

Finance & Governance Committee

Present: Cllrs Chapman (Deputy Chair), Collins, Cooper-Marsh (Chair), Goodman, Hitchin, and Pitt.

Absent: Cllrs Banks, Kumar and Maslen

In attendance: Deputy Town Clerk & Responsible Finance Officer

Minutes of the meeting of the **Finance & Governance committee** held on **Tuesday 22nd April 2025** at **7.15pm** in the Eaton's Centre, The Maltings, St Neots, PE19 8ES.

Public Participation

There were no members of the public present.

ACTIONS

140 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Cllrs Banks and Maslen.

Admin

141 Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were made.

142 Minutes

i) **RESOLVED** to approve the minutes of the Finance & Governance Committee held on 18th February 2025 which were previously deferred as a true and accurate record with an amendment to include the wording "subject to the renewal of the building lease" under item 121.

ii) **RESOLVED** to approve the minutes of the Finance & Governance Committee held on 18th March 2025 as a true and accurate record.

143 Payments

Members received and noted payments for February 2025.

144 Solar Panels for St Neots Museum

Members received and considered a recommendation and preferred quotation from the Operations and Amenities Committee on the installation of Solar Panels at St Neots Museum.

RESOLVED to RECOMMEND that the Council installs solar panels at the St Neots Museum building and that the Council funds the cost of the panels and battery.

RESOLVED to RECOMMEND that company B's quotation is recommended as the preferred company at a cost of £10,509.18.

RESOLVED to RECOMMEND that the Council allocates £10,509.18 from the Community Buildings earmarked reserve for the installation of solar panels and a battery at St Neots Museum.



145 Heating Systems for Gate Lodge and SVDK Building A (Man Cave)

Members received and considered recommendations and preferred quotations from the Operations and Amenities Committee on the installation of new heating systems at:

- i) Gate Lodge
- ii) SVDK Building A (Man Cave)

RESOLVED to RECOMMEND that the Council moves forward with the installation of the recommended new heating system at Gate lodge and that Company C is selected as the preferred quotation at a cost of £5,783.50.

RESOLVED to RECOMMEND that the Council moves forward with the installation of the recommended new heating system at the Steve van de Kerkhove Community Building and that Company C is selected as the preferred quotation at a cost of £4,071.00

RESOLVED to RECOMMEND that the allocation of £9,854.50 from the Community Buildings earmarked reserve which was established to help manage maintenance and investment in Town Council owned buildings.

146 Air Source Heat Pump at Eatons Community Centre

Members received and considered a recommendation, with an accompanying report and quotes/estimates from the Environmental Project Officer on the installation of an Air Source Heat Pump at Eatons Community Centre.

RESOLVED to RECOMMEND that the Council progresses the installation of an Air Source Heat Pump at the Eatons Community Centre with Company A agreed as the preferred contractor at an estimated cost of £23,634.54. That the Council allocates up to £25,000.00 from the Community Buildings earmarked reserve for the work. That officers work with the appointment company to submit a planning application for the installation of a heat pump.

147 Internal Audit Report

- i) Members received and noted the 2024-25 second interim internal audit report following an inspection in March 2025.
- ii) Members received and considered an action list in response to recommendations arising from the internal audit report. Members reviewed the comments/responses to the actions, referring to the Priory Centre website which was referenced in the internal audit recommendations.

Members noted the actions list and **RESOLVED** that the General Manager for the Priory and Eatons Centres provides an update on the recommendations raised by the auditors and the completion of associated actions at the next committee meeting.

- iii) Members received and considered a report from the Responsible Financial Officer on the independence and scope of the Internal Auditor.



RESOLVED that the Council agrees to continue the engagement of Auditing Solutions Ltd for a further year (2025/2026) to provide internal audit services for St Neots Town Council. That the company's engagement continues on a rolling annual basis following the 3-year initial agreement which expired on 31st March 2025.

148 Council Risk Assessment

Members received, considered and recommended for approval the Council risk assessment. Members discussed staff data protection training and Cyber Security for Councillors, agreeing to discuss these matters further with the Town Clerk and return to them in due course.

RESOLVED to RECOMMEND that the Council re-adopts the Council Financial Risk Assessment as reviewed by the Finance and Governance Committee on 22nd April 2025.

149 Date of Next Meeting

Members noted that the date of the next scheduled Finance and Governance Committee meeting would be 13th May 2025 at 7:15pm.

150 Confidential

RESOLVED that in terms of Schedule 12a of the Local Government Act 1972, the following items will be likely to disclose exempt information relating to establishment and contractual matters and it is, therefore, **RECOMMENDED** that pursuant to the provisions of the Public Bodies (admissions to Meetings) Act 1960 the public and press be excluded.

151 Operations Depot Lease

Members received and authorised the Town Clerk to sign Heads of Terms from Huntingdonshire District Council for a renewed lease for the Operations Depot located at 12 Levellers Lane, Eynesbury.

RESOLVED to authorise the Town Clerk to sign the Heads of Terms from Huntingdonshire District Council and to negotiate a renewed lease for the Operations Depot located at 12 Levellers Lane, Eynesbury.

152 Gate Lodge Lease Renewal

Members received and considered a recommendation from the Operations and Amenities Committee to offer early lease negotiations with a commercial tenant, as part of exploring the installation of solar panels on the building.

RESOLVED that the Council does not proceed with the installation of solar panels on the Gate Lodge building at this time but instead offers to enter into early lease renewal discussions with the tenant. These discussions should explore options to encourage the installation of solar panels with revised rent terms to ensure any investment is recouped by the Council.

RESOLVED that the Town Clerk be authorised to hold initial discussions with the tenant and report back to this Committee.



153 Trade Debtors

Members received and considered a report and recommendation from the Responsible Financial Officer on irrecoverable debtors.

RESOLVED that the Council write off the irrecoverable debts as listed in Appendix A.

RESOLVED that the Council write off the irrecoverable debts as listed in Appendix B.

RESOLVED that the Council defer write off of the outstanding credit payments as listed in Appendix B.

COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSON

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