
23/09/2021	T Astell	EP	200.00	Code 4510 FC110121	Members' allowance
23/09/2021	Business Stream	EP	55.39	Code 4200 FC110121	Queensgate Allotment Water
23/09/2021	Salaries	EP	5,132.90	Code 4000 FC 110121	Salaries
23/09/2021	HMRC	EP	1,446.60	Code 4000 4001 4150	Tax and NI
23/09/2021	East Riding Pension	EP	1,596.77	Code 4000 4002	Pension contributions
23/09/2021	Supplies East Riding of Yorks	EP	119.71		ER01545382/68/Supplies East Ri
25/09/2021	TC Group	DD	42.00	Code 4582 FC 110121	Payroll Fees
25/09/2021	East Riding Council	EP	1.96	Code 4400 FC 110121	Stationery
25/09/2021	Aubergine 262 Ltd	EP	1,344.00	Code 4490 FC 110121	Website hosting
29/09/2021	D H Fletcher	SO	3,500.00	Code 4100 FC110121	Office quarterly rent
30/09/2021	Aubergine 262 Ltd	PO81	500.00		Stripe payment page set up
30/09/2021	PKF Littlejohn	EP	960.00	Code 4580 FC 110121	2020/2021 Ext Audit
<b>Total Payments</b>			<b>368,245.63</b>		

The Acting Town Clerk explained that:

- keys had been cut for Natalie Acton for the office as she is based there on Wednesday afternoons, and for JB Rural for the Well Lane garage to be able to collect items such as dog waste bags and items for the notice board.
- PKF Littlejohn had sent an invoice for payment for the 2020-2021 year for external audit. An invoice had not yet been received for the 2019-2020 year.

Councillor D Horsley arrived at the meeting at 6.40 pm

**Recommended:** That the payments made between 1<sup>st</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> September 2021 are reviewed and approved.

**30.2: To review Credit Card payments made between 1<sup>st</sup> September 2021 and 30<sup>th</sup> September 2021 (see attached).**

Date: 28/09/2021	Beverley Town Council 2021/22	Page 1			
Time: 11:36	Yorkshire Bank Credit Card				
List of Payments made between 01/09/2021 and 30/09/2021					
Date Paid	Payee Name	Reference	Amount Paid	Authorized Ref	Transaction Detail
20/09/2021	Amazon Business	CRED CARD	8.06	Code	Stationery
20/09/2021	Amazon Services Europe	CRED CARD	6.70	Code 4400 FC 110121	Stationery
20/09/2021	Zoom	CRED CARD	38.40	Code 4481 FC110121	Zoom
20/09/2021	Googlemail	CRED CARD	1.69	Code 4481 FC 110121	Clerk storage
20/09/2021	Googlemail	CRED CARD	1.50	Code 4481 FC110121	Watson storage
20/09/2021	Amazon	CRED CARD	184.78	Code 4455 FC 110121	Postage
Total Payments:			241.12		

It was noted that the gmail payments were still being made although the email system had been upgraded. The Acting Town Clerk explained that Hallbeck IT need to cancel the gmail and that the Finance Officer will remind them.

**Recommended:** That the credit card payments are reviewed and approved.

**31/21: Internal Audit Recommendations Action Plan**

**To receive an update on progress made on the Internal Audit Recommendations Action Plan (see attached and Acting Town Clerk to report)**

The Acting Town Clerk reported that of the 37 points (from both Internal Audit reports for 2020-2021), 25 points had been completed. 12 are ongoing, for example the budget setting process. With regard to point number 14 – the Finance Officer is still trying to secure quotes for an HR company, and point number 17 – the bank has stated that the names on the credit/debit cards cannot be changed. Some recommendations had not been precisely followed, for example a recommended stamp had not been purchased but a paper slip had been devised to include all payment and authorisation details attached to each invoice. It is hoped that the next Internal Audit will prove that progress had been made. This is likely to be in October/November 2021.

Councillor Johnson wished to put on record the Council's thanks to the Acting Town Clerk, Finance Officer and Administrative Officer for the work done to achieve this level in a short space of time. The Committee will look at the plan again in three months' time.

It was noted that the staff had been working on the Action Plan that addresses legitimate concerns and that there had not been any queries/complaints recently.

Councillor D Horsley left the meeting at 6.45 pm.

**32/21: Unallocated Reserves**

**As resolved at Full Council on Monday 20<sup>th</sup> September 2021, to receive recommendations from Town Council Officers regarding the allocation of money held in reserves that is currently unallocated (see attached and Acting Town Clerk to report).**

The Acting Town Clerk reported that point 36 on the Internal Audit Recommendations plan had not yet been completed and that a General Reserves Policy was needed which will be put to the Committee in November. However, General Reserves had been reduced from 9 months running costs (£200,000) to 6 months running costs (£136,500) by Full Council. In the up-coming budget, this will be reduced again to 3 months running costs to align with JPAG and Internal Audit recommendations. £350,000 had been deposited with the CCLA. There was still £45,598 of funds that remained unallocated.

