

Minutes of the meeting of the Finance, Asset & Resources Committee held on Monday 18th December 2025 at 6:30 pm.

Present: Councillors: Cllr G Hutchinson (Chair), L Woodbridge, P Goulbourne, J Howard, A Wignall, M Hancock, and N Proffitt.

Town Clerk and RFO: Jo Butterworth.

Deputy Town Clerk and Deputy RFO: Gem Whitley.

FAR 12/25/01 **To receive apologies and reasons for absence.**

None received.

FAR 12/25/02 **Disclosure of Personal and Prejudicial Interests.**

None received.

FAR 12/25/03 **Grant Dispensations.**

None requested.

FAR 12/25/04 **Minutes.**

(a) To read and note the minutes and the confidential minutes of the Staffing and Governance Sub- Committee held on the 11th November 2025. **Noted.**

(b) It was moved by Cllr P Goulbourne, seconded by Cllr L Woodbridge and

RESOLVED: That both sets of minutes of the Finance Asset & Resources Committee meeting held on the 13th November 2025 be signed by the Chair as a true and accurate record.

FAR 12/25/05 **Detailed Income and Expenditure Report as of 30th November 2025.** **Noted.**

FAR 12/25/07 **Grant Awarding Policy**

It was moved by Cllr L Woodbridge, Seconded by Cllr P Goulbourne and

RESOLVED: to recommend to full council that this policy be adopted by Ellesmere Town Council.

FAR 12/25/08 **Employment Law/HR and Business Safe Contract.**

Committee members considered a recommendation made by the Staffing and Governance Committee for the above Contract. The Clerk explained that the Councils current contract was due to expire in March 2026, so costs had been obtained from two companies for budgeting purposes.

It was moved by Cllr G Hutchinson, seconded by Cllr P Goulbourne and

RESOLVED: To accept the recommendation from the Staffing and Governance Committee that company 1 be awarded the contract for 5 years at a cost of £2,436 per annum.

FAR 12/25/09 **Salaries and Wages.**

It was moved by Cllr G Hutchinson, seconded by Cllr L Woodbridge and

RESOLVED: To accept the recommendation from the Staffing and Governance Committee for the salaries and wages budget for 2026/2027 to be £148,919.87.

FAR 12/25/10 **Budget Deliberations.**

The Deputy Clerk delivered some 2026/2027 contract tenders for consideration, so that the figures could be included in the budget setting.

Christmas Lighting

It was moved by Cllr L Woodbridge, seconded by Cllr M Hancock and

RESOLVED: To recommend to full council at the meeting in January that Company 2 be awarded the Christmas Lighting contract for 3 years at a cost of £20,475.00.

Gardening

It was moved by Cllr P Goulbourne, seconded by Cllr L Woodbridge and

RESOLVED: To recommend to full council at the January meeting that company 5 be awarded the Gardening contract for 3 years at a cost of £27,150.00

Printers

It was moved by Cllr N Proffitt, seconded by Cllr P Goulbourne and

RESOLVED: To award the contract to Company 3, for 1 A4 and 1 A3 printer for 5 years at a cost of £503.72 per annum, £2,581.60 over 5 years.

Hanging Baskets

It was moved by Cllr M Hancock, seconded by Cllr L Woodbridge and

RESOLVED: To recommend to full council that the contract for the planters and hanging baskets be awarded to company 1 for 3 years at a cost of £1,000 per annum, £3,000 in total.

Data Protection Officer

It was moved by Cllr G Hutchinsom, seconded by Cllr A Wignall and

RESOLVED: To award the contract to company 1 at a cost of £1,184.39 per annum for 3 years, £3,553.17 in total.

Pest Control

It was moved by Cllr L Woodbridge, seconded by Cllr N Proffitt and

RESOLVED: to award the contract to company 1 at a cost of £475.00 for 1 year.

IT

It was moved by Cllr L Woodbridge, seconded by Cllr P Goulbourne and

RESOLVED: To award the contract to company 1 for 3 years at a cost of £4,614.00 per annum, totalling £13,842.00

Accounts & Bookings Software Package

The Clerk informed council that she had received quotations from two companies.

It was moved by Cllr P Goulbourne, seconded by Cllr L Woodbridge and

RESOLVED: To renew the Gold membership with Rialtas from 1st April 2026 -31st March 2029 at a cost of £920 per annum, totalling £2,760.00.

Cllr L Woodbridge gave an update on the events liaison working group. Arts festival, who are looking at holding an event in the town on May day bank holiday weekend over 4 days. They asked if a £2000.00 budget could be allocated for the year.

Proposals for a Youth Café at the Town Hall on a Monday evening during Term time were considered. The Clerk explained that the Youth Café with TNS which had been budgeted for in 2025/2026 had been cancelled due to lack of use, so a proposal for Monday was now to be decided. There is still money in the current budget to commence a Youth Café for the rest of 2025/2026.

TNS & 4 All Foundation had both made offers to run the service for 40 weeks of the year one for £2,800 and they would pay for the use of the hall. The other had offered to deliver the service for a cost of £5,000 plus had asked for free room hire.

It was moved by Cllr L Woodbridge, seconded by Cllr N Proffitt and

RESOLVED: to approve a new Youth Café is started with the 4 All Foundation at a cost of £2,800.

Members also considered if they wished to continue to pay TNS to deliver the HAF provision during school holidays at a cost of £1,200.

It was moved by Cllr L Woodbridge, seconded by Cllr P Goulbourne and

RESOLVED: to pay £1,200 to TNS to deliver the HAF provision for the town.

The Clerk confirmed that she had received the council tax taxbase figure from Shropshire Council for a Band D properties which is 1,623.04 for 2025/26 compared with 1595.89 for 2024/25. This means that to show a 0% increase in the Band D Council tax charge the 2026/27 precept request would be £315,546. The Clerk had input this figure into the initial draft budget to work through.

The initial draft budget was on her laptop and shared with members using the projector so that all councillors could see. The Clerk and members went through

each budget item in turn with the Clerk explaining the projections and reasons any figures had been entered into the draft budget (which are all explained in the budget notes), members increased and reduced the budgets where required and included the contract prices discussed earlier, which will be recommended to full Council on the 12th January.

Estimates for building maintenance were considered and it was anticipated that approximately £132,000 would be required to replace all the windows, sills, lintels. It had previously been agreed to look at the costs involved to extend the Police Office, however the idea to turn what is currently a storage shed into purpose-built town council offices was also considered and estimates were discussed and it was agreed to budget £25,000 to cover the works and professional fees.

After these figures were input it left a deficit of £197,000 based on a 0% increase in the precept request.

After much deliberation it was agreed to recommend to full council that £70,000 be used from EMR, (£20,000 from the Town Hall Capital Fund, £50,000 from Neighbourhood Fund EMR) and £40,000 be earmarked from the General Reserves to fund the improvements works at the Town Hall which will improve the energy efficiency and extend the life of the building for community use.

If this recommendation was made it would mean that a precept request for £372,058 would need to be made to Shropshire Council which would see a 2026/2027 balanced income and expenditure of £446,019 with an additional £110,000 to be spent from reserves.

Meeting Closed 20.45pm.

Meeting Closed: 21:10pm

Chair

Date