



Newark Town Council

Town Hall, Market Place, Newark, Nottinghamshire, NG24 1DU

Tel: 01636 680333 ~ Fax: 01636 680350

Email: post@newark.gov.uk ~ Website: www.newark.gov.uk

FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

WEDNESDAY 13th JANUARY 2021

Wednesday 6th January 2021

Dear Councillor

You are summonsed to attend a meeting of the Finance & General Purposes Committee at 7.30pm on Wednesday 13th January 2021. This meeting will be held remotely using "Zoom".

Any member of the public and press who wishes to attend the meeting will need to download Zoom. This application can be downloaded from: <https://zoom.us/meetings>

The Zoom ID for this meeting is: 967 6500 6526 and the Zoom Pass Code is: 322008.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A. Mellor'.

Alan Mellor
Town Clerk

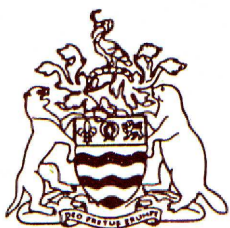
FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

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Committee Membership

Cllr D Jones (Chairman)
Cllr Mrs G Dawn
Cllr J Baggaley
Cllr Mrs I Brown
Cllr M Cope (Vice Chairman)
Cllr E Cropper
Cllr Mrs R Crowe
Cllr R A Crowe
Cllr L Geary
Cllr L Goff
Cllr J Henderson
Cllr D Ledger
Cllr J Lee
Cllr D Lloyd
Cllr T Mathias
Cllr Ms J Oliver
Cllr J Olson
Cllr M Skinner



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Agenda Item No: 2

Committee Date: Wednesday 13th January 2021

FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE MINUTES

Minutes of the Finance & General Purposes Committee held on Wednesday 2nd December 2020 (remote meeting via “Zoom”)

Membership Present:	Councillor	D Jones (Chairman)
	Councillors	Mrs G Dawn J Baggaley (Ap) Mrs I Brown M Cope (Vice-Chairman) E Cropper Mrs R Crowe R A Crowe L Geary L Goff J Henderson D Ledger (A) J Lee (Ap) D Lloyd T Mathias (Ap) Ms J Oliver J Olson (Ap) M Skinner
Apologies for Absence:	Councillors	J Lee, T Mathias, J Olson
Officers Present:	Town Clerk Deputy Town Clerk	Alan Mellor James Radley
Taking Notes:	PA to the Town Clerk	Helen Crossland
	There were no members of the public present.	
Venue:	Remote meeting via “Zoom”.	

FGP28/20/21 Minutes of the last meeting of the Finance & General Purposes Committee held on Wednesday 11th November 2020

The Minutes of the Finance & General Purposes Committee meeting held on Wednesday 11th November 2020 were **AGREED** as a true and accurate record and signed by the Chairman (who was present in the Town Hall).

FGP29/20/21 Matters Arising

FGP22/20/21 – Payment Schedules

Cllr R A Crowe asked if there had been any progress on the question of the Kidney Stones. The Town Clerk responded that he had contacted the relevant representatives from N&SDC and Urban Civic, but to date there had been no response from Urban & Civic.

FGP23/20/21 – Financial Out Turn

Cllr M Skinner asked if there was any movement on the formulation of a joint policy with N&SDC for the management and maintenance of Parks & Open Spaces as discussed at the last meeting.

The Town Clerk responded that this was still 'work in progress' and also that there was an item within the Climate Change Working Group Minutes (later on the Agenda for this meeting) that would deal with this.

FGP25/20/21 – Market Update

Virtual Christmas Event

Cllr M Skinner congratulated the Town Clerk and everyone else involved in putting on this event.

The Chairman informed Members that there had been over 11,000 'hits' so it had been a huge success. He felt it was important that the thanks of all Members should be noted and recorded in the Minutes of this meeting.

Cllr M Cope then congratulated the Market Manager and his team, along with the Town Clerk, the Town Mayor and all concerned.