As resolved by Full Council, Officers had looked at on-going commitments and future projects already approved by the Council as follows:

<b>Purpose/Project</b>	<b>Allocated</b>	<b>To Be Allocated</b>	<b>Comment</b>
Website	£500.00		The secure online payment system allocated after Full Council (20/09/21).
Dog Waste Bags 1	£1,044.00		Allocated to cover additional costs, as ongoing requirement for bags was not budgeted. This paid for 30,000 bags which are now being used to fill dispensers.
Dog Waste Bags 2		£6,000.00	If the dog waste bags detailed above only cover one month, there needs to be enough budget to afford the same amount for every remaining month of the financial year. It might be that the current 30,000 bags last much longer than a month, but as this is currently an unknown, it is prudent to allocate this amount to cover all eventualities. If, over the coming months, it becomes evident that £6,000 is actually too much, the unrequired amount can be vired to another budget line.
Staff Salaries		£7,500.00	If when the Town Clerk returns there is a gradual phasing back of duties being carried out by the Acting Town Clerk in her absence, finances will be required to continue paying the Acting Town Clerk at his increased rate to compensate for the additional responsibilities they still have, whilst the Town Clerk may also be back to full pay.
Legal Fees		£2,000.00	Based on spend from previous year, this addition covers all eventualities.
Flowers		£2,000.00	Given the trend of costs and the agreement to enhance autumn/winter planting this year, an additional £2,000 may be required.
Election Expenses		£8,000.00	Due to three unexpected by-elections that were not budget for, the allocated budget for the full Local Elections has been considerably depleted (please note we have not yet been invoiced for these, but will be by the end of the Financial Year). Therefore, the Local Elections fund needs to be replenished to ensure enough is reserved for the 2023 polls.
Matched Funding		£4,000.00	This is a new budget line, to enable a relatively modest amount for match funding with external grants for any current or new projects. This is not project specific, but is for a specified purpose.

St John Tree Planting Project		£554.00	The Council has resolved to work in partnership with the Civic Society and other organisations to plant 1,3000 trees to mark 1,300 years since the death of St John of Beverley. In the immediacy, this will include the purchase of a potted tree with commemorative plaque at the Minster, which this budget will go towards.
Jubilee		£5,000.00	It is estimated that this project will cost in total circa £45,000 to £50,000. £20,000 is already allocated. The additional amount will raise this to £25,000, leaving a further £20,000 - £25,000 to be allocated in the next Financial Year.
Town Entry Signs		£4,000.00	Originally £6,000 was allocated. However, with the Town Council's request for more creative designs by a graphic designer, the costs will rise. This will enable a total of £10,000 for this project. Anything that may go unspent can be vired to another budget line.
Beverley Beck Project Contribution		£1,500.00	When Commuted Sums approved this scheme, the budget included a contribution of £1,500 from the Town Council - this had not previously been allocated.
New Phone System		£2,000.00	The Council has resolved to install a new, up-to-date telephone system. We have struggled to get quotes due to Covid, but will work on this over Winter. This was not budgeted for, hence this allocation.
Flagpoles		£1,500.00	Council agreed to install freestanding flagpoles in Jubilee and Hengate Gardens, but no funding for this was recorded in reserves despite the project approval.
<b>Totals</b>	<b>£1,544.00</b>	<b>£44,054.00</b>	
	<b>Overall</b>	<b>£45,598.00</b>	

Councillors were concerned at the £6,000 expense for dog waste bags. This can be reviewed in three months' time when there would be more accurate information about usage requirements. Cheaper options could be sourced as biodegradable bags were not needed as this waste is burnt. It was noted that there had been positive comments received for this service and that after the initial novelty, it appears that the dispensers are being used for the purpose intended and that the Council is playing a positive role in keeping the streets tidy.

**Proposed:** Councillor Hopkins **Seconded:** Councillor Healy

**Recommended:** that unallocated funds are allocated as suggested by Officers and this is recommended to Full Council for approval.

**33/21: Honorary Freeman/Freewoman Policy**

**To consider a policy to direct the way in which the Town Council selects and bestows the title of Honorary Freeman / Freewoman (see attached and Acting Town Clerk to report).**

Councillor D Horsley arrived at the meeting at 7.07 pm

The Council discussed the Policy as proposed and some amendments were put forward for the Acting Town Clerk to review and gain advice from ERNLLCA (voting for nominations, restrictions of numbers or whether there is an obligation to award each year and wording for the criteria that nominees must have undertaken significant, exceptional and consistent work to be awarded a Freemanship). The Policy will be revised and put to Full Council for approval.

The meeting finished at 7.31 pm

Signed .....  ..... Date 25<sup>th</sup> October 2021