



# NEWARK TOWN COUNCIL

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## FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE MINUTES

Minutes of the Meeting of the Finance & General Purposes Committee held on Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> July 2018 in the Council Chamber at the Town Hall.

<b>Membership Present:</b>	<b>Councillor</b>	<b>D Lloyd (in the Chair)</b>
	Councillors	M G Cope (Vice-Chairman) Mrs C Barker-Powell (Ap) Mrs I Brown M Cleasby Mrs R Crowe R A Crowe Mrs G Dawn (Ap) P Duncan Ms H Gent (Ap) K Girling L Goff S Haynes D Hyde (Ap) D Jones (Ap) T Roberts MBE (Ap) M Skinner R Williams
<b>Apologies for Absence:</b>	<b>Councillors</b>	Mrs C Barker-Powell, Mrs G Dawn, Ms H Gent, D Hyde, D Jones, T Roberts MBE
<b>Officers Present:</b>	<b>Town Clerk</b> <b>Markets Manager</b>	Alan Mellor Ian Harrison
<b>Taking Notes:</b>	<b>PA to the Town Clerk</b>	Helen Crossland
	There were no members of the public present.	
<b>Venue:</b>	Council Chamber, Town Hall	

Prior to the commencement of the meeting it was **NOTED** that Cllr Mrs C Barker-Powell had sent apologies for the earlier meeting of this committee (6pm); she pointed out that she would have been able to attend if the meeting had been at the usual time of 7.30pm.

**FGP10/18/19 Minutes of the last meeting of the Finance & General Purposes Committee held on Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> June 2018**

The Minutes of the Finance & General Purposes Committee meeting held on Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> June 2018 were **AGREED** as a true and accurate record and signed by the Chairman.

**FGP11/18/19 Matters Arising**

**FGP02/18/19 – Matters Arising**

**FGP96/17/18 – Representation on Outside Bodies**

**(iii) Newark Allotments & Gardens Association**

Cllr L Goff reported that he had now received some Minutes from the last meeting of the Allotments & Gardens Association, and he would attend the next meeting.

**FGP08/18/19 – Cheque Signatories**

Cllr M Cope pointed out that he had not yet been asked to sign a bank mandate yet; the Town Clerk said that the matter was in hand and someone would be in touch about this soon.

**FGP12/18/19 Declarations of Interest**

It was **AGREED** to accept any Declarations of Interest as and when they arose during the meeting.

**FGP13/18/19 Payment Schedule 2/19**

Members **AGREED** that payment in accordance with Payment Schedule 2/19 in the sum of £273,102.03 (two hundred and seventy three thousand, one hundred and two pounds and 03p) be **APPROVED**.

**FGP14/18/19 Street Collection Licences**

Prior to agreement of this item there was some discussion with regard to the date requested; it was felt that it should be Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> July, not Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> July. With this in mind:

Members **AGREED** to recommend to Newark & Sherwood District council that the following application for a Street Collection Licence be **APPROVED**:

- (i) The Children's Bereavement Centre on Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> July 2018.

**FGP15/18/19 Voluntary Body/Community Events Grant Applications**

Members **AGREED** to grant the following application for free use of the Town Hall:

- (i) Just Sing! Newark's Community Choir, for free use of the Ballroom and Council Chamber on Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> October 2018, to hold a fund raising concert for the Emmaus Trust at a cost of £383.00 net.

Cllr P Duncan queried the amount of money that had been spent on 'music for the choir'; Cllr Mrs Crowe said that this was a fairly new group and that music was expensive to buy. The Town Clerk agreed to enquire about the 'Miscellaneous expenditure' incurred and the recording of the grants obtained from other organisations as set out in the application form.

#### **FGP16/18/19 Internal Audit Plan 2018/19**

Members **APPROVED** the proposed Internal Audit work plan for the 2018/19 financial year.

#### **FGP17/18/19 Financial Out Turn**

Members **RECEIVED** and **APPROVED** the financial out-turn report as at 30 June 2018.

#### **FGP18/18/19 Allotment Rent Review**

Members **CONSIDERED** a review of the Allotment Fees and Charges as in the Agenda Report and **AGREED** with the recommendation that an increase of 3.5% be levied with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> October 2019.

#### **FGP19/18/19 Markets Income Performance**

The Markets Manager went through the Report and explained some of the reasons for the reduction in income in the 2017/18 financial year and over the last three months.

One of the main issues was that there has been a continuing decline in traders standing on the Market. The performance for the last three months of 2017/18 was also significantly affected by the severe winter weather and the roadworks associated with the major work being undertaken by STWA.

Whilst the offers of discounted rents to attract new traders has been partially successful and has resulted in an increase in occupancy rates; the reduced rents has meant that actual income levels have not seen the same increase.

It is also clear that it is difficult to attract new young traders to replace those that are retiring, there has been some success in getting them to attend specialist/artisan markets, but they aren't coming to general markets. Further effort is required to get new young traders interested in the Market as a career and the Markets Manager undertook to invest more time to try and achieve this.

The Markets Manager said he was expected that the income figures for the Monday/Thursday and Friday markets would be higher than for last year. But that the main challenge was to increase income on the two main market days, Wednesday and Saturday.

VAT – the Town Clerk reported that subject to the views at this meeting, he would go back to Robert Jenrick MP (as outlined in the Agenda Report) and seek his support to resist the application of VAT on Market Rents. This was a significant issue which, if implemented, would further jeopardise the viability of all markets across the country.

Cllr M Skinner congratulated the Markets Manager on the coach tours; he said that it had been a particularly bad winter last year, and that it was right to be looking at bringing in younger traders. He also asked how many traders now take card payments – the Market Manager responded that it was between 7 and 10.

Cllr M Skinner said he had heard something about 'Small Business Saturday' and asked if the Town Council were doing anything to promote this.

The Markets Manager said that he would contact the local group, Totally Locally about this.

Discussion followed with regard to the amount of people in Newark that still do not know that there is free wi-fi in the Market Place, provided by O2. Cllr M Skinner declared a non-prejudicial interest at this point.

- (i) Members then **CONSIDERED** the Agenda Report and **NOTED** the action taken to date from the Markets Strategy Action Plan.
- (ii) Members **AGREED** to grant delegated authority to the Town Clerk, in consultation with the Chairman of the Finance and General Purposes Committee, to offer an extension period to the new starter discount scheme with the aim of attracting and retaining traders.
- (iii) The reduction in income achieved in the first three months of the 2018/19 financial year was **NOTED**.
- (iv) Members **NOTED** the potential implications arising from the impact of imposing VAT on Market charges.
- (v) Members then **AGREED** that a further report be brought back to the Finance and General Purposes Committee in September 2018 to further monitor performance of the Market.

<b>Meeting Closed:</b>	<b>6.35pm</b>	<b>Next Meeting:</b>	<b>Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> September 2018</b>
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