Cllr J Henderson said he was really glad that the event had gone ahead, and gave his thanks to the team as well. He also asked if it would be possible to have a 'live link' again next year.

The Chairman responded that it should be repeated if that was possible.

The Town Clerk said he would be happy for this to happen again but he would need to have a conversation with Radio Newark about the possibility of live broadcasting.

Cllr L Geary thought it would be good for the elderly and/or disabled people that could not attend in person.

It was **AGREED** to formally minute the Town Council's thanks and appreciation to the staff and all those who were involved in putting on this Virtual event.

FGP27/20/21 – Purchase of Land, South Church Walk

Cllr Mrs G Dawn asked the Chairman why the subject of a Museum Working Party had not been included on the Agenda for this meeting.

The Chairman responded that the Town Clerk was already in talks with the District Council about the future of the Museum, and was not in a position to start a Working

Party yet.

Cllr Mrs G Dawn felt that if the Town Clerk was having talks with the District Council, there was all the more reason to have a Working Party.

The Chairman reiterated that it was not yet the right time for this.

There were no other Matters Arising.

FGP30/20/21 **Declarations of Interest**

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

FGP31/20/21 **Street Collection Licences**

Members **NOTED** the decision taken by the Town Clerk to approve the Street Collection Licences for Newark Round Table and the Royal Air Force Association.

FGP32/20/21 **Final Accounts 2019/20 - External Audit**

(i) Members **NOTED** the approval of the Town Council's financial accounts for the 2019/20 financial year ended on 31st March 2020 by the external auditors.

(ii) Members also **NOTED** the changes made to the figures for the 2019/19 financial year as follows:

Box 3 should read £2,191,936

Box 6 should read £2,751,889

FGP33/20/21 **Newark in Bloom 2021**

The Town Clerk went through the Agenda Report; he said he was asking at this stage for an 'in principle decision' as to whether to support the provision of hanging baskets as part of Newark In Bloom 2021.

Cllr M Cope was more than happy to support the procurement of the baskets – they make the town look very attractive. The decision with regard to charging, or otherwise, could be made at a later date.

Cllr J Henderson agreed with Cllr M Cope. He also asked the Town Clerk if he had managed to speak to the Deputy Town Clerk about the possibility of having perennial plants, as a result of a previous conversation. The Town Clerk had not, but as the Deputy Town Clerk was in the meeting, he was now aware and would look at this.

Cllr Mrs G Dawn said she was happy to accept the recommendations as written; she asked if there was going to be a general shortage of plants next year.

The Deputy Town Clerk explained that it was the seed suppliers and nurseries that were asking – they were worried about stock not being sold. Consequently, they would only be growing for confirmed orders.

Cllr L Goff then thanked the Newark In Bloom group for all their help with Chatham Court; they had tidied up gardens etc and he was very grateful.

Cllr Ms J Oliver asked if the Town Council would be entering the Bloom Awards next year.

The Town Clerk said he thought that there were no National Awards being planned and that the Deputy Town Clerk was in discussions about anything Regional. He also felt that regardless of whether the town enters any competition, the baskets made the town look nicer anyway.

The Chairman then moved the recommendation, which was seconded by Cllr M Cope. Following a vote, Members **AGREED** to support the provision of hanging baskets as part of Newark in Bloom 2021, as outlined in the Agenda Report, and that a decision about whether to charge or not be made at a later date.

FGP34/20/21 Minutes of the Climate Change Working Group held on Wednesday 25th November 2020

The Chairman presented the Minutes of the Climate Change Working Group.

