

Councillors are hereby summoned, and members of the public and press are invited, to attend a meeting of the **Full Council** to be held on **Monday 18 December 2023**, following a meeting of the Planning & Highways Committee, in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Market Square, Crewkerne.

**Note:**

- **Members of the public who wish to view the meeting proceedings, either in real time or afterwards, can access the meeting through the following link:**  
<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCTA9K-7L4Onjcli2Gtz7tCg>

K. Sheehan, Town Clerk (signed on original)  
12 December 2023

# Agenda

**Open Forum:** Questions may be put to the Council in person during this Public Participation Session of up to 15 minutes and a maximum of 3 minutes per person. Issues notified to the Clerk a minimum of 3 working days before the meeting (i.e., by 5pm on the preceding Wednesday) will receive a response during this session. Issues raised in this session without prior notice may be referred to the Clerk to respond to within 10 working days or listed on a subsequent agenda.

1. **To note apologies for absence.**
2. **Declarations of interest** in items on the agenda.
3. **To confirm the minutes of the Town Council meetings** held on 30 October and 27 November 2023.
4. **To receive reports from the Unitary Councillors and LCN representative.**
5. **Clerk's progress report:** to receive an update report (for information only).
6. **Finance & Procedure:**
  - a. To approve the accounts for payment for December 2023 as listed.
  - b. To report the bank reconciliation for November 2023 has been completed.
  - c. To note that the monthly accounts for the War Memorial Commemoration Trust have been checked.
  - d. To note the report of the internal auditor and clarify that the accounts for payment for August 2023 were approved at the September 2023 Full Council meeting (as per report recommendation).
  - e. To consider adopting minor amendments to Standing Orders.
  - f. To consider adopting minor amendments to Financial Regulations.
7. **Meeting dates January 2024:** to note changes to scheduled meetings in January 2024.
8. **Somerset Council services and assets:** to note initial feedback from CTC survey on priorities in Crewkerne.

- 9. Bincombe Beeches nature trail:** to resolve to apply for Wellbeing funding for updated nature trail artwork, leaflets and interpretation boards at Bincombe Beeches.
- 10. Open Spaces Management Policy:** to adopt an Open Spaces Management Policy.
- 11. To receive the following minutes and approve any recommendations contained therein:**
- a. Planning & Highways Committee 13 November 2023
  - b. Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group 1 November 2023
  - c. Joint Burial Committee 3 October 2023
  - d. Reports from Town Council representatives to outside bodies
- 12. To receive Matters of Report (for information only).**
- 13. Next meeting:** Monday 29 January 2024 at 18.45, Council Chamber, Town Hall.

*In accordance with the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 s 1(2), to resolve that the press and members of the public be excluded from following items having regard to the confidential issues to be discussed.*

Confidential Session: Exclusion of the Press & Public – Staffing matters.

- 14. Staffing sub-committee:** to receive the minutes of the staffing sub-committee held on 12<sup>th</sup> December 2023 and agree any recommendations contained therein.

