

# HOUGHTON REGIS TOWN COUNCIL

## Corporate Services Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on

30<sup>th</sup> May 2023 at 7.00pm.

Present: Councillors: D Jones Chairman  
J Carroll  
E Costello  
W Henderson  
M Herber  
C Slough

Officers: Debbie Marsh Corporate Services Manager  
Louise Senior Head of Democratic Services

Public: 0

Absent: Councillor: C Rollins

### 12449 APOLOGIES & SUBSTITUTIONS

None.

### 12450 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

None.

### 12451 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST & REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS

None.

### 12452 ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIR

Members were invited to elect a Vice-Chair for Corporate Services Committee for 2023/2024.

Nomination: Cllr Herber Nominated by: Cllr Carroll  
Seconded by: Cllr Herber

Nomination: Cllr C Slough Nominated by: Cllr Henderson  
Seconded by: Cllr C Slough

A recorded vote was requested.

Members in favour of Cllr Herber: Cllr Carroll and Cllr Herber

Members in favour of Cllr C Slough: Cllr Costello, Cllr Henderson and Cllr C Slough

Accordingly, Cllr C Slough was duly appointed as Vice-Chair of the Corporate Services Committee for the municipal year of 2023/2024.

**12453 MINUTES**

To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 27<sup>th</sup> February 2023.

**Resolved:** To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 27<sup>th</sup> February 2023 and for these to be signed by the Chairman.

**12454 TO RECEIVE THE MINUTES OF THE FOLLOWING MEETINGS AND CONSIDER ANY RECOMMENDATIONS CONTAINED THEREIN**

Personnel Sub-Committee: 16<sup>th</sup> January 2023

**Resolved:** To receive the Minutes detailed above.

**12455 COMMITTEE FUNCTIONS & TERMS OF REFERENCE**

In accordance with Standing Order 4.j.iv. Council was required to review its delegation arrangements to committees and sub committees.

These arrangements were set out in the Committee Functions & Terms of Reference. This document set out the system of delegation to the Committees, Sub Committees and Working Groups of the Council.

Members received the extract from the approved Committee Functions & Terms of Reference which related to this committee.

Members received this report for information.

**12456 FINANCIAL REPORT 2023/24**

In accordance with the committee functions a review of the income and expenditure of the committee should be undertaken periodically. However, at the time of compilation of this report, financial year 2022/2023 had not been closed down.

Members were advised the budget figures were as set in January 2023.

Members received, for information, the budget report for Corporate Services Committee.

**Resolved:**

- 1) To approve a virement of the sum of £300 from budget heading Advertising (190-4031) to Accountancy & Software (101-4057) to enable the town council to subscribe to a platform offering an electronic signature (for example Docusign, E-Sign or similar).
- 2) To recommend to Town Council, at the meeting to be held on the 19<sup>th</sup> June 2023, the transfer of the sum of £6000 from General Reserves to budget heading P&R Capital and Projects, Computer Costs (199-4026) for the purchase of IT equipment for new members of staff.

**12457 BANK AND CASH RECONCILIATION STATEMENTS**

Members were requested to receive the monthly bank and cash reconciliation statements for January, February and March 2023.

It was highlighted that between 28<sup>th</sup> February and 31<sup>st</sup> March £311,000 had been moved out of the LA Deposit Fund Account. It was assumed that this sum had been transferred out of the account to fund the Tithe Farm project, as this project had started. A request was made that confirmation be provided to members that the funding which was due to be received, by the Town Council, to fund this project, had actually been received.

**Resolved:**

- 1. To approve the monthly bank and cash reconciliation statements for January and February and to note the draft bank and cash reconciliation statement for March 2023;**
- 2. For these along with the original bank statements to be signed by the Chair of Corporate Services Committee and the Council's RFO.**

**12458 LIST OF CHEQUE PAYMENTS**

Members received a list of payments for the period January, February and March 2023 (inclusive).