Members considered the recommendations made by the Working Group to this Committee and the following actions were **APPROVED**:

- (i) The Town Clerk be asked to submit a report to a future meeting of the Finance & General Purposes Committee for Members to consider whether or not to prepare a Neighbourhood Plan. Further that the appropriate officers from the District Council be invited to the meeting to provide further information on the process to approve and adopt a Neighbourhood Plan.
- (ii) The Town Clerk be asked to submit a report to a future meeting of the Finance & General Purposes Committee for Members to consider proposals to engage with surrounding Parish Councils to support and promote Climate Change & Bio-diversity projects in a joint and collaborative way.
- (iii) That all future tree planting schemes will include local schools, community groups and Notts Wildlife Trust.
- (iv) The Town Council undertake a review all its parks and open spaces sites and agree any redefinition as to how they should be maintained in the future. Such a review to consider enhancing bio-diversity where appropriate, this will then deliver an agreed purpose of each site and enable appropriate new maintenance regimes to be put into place.

Members then **NOTED** the Minutes of the Climate Change Working Group held on Wednesday 25th November 2020.

Meeting Closed:	8.00pm	Next Meeting:	Wednesday 13th January 2021
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FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

SUBJECT:	PAYMENT SCHEDULES
REPORT BY:	TOWN CLERK

1. Recommendations

1.1 Members to Approve the attached Payment Schedules 8/21 & 9/21

2. Background

2.1 Payment Schedules 8/21 & 9/21 appended to this report.

3. Financial, Legal, Equality, Risk & Environmental Issues

3.1 None.

Background Papers:	None
Lead Officer:	Alan Mellor Tel: 01636 684801 Email:

CHEQUES				
ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT SCHEDULE 8/21				30.11.20
Voucher Number	Cheque Number	Payee	Budget	Amount
629	19162	Beaumont House Community Hospice	Mayors Allowance	500.00
630	19163	Childrens Bereavement Centre	Mayors Allowance	500.00
631	19164	Brown I	Mayors Allowance	1000.00
			Total	2000.00

AUTOPAY			
ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT SCHEDULE 8/21			30.11.20
Voucher Number	Payee	Budget	Amount
632	A O Cumbernauld	Payroll	17269.00
633 - 634	Arco Ltd	Protective Clothing & Equipment	77.22
635	Bagnalls Ltd	Recharges	2154.00
636	Bagnalls Ltd	PC Repairs & Maintenance	954.00
637 - 640	Bagnalls Ltd	Capital Receipts	23784.00
641 - 642	Belvoir Surfacing	P & O/S R&R	8724.00
643	Bramley Publications	Market Promotions	259.20
644	Broxap Ltd	Dog Bins	8064.00
645 - 647	Bunzl Ltd	TH Maintenance & Equipment	550.53
648	Charity Link	Market Rent	186.00
649	Derry Ltd	Cemetery Upkeep	2100.00
650	EDF Energy	Electricity	6.95
651	EE	Telephones	87.73
652	Enva Ltd	Market Refuse	2427.44
653 - 654	Fibrous Ltd	Cemetery Tablets	314.37
655	G M Imber Insurance	Market Insurance	350.00
656	HCS Ltd	TH Maintenance & Equipment	360.00
657	InTouch Now	Computers	900.00
658 - 661	Jones Maintenance	TH Maintenance & Equipment	1303.20
662 - 664	Jones Maintenance	Market Repairs & Maintenance	304.20
665 - 666	Jones Maintenance	Buttermarket Maintenance	1325.40
667 - 669	Jones Maintenance	PC Repairs & Maintenance	581.40
670 - 671	Jones Maintenance	Cemetery Upkeep	749.40
672	Jones Maintenance	Defibrillator	99.00
673	Lidsters of Worksop	Cemetery Tablets	870.62