Payment Ref	Gross	Vat	Net	Payee	Description
O P Dec 1	£212.21		£212.21	Event Insurance Direct	Public Liability Insurance for Christmas Lighting Up
O P Dec 2	£5.50		£5.50	Singleton A	Chainsaw sharpening for Christmas Trees
O P Dec 3	£21.54	£3.59	£17.95	Elswoods Cleaning Supplies	Grounds paper towel
O P Dec 4	£800.00		£800.00	Simon Stewart	Delivery of newsletter
DD60	£305.27	£14.54	£290.73	British Gas Business	Gas Lodge office 10/10 - 12/11/23
DD33 C.Card	£54.98	£9.16	£45.82	Jacksons Nurseries	Tree for Cemetery
DD22	£8.14	£0.39	£7.75	British Gas Business	Gas Victoria Hall 17/10 - 17/11/23
DD33 C.Card	£10.00		£10.00	The Menderns	Keys for GRC
DD44	£449.02		£449.02	Everflow	Water Rates Dec 23
DD59	£970.25	£161.71	£808.54	British Gas Business	Gas GRC 14/9 - 15/11/23
DD30	-£441.23	-£21.01	-£420.22	British Gas Business	Electricity Public toilets CREDIT 22/7 - 23/10/23
DD30	£229.42	£10.92	£218.50	British Gas Business	Electricity 22/7 - 19/11/23
DD48	-£221.65	-£10.55	-£211.10	British Gas Business	Electricity Lodge office CREDIT 14/4 - 15/10/23
DD48	£120.20	£5.72	£114.48	British Gas Business	Electricity Lodge Office 14/4 - 12/11/23
O P Dec 5	£66.08	£11.01	£55.07	Iris Business Software Ltd	Payroll software remote hosting Dec 23
O P Dec 6	£1,530.17		£1,530.17	Active Learning & Skills	Provision of Youth Services Nov 23
O P Dec 7	£450.00	£75.00	£375.00	Altegra Integrated Solutions Ltd	Hire of cherry picker for Christmas light installation
O P Dec 8	£300.00	£50.00	£250.00	Groves Nurseries	Bulbs for Pill Box area
O P Dec 9	£365.64	£60.94	£304.70	Ricoh Uk Ltd	Photocopier/printer hire Nov - Jan
O P Dec 10	£702.00	£117.00	£585.00	Prosound Solutions (SW) Limited	Stage for Lighting up event - balance
O P Dec 11	£6,421.93		£6,421.93	SCC Pension Fund	Pension Contributions Nov 23
O P Dec 12	£6,811.71		£6,811.71	HM Revenue & Customs	Tax & NI Contributions Nov 23
O P Dec 13	£28.00		£28.00	Dash, L	Refund of deposit for Victoria Hall
O P Dec 14	£10.00		£10.00	Elson,L	Refund for Christmas market stall
DD21	£138.19	£6.58	£131.61	British Gas Business	Electricity Happy Valley Floodlights 18/10 - 18/11/23
DD17b	£11.80	£0.56	£11.24	Edf Energy 1 Ltd	Electricity Street Lighting Henhayes 22/10/- 20/11/23
DD17c	£13.27	£0.63	£12.64	Edf Energy 1 Ltd	Electricity Street Lighting Middle Path 22/10 - 20/11/23
DD58	£1,018.48		£1,018.48	Water2Business	GRC Water rates 10/6 - 14/11/23
DD33 C.Card	£289.00	£48.17	£240.83	Amazon Marketplace	Dehumidifier Town Clerk's office
DD13	£1,704.97		£1,704.97	Aviva Credit Services UK Ltd	Insurance Dec 23
DD51	£649.00		£649.00	Somerset Council	Rates GRC Dec 23
DD20	£309.00		£309.00	Somerset Council	Rates Cemetery Chapel/Workshop Dec 23
DD2	£1,234.00		£1,234.00	Somerset Council	Rates Town Hall/Victoria Hall Dec 23
DD55	£1,277.75		£1,277.75	Somerset Council	Rates Lodge office Dec 23
DD6	£112.79	£18.80	£93.99	Phs Group Plc	Public Toilets sanitary disposal 29/11 - 12/4/23
DD23	£340.70	£16.22	£324.48	British Gas Business	Electricity Town Hall 20/10 - 20/11/23
DD26	£224.13	£10.67	£213.46	British Gas Business	Gas Town Hall 27/10 - 29/11/23
DD49	£83.80	£13.97	£69.83	The Business	Fuel Nov 23
DD57	£243.55	£40.59	£202.96	British Telecom	Lodge office/GRC Telephone & Broadband Dec 23
DD6	£62.83	£10.47	£52.36	Phs Group Plc	Public Toilets sharps bin disposal
DD6	£23.47	£3.91	£19.56	Phs Group Plc	Public Toilets sharps bin replacement
DD46	£136.80	£22.80	£114.00	Somerset Web Services Ltd	Email hosting Dec 23
DD42	£16.15	£0.77	£15.38	British Gas Business	Electricity Workshop 30/10 - 28/11/23
DD47	£47.16	£7.86	£39.30	Biffa	Grounds Skip rental Nov 23
O P Dec 15	£52.19	£7.50	£44.69	Sheehan, Katharine	Land registry documents for GRC
O P Dec 16	£95.00		£95.00	Steve Carpenter	Presenter for Christmas Lighting up
O P Dec 17	£60.00		£60.00	JAF Yeovil Ltd	First Aid provision for Christmas Lighting up
O P Dec 18	£187.20	£31.20	£156.00	CIA Fire & Security Ltd	Tennis Court smart access gate subscription
O P Dec 19	£103.80	£17.30	£86.50	Sovereign Fire & Security	GRC Intruder/Fire alarm/CCTV maintenance Jan 24
O P Dec 20	£15.00		£15.00	Somerset PFA	Playing Fields Association membership 1/12/23 - 30/11/24
O P Dec 21	£744.00	£124.00	£620.00	Fern Garden Tree Services	Cemetery grass cutting October & November 23
O P Dec 22	£1,000.00		£1,000.00	M C Commercial Cleaning	Cleaning Nov 23
O P Dec 22	£65.00		£65.00	M C Commercial Cleaning	GRC Cleaning Nov 23
O P Dec 23	£288.00	£48.00	£240.00	Stone's The Monumental Masons	Repair of broken Cemetery memorial
O P Dec 24	£87.78	£14.63	£73.15	Prism	Desk diaries/Paper towels
O P Dec 25	£150.00		£150.00	Bilbys	Food for Christmas tree volunteers/Vouchers LIC volunteers
O P Dec 26	£51.00	£8.50	£42.50	Allen Computer Services	Printer cartridges

