Minutes of the meeting of the Finance, Asset & Resources Committee held on Thursday 8th January 2026 at 6:30 pm.

Present: Councillors: Cllr G Hutchinson (Chair), L Woodbridge, P Goulbourne, J Howard, A Wignall, G Elner, P Jones.

Town Clerk and RFO: Jo Butterworth.

Deputy Town Clerk and Deputy RFO: Gem Whitley.

Cllrs Austin & Mooney were present as non – committee members.

FAR 01/26/01 **To receive apologies and reasons for absence.**

Apologies were received from Cllr M Hancock and Cllr N Proffitt due to family commitments.

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

RESOLVED: that the apologies and reasons for absence be approved.

FAR 01/26/02 **Disclosure of Personal and Prejudicial Interests.**

None received.

FAR 01/26/03 **Grant Dispensations.**

None requested.

FAR 01/26/04 **Minutes.**

(a) To read and confirm the minutes and the Finance, Asset & Resources Committee held on the 18th December 2025.

It was moved by Cllr P Goulbourne, seconded by Cllr A Wignall and

RESOLVED: that the Finance Asset & Resources Committee meeting held on the 18th December 2025 be signed by the Chair as a true and accurate record.

FAR 01/26/05 **Mereside Boathouses.** A report was read from Shropshire Council on the condition of the Boathouses at the Mere. As joint owner's, members were advised to consider budgeting for repairs to the boathouses.

FAR 01/26/06 **Budget Deliberations.**

The Clerk informed the committee that during the last budget deliberations the 5-year maintenance programme of works for the streetlights which was agreed in November had not been included in the draft budget. She also reminded members that because the Town Hall is not taxed that there is £7,500 VAT reclaim threshold in any one year. A partial VAT Exemption calculation can be done to ensure that VAT is not lost when considering works to the building. The Clerk recommended revisiting

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the works discussed at the last meeting and suggested that a programme of works is developed.

She also advised members that she'd received confirmation from Shropshire Council that the Neighbourhood Funds could be spent on the Town Hall.

The draft budget was 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.

An EMR for £21,612 was budgeted for from the reserves to cover year 2 of the 5 year street light maintenance programme. The first stage of the programme will be completed prior to March 2026 and will also be paid from general reserves.

£10,000 was included in the budget for jointly owned property for the boathouse repairs.

At the previous meeting it had been agreed to purchase a new Mayoral Chain, however in order to keep the increase in precept request to a minimal it was agreed to defer this purchase for the 2026/2027 financial year.

After much deliberation it was agreed to recommend to full council that £105,000 be used from EMR, (£25,000 from the Town Hall Capital Fund, £80,000 from Neighbourhood Fund EMR) to fund the improvement works at the Town Hall which will improve the energy efficiency and extend the life of the Town Hall for community use. The works that will be staggered prioritising the offices, main hall and small hall windows, sills and lintels, where the budget will allow.

If the recommendation for full council to approve the draft budget was made, it would mean that a precept request for £331,323 would be need to be submitted to Shropshire Council which would see a 2026/2027 balanced income and expenditure budget of £405,284 with an additional £126,612 to be spent from reserves (£105,000 to be spent from EMR reserves an additional £21,612 to be ear marked from the general reserves).

This would mean an increase of 19 pence a week to a Band D property equating to a 5% increase to the Band D Council Tax charge.

It was moved by Cllr P Goulbourne, seconded by Cllr A Wignall and

RESOLVED: recommend to full council that they approve the 2026/2027 draft budget and submit a precept request of £331,323 for the 2026/2027 Financial Year.

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FURTHER RESOLVED: to recommend that £80,000 from the Neighbourhood Fund EMR and £25,000 from the Town Hall Capital EMR for works to the Town Hall and offices.

FURTHER RESOLVED: to recommend that £21,612 be Ear Marked from the general reserves for the street lighting maintenance programme.

Meeting Closed 8pm.

Chair ……

Date ……..

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