674	LITE Ltd	Christmas Lights	31477.80
675 - 676	Market Traders	Market Traders	661.05
677 - 678	Marshall & Sons	P & O/S Maintenance	1614.00
679	MEC Recycling	Cemetery Upkeep	40.00
680	NEC Ltd	TH Maintenance & Equipment	234.00
681	Newark Security Services	P & O/S Security	393.60
682	NSDC	Collis Close	5707.20
683	NSDC	SLA P & O/S	106626.00
684	Newark & Sherwood Locksmiths	Cemetery Upkeep	93.56
685	Northgate Vehicle Hire	Covid Grant	475.78
686	Notts CC	Payroll	14864.18
687 - 690	NTC Pay Account	Payroll	35114.56
691	Peace G	Market Rent	12.00
692	PKF Littlejohn	Audit Fee	2400.00
693 - 696	Reflect Recruitment	Payroll	1896.06
697	Royal British Legion	Mayors Allowance	92.50
698	Screwfix	TH Maintenance & Equipment	6.99
699	SCS Ltd	Computers	988.80
700 - 701	Second Element	TH Maintenance & Equipment	264.00
702	Smith Electrical	TH Maintenance & Equipment	520.80
703	Smith Electrical	Christmas Lights	403.20
704	SSE	TH Gas	1423.15
705 - 706	SSE	Electricity	755.40
707 - 709	Staples Ltd	Printing & Stationery	142.40
710	TC Harrison	Vehicle Running Cost	54.60
711	TSG	Computers	432.00
712	Tuxford Lawnmowers	Mowers	930.61
713	UK Waste	Cemetery Upkeep	1184.76
714 - 716	Virgin Media	Telephones	646.40
717	Watch it Security	Allotment Maintenance	400.70
718	Watch it Security	Cemetery Upkeep	736.99
719	Wildlife Fundraising Ltd	Artisan Market	18.00
		Total	284412.75

DIRECT DEBITS			
ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT SCHEDULE 8/21			30.11.20
Voucher Number	Payee	Budget	Amount
720	British Gas	Buttermarket Electricity	£28.77
721 - 722	BT	Telephones	£238.44
723	Everflow Ltd	Water/Sewerage	£1,341.14
724	Hyundai Finance	Civic Car	£254.40
725	Natwest Card	TH Maintenance & Equipment	£87.21
725		Civic Car	£151.91
725		Postage	£16.92
725		Vehicle Running Costs	£453.49
726	NSDC Rates	Rates	£8,432.00
727	PWLB	PWLB	£12,420.92
728	Safety Measures	Health & Safety	£88.80
729 - 731	SSE	Electricity	£1,912.95
732 - 733	Total Power	Electricity	£136.07
734 - 735	Total Power	PC Gas	£249.33
736 - 738	UK Fuels	Vehicle Running Costs	£386.93
739	Worldpay	Bank Charges	£132.00
		Total	£26,331.28
		Grand Total	£312,744.03

AUTOPAY

ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT SCHEDULE 9/21

31.12.20

Voucher Number	Payee	Budget	Amount
740	A O Cumbernauld	Payroll	10018.40
741	Arco Ltd	Market Equipment	27.25
742	Arco Ltd	Protective Clothing & Equipment	258.00
743 - 744	Bagnall & Sons	Capital Receipts	3926.40
745	Banner Group Ltd	Printing & Stationery	24.49
746	Broxap Ltd	Dog Bins	2070.00
747 - 748	Bunzl Ltd	PC Materials	255.45
749	Canon UK	Printing & Stationery	378.90
750	Closomat Ltd	PC Repairs & Maintenance	354.00
751	Davies S	Consultancy Fees	1500.00
752	EM Digital Media	Christmas Lights	3210.00
753	EDF Energy	Market Electricity	6.72
754	EE	Telephones	87.73
755	Fibrous Ltd	Cemetery Tablets	241.54
756	Gala Tent Ltd	Market Equipment	1599.80
757	Iliffe Media	Market Promotions	252.00
758	Johnstone MB	Xmas Market	18.00
759	Laffey's Ltd	Cemetery Upkeep	216.00
760	Lidsters of Worksop	Cemetery Tablets	481.75
761 - 763	Market Traders	Market Traders	973.35
764	Marshall & Sons	P & O/S R&R Play Equipment	5184.00
765	Mayo Crane Hire	Christmas Lights	510.00
766	MEC Recycling	Cemetery Upkeep	20.00
767	Newark Northern Bowls Club	Bowls Maintenance	4100.00
768	Newark Security Services	P & O/S Security	609.60
769	Newark & Sherwood Locksmiths	Allotment Repairs & Maintenance	74.40
769	Newark & Sherwood Locksmiths	TH Maintenance & Equipment	78.60
770	Northgate Vehicle Hire	Covid Grant	475.78
771	Notts CC	Pensions	692.39
772	Notts CC	Payroll	13605.25
773	NTC Pay Account	Payroll	35581.51
774	NTC Pay Account	Payroll	100.00
775 - 776	Opus Energy	Buttermarket Electricity	23.16
777	Parkin Gerry Ltd	Capital Receipts	954.00
778	PHS Group	TH Contracts	433.18
779	PP PRS Ltd	PC Contracts	304.16
780	Primeprint	General Marketing	234.00
781 - 784	Reflect Recruitment	Payroll	2943.73
785	SCS Technology	Computers	460.80