DD43	£15.73		£15.73	Lloyds Bank	Bank charges Nov 23
O P Dec 27	£33.04	£5.51	£27.53	Bradfords	Screws
O P Dec 27	£344.45	£57.41	£287.04	Bradfords	Loft insulation Lodge Office
O P Dec 27	£24.95	£4.16	£20.79	Bradfords	Grounds PPE
O P Dec 28	£375.00		£375.00	Society Of Local Council Clerks	Staff training
O P Dec 29	£181.00	£30.16	£150.84	Allen Computer Services	Resiting of office PC
O P Dec 30	£406.15	£67.69	£338.46	Darkin Miller Ltd	Internal Audit fees 2023/24 1st visit
O P Dec 31	£2,140.25	£356.71	£1,783.54	Bradsons	Road closure signage for Christmas Lightng Up
O P Dec 32	£63.25	£10.54	£52.71	Yarcombe Woodland Products Ltd	Materials for Henhayes fence repair
O P Dec 32	£147.28	£24.55	£122.73	Yarcombe Woodland Products Ltd	Materials for Henhayes fence repair
O P Dec 32	£1,008.00	£168.00	£840.00	Yarcombe Woodland Products Ltd	Town Christmas trees
O P Dec 32	£336.00	£56.00	£280.00	Yarcombe Woodland Products Ltd	Large Christmas Tree
O P Dec 32	£23.66	£3.94	£19.72	Yarcombe Woodland Products Ltd	Postmix
DD31	£7.77	£1.29	£6.48	Iris Business Software Ltd	Payroll payslips software Nov 23
DD9	£61.98	£10.33	£51.65	Southern Communications	Mobile phone charges Dec 23
DD50	£1,215.40	£202.56	£1,012.84	British Gas Business	Electricity GRC Nov 23
DD33 C.Card	£7.99	£1.33	£6.66	Amazon Marketplace	Mobile phone case
DD33 C.Card	£33.52	£5.60	£27.92	Amazon Marketplace	Handwash
DD33 C.Card	£15.00		£15.00	The Menders	Keys for GRC
DD52	£276.43	£46.07	£230.36	Gamma Business Communications Lt	Telephone & broadband Dec 23
O P Dec 33	£3,532.70	£588.78	£2,943.92	Boilerman Ltd	GRC new water calorifier
O P Dec 33	£120.92	£20.15	£100.77	Boilerman Ltd	Town Hall toilet repair
O P Dec 34	£85.80	£14.30	£71.50	Parker Bell	PAT tester recalibration
	£12,768.75		£12,768.75	Salaries	Dec-23
Total	£53,270.01	£2,616.63	£50,653.38		

<b>CREWKERNE TOWN COUNCIL</b> <b>BANK RECONCILIATION AS AT 30/11/2023</b>			
	Cash in Hand 01/04/2023 ADD Receipts 01/04/2023 - 30/11/2023 SUBTRACT Payments 01/04/2023 - 30/11/2023		£353,547.28  £595,136.16  £401,867.05
<b>A</b>	<b>CASH IN HAND 30/11/23</b> (per Cash Book)		<b>£546,816.39</b>
	Cash in Hand per Bank Statements 30th November 2023  LLOYDS - Business Call Account LLOYDS - Current Account LLOYDS - Burial Account  Less unrepresented cheques   Plus unrepresented receipts	£389,223.90 £50,000.00 £107,592.49          £0.00	£546,816.39          £0.00
<b>B</b>	<b>ADJUSTED BANK BALANCE</b>  <b>A = B Checks out OK</b>   Town Clerk: ..... Date: .....   Checked by: ..... Date: .....		<b>£546,816.39</b>

