

**Minutes of the meeting of the
FINANCE COMMITTEE
held on Monday 10th October at 7:00pm
at the Rochford Day Centre, 33a Back Lane, Rochford**

Councillors present: Mrs L Dalby, R Gardner, Mrs L Massey, S May, R Patient, M Vallance & Mrs M Weir.

- F 22/1 To elect a Chairman for the civic year 2022-23:**
Cllr R Patient nominated Cllr S May as Chairman which was seconded by Cllr M Vallance. Cllr Mrs L Dalby nominated R Gardner. There was no seconder and Cllr S May was elected Chairman.
- F 22/2 To elect a Vice Chairman for the civic year 2022-23:**
Cllr M May nominated Cllr M Vallance which was seconded by Cllr Mrs L Massey. There were no further nominations and Cllr M Vallance was elected Vice-Chairman.
- F 22/3 Receive apologies for absence:**
No apologies were received.
- F 22/4 Declarations of any:**
a) **Disclosable Pecuniary Interest;**
b) **Other Pecuniary Interest; or**
c) **Non-Pecuniary Interest**
on any matter on the agenda for 10th October 2022:
No declarations were made.
- F 22/5 Public Forum:**
No members of the public were present.
- F 22/6 Approve Minutes of the meeting held on the 4th April 2022 and to approve the destruction of the notes in respect of that meeting:**
It was **resolved** that the minutes from the meeting held on 4th April 2022 were approved as a correct record and Members agreed to the destruction of the notes in respect of that meeting.
- F 22/7 Action Update List (October 2022):**
22/7.1 The Clerk explained that the delay in setting up the online bank transfers was partly due to being busy in the office along with the fact assistance was needed to set up the payments. The process was not easy, and the Clerk had asked for Council's Account Manager to come in to assist but they had declined and advised the Clerk to visit a Metro Bank store. That would mean having to wait in-store as they did not arrange appointments which was not practical when the office was continually busy. Members gave their views on setting up payments via online banking systems, but the Clerk pointed out the online account was a business account with different functionalities than that of a personal online banking platform. The Clerk would persevere to get the matter resolved.
22/7.2 Members were referred to agenda item 11. (Minute F 22/11)
22/7.3 The petty cash issue had been resolved. Members agreed to close the item.

It was **resolved** that Members accepted the Action List update and agreed to the removal of closed items

F 22/8 Financial Report – September 2022

Members were disappointed at the ongoing cost for criminal damage. The Clerk reminded Members there had been contact with one of the parents of the offender who had destroyed the toddlers' swing in Magnolia Park playground, but they had failed to reimburse Council, despite claiming they would do so.

There were no questions, and it was **resolved** that Members accepted the Financial Report.

F 22/9 New cheque signatories required:

It was **agreed** Cllrs Mrs L Massey and M Vallance would become cheque signatories. The Clerk informed them it would be likely they would need to visit Metro Bank.

F 22/10 Notice of completion of external audit for 2021-22; no matters arising:

Members noted the information.

F 22/11 Hawkwell Village Hall (HVH) – Council's historic financial contributions to HVH:

Members noted the Clerk's report which contained information dating back to 1994. The Clerk and Cllr Mrs Massey had visited the Essex Records Office to obtain all the information. No evidence of a formal agreement with HVH had been found, but the history of multiple donations and grants to HVH spanning 30 years had been recorded. It was noted a nominal rent had been established from when the annex had been built and that the rental cost for Council had increased slightly over the years, with the largest increases seen over recent years. Members discussed Council's maintenance of the office and noted that the HVH had not paid for any maintenance costs and did not provide many facilities for the office. There had been indications HVH were looking for a commercial rent, but Members pointed out the HVH was a non-profit entity and therefore commercial costs were not permissible. Members discussed the noise issues for the office and felt it was admirable the staff were able to work through that, noting it would not be an ideal environment for a lot of businesses. Members agreed it would be prudent to understand more what HVH were hoping for in respect of Council's rent before making any decisions or putting forward any proposals.

F 22/12 Notice of commencement of internal audit 2022-23:

a) Chair of Council to undertake petty cash reconciliation: The Clerk explained this was a new requirement given the internal auditor no longer visited the office and performed the audit remotely. The change did not factor in the time it took the office staff to scan all the information and send it to the auditor; it was noted there had been no reduction in service costs to reflect the office's time.

b) Chair of Council to undertake Q2 financial reconciliation: The information was noted.

F 22/13 Grant applications –

a) Ashingdon and East Hawkwell Memorial Hall (AEHMH): Members discussed the application and learned the room being renovated would be for multiple uses. A Member raised concerns about the historic issues at the hall and the Clerk explained that a lot of the issues seemed to have been resolved and the hall running was being turned around with many improvements underway. Members still had concerns about the responsibilities of being a representative/trustee.

Cllr Mrs M Weir proposed the hall be given £1k towards the flooring of the 'room of requirement'. This was seconded by Cllr M Vallance with all in favour.

- b) Essex Air Ambulance:** Members agreed the air ambulance was a worthy cause. Cllr R Patient proposed £500 be donated to the Essex Air Ambulance. This was seconded by Cllr M Vallance with all in favour.

F 21/14 Summary of Decisions:

- Cllr S May elected Chairman for 2022-23.
- Cllr M Vallance elected Vice-Chair for 2022-23.
- Cllrs Mrs L Massey & M Vallance to become cheque signatories.
- External audit for 2021-22 completed; no matters arising.
- Information on donations/grants given to HVH noted; Members to await further information from HVH about their intentions.
- Chairman M Strubel to undertake petty cash and Q2 financial reconciliations.
- Grant of £1k awarded to AEHMH.
- Donation of £500 be given to Essex Air Ambulance.

The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 7:31pm

Chairman