786 - 789	Second Element Ltd	Maintenance & Equipment	528.00
790	Shephardson M	Christmas Lights	100.00
791	Sherwood Signs Ltd	Protective Clothing & Equipment	288.00
792	SSE	P & O/S Electricity	166.76
793	SSE	PC Electricity	499.20
794	SSE	TH Gas	1875.62
795	TC Harrison	Vehicle Running Costs	54.60
796 - 797	Temple P	Consultancy Fees	900.00
798	TIS Ltd	TH Maintenance & Equipment	192.00
799	TMS Users Fund	Postage	500.00
800	TSG	Computers	828.00
801	UK Waste Ltd	Cemetery Upkeep	592.38
802 - 805	Virgin Media	Telephones	644.82
806	Watch it Security	Cemetery Upkeep	736.99
807	Watch it Security	Allotment Repairs & Maintenance	400.70
		Total	100591.41

DIRECT DEBITS			
ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT SCHEDULE 9/21			31.12.20
Voucher Number	Payee	Budget	Amount
808 - 811	British Gas	Buttermarket Electricity	£68.12
812 - 820	BT	Telephones	£1,003.08
821	Everflow	Water/Sewerage	£778.05
822	Hyundai Vehicle Finance	Civic Car	£254.40
823	Natwest Cards	Postage	£2.00
823		Printing & Stationery	£12.48
824	NSDC	Rates	£8,432.00
825	Safety Measures	Health & Safety	£88.80
826	Severn Trent Water	ENV Water	£80.83
827 - 828	SSE	PC Gas	£253.33
829 - 833	SSE	Electricity	£5,452.49
834	Total Gas & Power	Buttermarket Electricity	£26.67
835	Total Gas & Power	Market Electricity	£498.44
836 - 838	UK Fuels	Vehicle Running Costs	£253.04
839	UK Fuels	Fuel - Mowers	£178.63
839	UK Fuels	Covid Grant	£40.18
840	Worldpay	Bank Charges	£131.96
		Total	£17,554.50
		Grand Total	£118,145.91

FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

SUBJECT:	DOG BINS
REPORT BY:	TOWN CLERK

1. Recommendations

1.1 Members are asked to consider:

- (i) Whether or not any of the existing sites of Dog Bins can be deleted,
- (ii) Any new sites that may be required for submission back to this Committee for approval.

Background

2.1 The Town Council has a long established policy of providing 'Dog Bins' for the disposal of dog faeces at many sites across the town.