<b>CREWKERNE TOWN COUNCIL WAR MEMORIAL          COMMEMORATION TRUST RECREATION GROUND          BANK RECONCILIATION AS AT 30/11/2023</b>			
<b>A</b>	Cash in Hand 01/04/2023		£0.00
	ADD		
	Receipts 01/04/2023 - 30/11/2023		£2,966.44
	SUBTRACT		
	Payments 01/04/2023 - 30/11/2023		£51.39
	<b>CASH IN HAND 30/11/23</b>		<b>£2,915.05</b>
	(per Cash Book)		
<b>B</b>	Cash in Hand per Bank Statements 30th November 2023		
	LLOYDS - Instant Access Account	£2,614.74	
	LLOYDS - Current Account	£300.31	
			£2,915.05
	Less unpresented cheques		
			£0.00
	Plus unpresented receipts		
	<b>ADJUSTED BANK BALANCE</b>		<b>£2,915.05</b>
	<b>A = B Checks out OK</b>		
	Town Clerk: .....		
	Date: .....		
	Checked by: .....		
	Date: .....		



FINAL

Internal audit report 2023/24

Visit 1 of 2

# CREWKERNE TOWN COUNCIL

Date: 5<sup>th</sup> December 2023

Report author: R Darkin-Miller  
Email: [r.darkin@darkinmiller.co.uk](mailto:r.darkin@darkinmiller.co.uk)

## **Introduction**

This report contains a note of the audit recommendations made to Crewkerne Town Council following the carrying out of internal audit testing on site on the 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2023.

The audit work has been carried out in accordance with Appendix 9 of the 2014 'Governance and Accountability for Local Councils: A Practitioners', as supplemented by the requirements of later AGARs.

An internal audit covers the review of the operation of the Council's internal control environment. It is not designed to review and give full assurance over every transaction carried out by the Council. Instead it enables the auditor, following the sample testing of a number of different types of transaction, to give an opinion as to whether or not the control objectives are being achieved across a range of financial and governance systems.

## **Audit Opinion**

As this audit report is an interim one, no audit opinion is offered at this stage.

The report issued after the final visit for 2023/24 (which will be in May or June 2024) will contain the audit opinion.

The following areas were reviewed during this audit visit:

1. Proper Book-keeping
2. Payments
3. Risk Management
4. Petty Cash (confirmed n/a)
5. Payroll
6. Exemption (confirmed not covered)
7. Public Rights
8. Publication



## Audit Recommendations

Recommendations made during the audit are shown in appendix one to this report. Recommendations are graded as follows:

Rating	Significance
High	Either a critical business risk is not being adequately addressed or there is substantial non-conformity with regulations and accepted standards.
Medium	Either a key business risk is not being adequately addressed or there is a degree of non-conformity with regulations and accepted standards.
Low	Either minor non-conformity with procedure or opportunity to improve working practices further.

The number of recommendations made at this audit visit and their priority are summarised in the following table:

Rating	Number
High	0
Medium	0
Low	2
TOTAL	2

I would like to thank Katharine Sheehan, Town Clerk RFO; and Paula Hewitt, Finance Officer for their assistance during this audit.

**Darkin Miller ~ Chartered Accountants**  
**2023/24 INTERNAL AUDIT OF CREWKERNE TOWN COUNCIL**  
**FINAL REPORT VISIT 1 OF 2: 5<sup>th</sup> DECEMBER 2023**