It was clarified that the payment list received by councillors had already been checked and reconciled by designated councillors.

Members received this report for information.

**12459 INVESTMENT REPORT**

In accordance with Committee Functions, Financial Regulation 8 and Banking Arrangements, Investment Strategy & Investment Arrangements, the Corporate Services Committee were to oversee and manage the financial obligations of the Council, including:

To receive quarterly reports on investments containing a forecast of capital expenditure, investment opportunities and a recommendation for further investment including where length and amount.

This report had been expanded to incorporate the capital value of the Property Fund as per the Internal Auditors comment from interim audit in 2022/23 (Ref E2).

Cllr Jones and Cllr Herber volunteered to engage in a review of the councils approach to risk and investment with the requisite that professional support would be offered for councillors undertaking this role.

**Resolved:** **To nominate Cllr Jones and Cllr Herber to engage in a review of the councils approach to risk and investment and for their findings to be reported back to Corporate Services Committee for further**

**consideration.**

**12460 RENEWAL OF DIRECT DEBIT, STANDING ORDER, BACS AND CHAPS PAYMENTS**

Members were advised, under Financial Regulation 6.8, the approval of the use of Direct Debit, Standing Order, BACS or CHAPS would be renewed by resolution of the council every year.

Members received a list of Direct Debits and Standing Orders.

Members were informed that the town council used BACs payment for staff salaries only.

Members highlighted the top 7 items were associated with cost of living support scheme, it was acknowledged that this scheme had been extended to March 2024 in the budget.

**Resolved:**

- 1. To approve the use of BACS method of payment.**
- 2. To approve the use of Direct Debit, Standing Order and CHAPS method of payment.**

**12461 PUBLIC WORKS LOAN BOARD REPAYMENTS ANNUAL REPORT**

In accordance with the Committee Functions & Terms of Reference and Financial Regulations, Members are presented with an annual report to provide detail on the council's loans including current value, repayments and early settlement options as they stand as of 1st April 2023.

**Resolved:** **To note the Public Works Loan Board Repayments Annual Report.**

**12462 INSURANCE CLAIMS**

Members were advised that there had been one insurance claim since the last meeting of this committee.

Members received this report for information.

<i>Claim number</i>	<i>Details</i>	<i>Repair cost</i>	<i>Date settled</i>
27230000247	Date of incident: 8/4/23 Address of incident: Tithe farm Play Area, Tithe Farm Rd, Houghton Regis Nature of incident: Vandalism to a wooden platform forming part of a piece of play equipment. The platform was snapped in half.	1,100	17 <sup>th</sup> April 2023

**12463 OFFICER/MEMBER PROTOCOL**

The Town Councils Officer/Member Protocol was last reviewed, by this committee, on the 1<sup>st</sup> June 2021.

There had been no amendments to this document and therefore it was considered fit for purpose.

Members received a copy of the Officer/Member Protocol, it was suggested that this document be presented at the first meeting of each new administration.

**Resolved: To recommend to Town Council that the Officer/Member Protocol be approved.**

**12464 COUNCILLORS EXPENSES**

Members received a copy of the Town Councils Councillor Expenses Policy.

This policy was provided for review every 4 years, following each new administration.

**Resolved: To recommend to Town Council that the Councillor's Expenses Policy be approved.**

**12465 POLICY DOCUMENT REVIEW**

Policies and procedures play an important role in governing the Town Councils responsibilities. Policies and procedures set out expectations, from both the Council and employees, and confirmed legal compliance.

This schedule was provided annually at the first Corporate Services meeting following the Town Councils Annual General Meeting.

Members received a list of suggested policy review dates that coincided with dates of the meetings for this committee for the municipal year 2023-2024.

**Resolved: To consider and approve the 2023-2024 Policy Review Document**

**The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 7.45pm**

**Dated this 11<sup>th</sup> day of September 2023.**

**Chairman**