At present there are 42 bins located in the following positions:

- Newark Cemetery x2
- Thoresby Road Entrance
- Beacon Hill Road
- Elm Avenue (near East Mids. Sub-station)
- Footpath off Mather Road
- Footpath near Trent Bridge, Beast Market Hill
- Town Lock Footpath, Mill Gate
- Entry to Footpath, Strawberry Hall Lane
- Grass verge end of Winthorpe Road
- Alleyway to Belmont Close
- Alleyway to Hawton Road
- Lawrence Street
- Bishop Alexander School, Wolsey rd.
- Grass area opp. Broadway, Bowbridge Rd.
- New Development Windsor Rd.
- Junction. Beacon Hill Rd / Newbury Rd.
- Junction, Marston Moor Rd/Winstanley Rd
- Greenway (grass island)
- Farndon Rd (end bridleway)
- Syerston Way (play area)
- RHS Library, Beaumont Gardens
- RHS London Road, Beaumont Gardens
- LHS London Road, Beaumont Gardens
- Fountain Gardens, Baldertongate
- Fountain Gardens, London Road
- Fountain, Fountain Gardens
- Riverside Park, Tolney Lane
- Riverside Park, Tolney Lane
- Riverside Park, Tolney Lane
- Riverside Park, Tolney Lane
- Riverside Park, Tolney Lane

Entrance to Friary Gardens
 Entrance to Friary Gardens
 Sherwood Avenue, Barnbygate
 Bedehouse Lane, Sherwood Avenue
 Amenity area, Sherwood Avenue
 Amenity area, Sherwood Avenue
 Back of library, London Road
 Edgehill Drive, adj. to play area
 Cow Lane
 Maltkiln Lane
 Riverside Walk (behind TK Max)

2.2 I would invite Members to review the above existing sites to ascertain whether or not they are all still required.

2.3 Over the last year a number of Members have asked about the potential to site new additional dog bins in various locations. In particular the new housing estates are now becoming established with no provision for dog bins.

In addition the following requests have been received from members of the public for additional dog bins to be installed:

- (i) Footpath to the rear of the Farndon Unit
- (ii) Beacon Hill Nature Reserve 2no
- (iii) End of Old Kelham Road before the Cricket Field

I would also therefore invite Members to review the need the additional dog bins within their Wards in order that a comprehensive assessment of such demand can be put together for the whole of the town.

3. Operational Arrangements

3.1 The bins are emptied by the District Council, the charge for this service in the current year is £1.90 per bin per visit.

The current contract provides for a weekly collection for all of the Dog Bins.

The annual cost for the emptying of each bin is therefore around £100

The total cost for the emptying service last year was £4,150.

If any bins need to be replaced then this is a cost that falls on the Town Council.

A new Dog Bin will cost between £150 to £300 for supply and fixing, subject to the size of the bin required. The District council have recently undertaken a review of the existing Dog Bins and 15 were identified as needing to be replaced with new bins, these should all now be in place.

3.2 The total approved budget for this financial year is £9,490, a balance of £2,500 remains uncommitted and is therefore available to purchase and empty new Dog Bins if required.

4. Financial, Legal, Equality, Risk and Environmental Issues

4.1 Contained in the report.

Background Papers:	None
Lead Officer:	Alan Mellor Tel: 01636 684801 Email: alan.mellor@newark.gov.uk

FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

SUBJECT:	COUNCIL TAX BASE & COUNCIL TAX REFERENDUM
REPORT BY:	TOWN CLERK

1. Recommendations

1.1 Members are requested to:

- (i) Note the Council Tax Base figure for the 2021/22 financial year,
- (ii) Consider whether or not to submit a response to the Government’s Consultation Paper on the Local Government Finance Settlement for 2021/22.

2. Background

2.1 The Town Council will set its’ budgets and precept for the 2021/22 financial year at the meeting scheduled for 17th February. Prior to that the detailed estimates will be submitted to this Committee for examination on the 10th February.

2.2 As Members will appreciate this year has been particularly challenging, like many Councils, Newark is having to deal with significant financial issues which will have long term implications for its financial position.

This report is submitted to provide some advance information for Members on issues that will impact on the Town Council and will need to be taken into account when setting next year’s estimates.

3. Council Tax Base

3.1 The Council Tax Base is the number of properties in the town (expressed as Band D equivalents) upon which the approved Precept is levied. The Precept divided by the Council Tax Base gives the annual Town Council Band D Council Tax Charge.