**Appendix 1 – Recommendations and Action Plan**

Recommendation number	Detail	Priority (Low/ Medium/ High)	Management Response	Responsible Officer	Due Date
2.1 – Amend minutes to record approval of August 2023 payments list	<p>I checked to see that a sample of payments in the cashbook were supported by invoices, authorised and minuted. I found that all invoices were in place to support all payments, and that all had been authorised and minuted, but that the September 2023 minutes do not record the approval of the August 2023 payments list in error.</p> <p>I recommend that the minutes are amended in order to ensure that they are an approved record of Council business and decisions.</p>	L	Have added an item to the next Full Council agenda to note that these were approved in the September 2023 meeting.		
3.1 – Check cover for Store and Welfare Offices	<p>I checked to see that the Council's insurance cover was appropriate and adequate. I found that cover had been increased for Council properties based on a recent revaluation exercise, but that the value for the Store and Welfare Offices (former Lodge) appeared to be based on the gross rebuild value (including VAT) where other assets were based on the net value.</p> <p>I recommend that the Council checks that the level of cover is appropriate.</p>	L	We will follow up with the insurer to check that the latest revaluation figures for Council property have been used consistently.		



# Crewkerne

## Town Council

**Crewkerne Town Council**

**Standing Orders**

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Note: Text in **bold** may not be suspended as these are statutory in origin.

## 1. Rules of debate at meetings

- a Motions on the agenda shall be considered in the order that they appear unless the order is changed at the discretion of the chairman of the meeting.
- b A motion (including an amendment) shall not be progressed unless it has been moved and seconded.
- c A motion on the agenda that is not moved by its proposer may be treated by the chairman of the meeting as withdrawn.
- d If a motion (including an amendment) has been seconded, it may be withdrawn by the proposer only with the consent of the seconder and the meeting.
- e An amendment is a proposal to remove or add words to a motion. It shall not negate the motion.
- f If an amendment to the original motion is carried, the original motion, as amended, becomes the substantive motion upon which further amendment(s) may be moved.
- g An amendment shall not be considered unless early verbal notice of it is given at the meeting and, if requested by the chairman of the meeting, is expressed in writing to the chairman.
- h A councillor may move an amendment to his/her own motion if agreed by the meeting. If a motion has already been seconded, the amendment shall be with the consent of the seconder and the meeting.
- i If there is more than one amendment to an original or substantive motion, the amendments shall be moved in the order directed by the chairman.
- j Subject to standing order 1(k) below, only one amendment shall be moved and debated at a time, the order of which shall be directed by the chairman of the meeting.
- k One or more amendments may be discussed together if the chairman of the meeting considers this expedient but each amendment shall be voted upon separately.
- l A councillor may not move more than one amendment to an original or substantive motion.
- m The mover of an amendment has no right of reply at the end of debate on it.
- n Where a series of amendments to an original motion are carried, the mover of the original motion shall have a right of reply either at the end of debate of the first amendment or at the very end of debate on the final substantive motion immediately before it is put to the vote.
- o Unless permitted by the chairman of the meeting, a councillor may speak once in the debate on a motion except:

- i. to speak on an amendment moved by another councillor;
  - ii. to move or speak on another amendment if the motion has been amended since he/she last spoke;
  - iii. to make a point of order;
  - iv. to give a personal explanation; or
  - v. in exercise of a right of reply.
- p During the debate of a motion, a councillor may interrupt only on a point of order or a personal explanation and the councillor who was interrupted shall stop speaking. A councillor raising a point of order shall identify the standing order which he/she considers has been breached or specify the other irregularity in the proceedings of the meeting he/she is concerned by.
- q A point of order shall be decided by the chairman of the meeting and his/her decision shall be final.
- r When a motion is under debate, no other motion shall be moved except:
- i. to amend the motion;
  - ii. to proceed to the next business;
  - iii. to adjourn the debate;
  - iv. to put the motion to a vote;
  - v. to ask a person to be no longer heard or to leave the meeting;
  - vi. to refer a motion to a committee or sub-committee for consideration;
  - vii. to exclude the public and press;
  - viii. to adjourn the meeting; or
  - ix. to suspend particular standing order(s) excepting those which reflect mandatory statutory requirements.
- s Before an original or substantive motion is put to the vote, the chairman of the meeting shall be satisfied that the motion has been sufficiently debated and that the mover of the motion under debate has exercised or waived his/her right of reply.
- t Excluding motions moved under standing order 1(r) above, the contributions or speeches by a councillor shall relate only to the motion under discussion and shall not exceed 3 minutes without the consent of the chairman of the meeting.