In a normal year the figure is relatively stable; reflecting the number of new properties being built less any demolitions.

However the Tax Base now includes, in effect, the cost of paying Council Tax Benefit. This has introduced the potential for increased volatility in the calculations as the number of people claiming Council Tax Benefit can clearly change more frequently than the number of actual properties.

3.2 Given the impact of Covid19 on the whole economy, there were, and remain, concerns that the Council Tax Base could actually reduce as more Council Tax Benefit claimants come on stream through redundancies etc.

The District Council have notified us that the Council Tax Base for 2021/22 will be 8,612.47. This represents an increase of 130.12 from the current years figure. Whilst this is a welcome position, and not as bad as I feared, it does represent a reduction from the figure which was originally estimated in the Medium Term Financial Plan by 23.74.

3.3 It is still estimated that there will be additional increases in the Council Tax Base as the new

houses being delivered from the Growth Point site come on stream, however this profile has been revised and pushed out further into the future to reflect a slower than originally expected completion rate together with an overall reduction in the number of houses now expected to be built.

I have asked the District Council to provide an updated estimate of the numbers and profile of new houses over the next 15 years, this will enable the Town Council to consider its long term financial position. In particular the ongoing affordability of the Devolution Agreement which took effect from 1st April 2015.

- 3.4 The Devolution agreement was framed to provide a significant level of financial security to the Town Council; the annual grant is adjusted, upwards, to take into account the position whereby the Council Tax Base doesn't increase as anticipated from the new housing on Land South of Newark in particular.

This clause has worked and protected the Town Council from the lower than expected rise in its Council Tax Base. However the overall level of grant aid from the District Council is capped at £3.78m over the period 2015-2035. It is now calculated that the full amount will have been paid by 2026/27; this will create a significant financial issue in the following years unless the new house building increases significantly.

4. Council Tax Referendum

- 4.1 I have submitted a number of reports to this Committee over the last few years advising Members of the Governments' consultation proposals to extend the Excessive Council Tax Increase Referendum Principles to Local Councils.

I am pleased to be able to report that the Government has once again decided not to extend the referendum principles to Parish Councils for the 2021/22 financial year.

However the consultation paper goes on to say that:

"The Government will take careful account of the increases set by parishes in 2021/22 when reviewing the matter ahead of next year's settlement."

Clearly this is an issue that continues to be of interest/concern to the Government.

A copy of the Consultation paper is attached at Appendix 1.

- 4.2 In this context the Government has set a limit of 2% or £5 whichever is higher, for all Principal Councils, above which a Referendum would be triggered.

I would normally suggest that the Town Council should pay heed to this same limit when considering its Council Tax rate for 2021/22. However the setting of next years Council Tax needs to be considered in the context of the above concerns about the Council Tax Base for the Town Council and the financial impacts which have arisen due to Covid19.

Whilst the Consultation paper does refer to the impacts of Covid19 on the finances of all Councils. It appears that it remains wedded to the principle of controlling, what it considers to be, excessive increases in Council Tax.

This seems to be somewhat out of touch with reality; with an increasing number of Councils facing positions that would effectively be described as being bankrupt and the volatility around the Council Tax Base calculations, the ongoing imposition of these Referendum triggers seem entirely unhelpful.

- 4.3 Whilst the Town Council has taken action to mitigate the financial impact of losing £130,000 of Market Rent income, without finding savings in expenditure elsewhere, this would have resulted in an increase in the precept of some 14%.

The Town Council has, in my opinion, taken appropriate and robust steps to address the financial position. It has taken control of its financial destiny without any direct external

financial assistance from the Government apart from the Furlough Grant.

Given the above backdrop it seems, at best, churlish for the Government to be raise concerns and issue warnings about the level of Council tax increase for 2021/22.

In addition, I would advise Members that I submitted a FOI request in January 2020 to the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government requesting the following information:

“I would like to make the following FOI request regarding views expressed on the level of parish Council Precepts for the last two calendar years as follows:

- (i) Number of comments received
- (ii) Analysis of comments between those concerned about the level of Parish Council Precepts and those which aren't concerned
- (iii) Analysis of comments between; Individuals, MP's and other organisations”

The official response was as follows:

“I am writing to advise you that, following a search of our paper and electronic records, I have established that the information you have requested is not held by the Ministry”

I can only presume from this response that the Government have received no comments over the last two years expressing any views on Parish Council Precepts. Given this information it appears that the concern being expressed in the Consultation paper has no foundation in reflecting any views submitted to the Government.

4.4 I would invite Members to consider whether or a formal response on the Consultation paper is appropriate and if so, grant delegated authority to the Town Clerk, in consultation with the Chairman & Vice-Chairman of this Committee, to submit a response on behalf of the Town Council.

5. Financial, Legal, Equality, Risk and Environmental Issues

5.1 Contained in the report.

Background Papers:	Estimate files for 2021/22.
Lead Officer:	Alan Mellor Tel: 01636 684801 Email: alan.mellor@newark.gov.uk

APPENDIX 1 – SEPARATE EMAIL

FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

SUBJECT:	MEETING DATES
REPORT BY:	TOWN CLERK

1. Recommendations

1.1 Members consider the meeting schedule as set out in Appendix 1 to this report and recommend to the Town Council accordingly.

2. Background

2.1 The schedule of Committee and Council meetings are arranged around the dates of the District Council's Planning Committee and key dates in relation to financial reporting.

2.2 The Town Council's Planning Committee dates are set to take place one week before the District Council Planning Committee to enable any comments on late items to be submitted to the District by noon of the following Monday; this ensures their submission at the District Planning Meeting.

This has worked well and the schedule as set out continues this format.

3. Financial Legal, Equality & Risk Issues

3.1 There is a requirement in respect of the number of meetings the Town Council must hold each year in that it must have an annual meeting, plus at least three other meetings per year (Local Government Act 1972 Schedule 12 paras 10 (1) and 26 (1)).

Background Papers:	None
Lead Officer:	<p>Alan Mellor Tel: 01636 684801 Email: alan.mellor@newark.gov.uk</p>

NEWARK TOWN COUNCIL CALENDAR OF COMMITTEE MEETINGS: MAY 2021 TO APRIL 2022			
	PLANNING	FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES	TOWN COUNCIL
DAYS	WEDNESDAY	WEDNESDAY	WEDNESDAY
Commencing	7.00 pm	7.30 pm	7.30 pm
[Last Cycle 2020/21]	21.04.21	07.04.21	14.04.21
MAY	26.05.21		
JUNE	30.06.21	09.06.21	23.06.21
JULY	28.07.21	14.07.21	
AUGUST			
SEPTEMBER	01.09.21	15.09.21	22.09.21
	29.09.21		
OCTOBER	27.10.21	13.10.21	
NOVEMBER	01.12.21	24.11.21	
DECEMBER			08.12.21
JANUARY	12.01.22	05 or 19.01.22	
FEBRUARY	09.02.22	16.02.22	22.02.22
MARCH	09.03.22	16.03.22	
APRIL	06.04.22	13.04.22	20.04.22*
MAY	04.05.22		

Please Note: Mayor Making will be Sunday 8th May 2022

ORANGE and WHITE indicate separate cycles in 21/22
Cycles based on NSDC planning meetings

Committee meetings in the year: **12 Planning, 9 Finance & General Purpose, 5 Town Council including *
Annual Town (Parish) Meeting**

FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

SUBJECT:	EXEMPT NOTICE
REPORT BY:	TOWN CLERK

1 Recommendation

- 1.1 That under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 (as extended by Section 100 of the Local Government Act 1972) the press and public be excluded from the remainder of the meeting on the grounds that the Committee’s remaining business involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006, and the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

<p>Lead Officer: Alan Mellor Tel: 01636 684801 Email: alan.mellor@newark.gov.uk</p>