## **2. Disorderly conduct at meetings**

- a No person shall obstruct the transaction of business at a meeting or behave offensively or improperly. If this standing order is ignored, the chairman of the meeting shall request such person(s) to moderate or improve their conduct.
- b If person(s) disregard the request of the chairman of the meeting to moderate or improve their conduct, any councillor or the chairman of the meeting may move that the person be no longer heard or excluded from the meeting. The motion, if seconded, shall be put to the vote without discussion.
- c If a resolution made under standing order 2(b) above is ignored, the chairman of the

meeting may take further reasonable steps to restore order or to progress the meeting. This may include temporarily suspending or closing the meeting.

### 3. Meetings generally

Full Council meetings ●

Committee meetings ●

Sub-committee meetings ●

- a ● **Meetings shall not take place in premises which at the time of the meeting are used for the supply of alcohol, unless no other premises are available free of charge or at a reasonable cost.**
- b ● **The minimum three clear days for notice of a meeting does not include the day on which notice was issued, the day of the meeting, a Sunday, a day of the Christmas break, a day of the Easter break or of a bank holiday or a day appointed for public thanksgiving or mourning.**
- c ● **The minimum three clear days' public notice for a meeting does not include the day on which the notice was issued or the day of the meeting unless the meeting is convened at shorter notice.**
- d ●● **Meetings shall be open to the public unless their presence is prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted or for other special reasons. The public's exclusion from part or all of a meeting shall be by a resolution which shall give reasons for the public's exclusion.**
- e Members of the public may make representations, answer questions and give evidence at a meeting which they are entitled to attend in respect of any matter affecting Crewkerne.
- f Members of the public wishing to address the meeting will be asked to complete a contact details form prior to the start of the meeting. At the start of the public participation period the chairman of the meeting shall ask members to introduce themselves to the meeting, stating their names and organisations represented.
- g The period of time designated for public participation at a meeting in accordance with standing order 3(e) above shall not exceed 15 minutes unless directed by the chairman of the meeting.
- h Subject to standing order 3(g) above, a member of the public shall not speak for more than 3 minutes.
- i In accordance with standing order 3(e) above, a question shall not require a response at the meeting nor start a debate on the question. The chairman of the meeting may direct that a written or oral response be given.
- j A person shall raise his/her hand when requesting to speak but is not required to stand when speaking unless requested to do so by the Chairman.




- k A person who speaks at a meeting shall direct his/her comments to the chairman of the meeting. When a meeting is being recorded or streamed, the chairman should ask all participants, including councillors to speak clearly towards microphones provided. Councillors and members of Town Council staff in attendance will be provided with a name plate for use in meetings.
- l Only one person is permitted to speak at a time. If more than one person wants to speak, the chairman of the meeting shall direct the order of speaking.
- m Footage of council meetings will be made available on the Council's YouTube channel until such time as the minutes of each meeting are formally agreed and signed by the chairman of the meeting in question. Recordings will then be removed.
- n **●● Members of the press or public must not orally report or comment about a meeting as it takes place if he/she is present at the meeting of the council or its committees but otherwise may:**
  - i. **Film, photograph or make an audio recording of a meeting**
  - ii. **Use any other means for enabling persons not present to see or hear proceedings at a meeting as it takes place or later**
  - iii. **Report or comment on the proceedings in writing during or after a meeting or orally report or comment after the meeting.**

in accordance with Crewkerne Town Council's policy on audio/visual recording at Council meetings.

- o **●● The press shall be provided with reasonable facilities for the taking of their report of all or part of a meeting at which they are entitled to be present.**
- p **● Subject to standing orders which indicate otherwise, anything authorised or required to be done by, to or before the Chairman of the Council may in his/her absence be done by, to or before the Vice-Chairman of the Council.**
- q **● The Chairman, if present, shall preside at a meeting. If the Chairman is absent from a meeting, the Vice-Chairman, if present, shall preside. If both the Chairman and the Vice-Chairman are absent from a meeting, a councillor as chosen by the councillors present at the meeting shall preside at the meeting.**
- r **●●● Subject to a meeting being quorate, all questions at a meeting shall be decided by a majority of the councillors or councillors with voting rights present and voting.**
- s **●●● The chairman of a meeting may give an original vote on any matter put to the vote, and in the case of an equality of votes may exercise his/her casting vote whether or not he/she gave an original vote.**
- t **● Unless standing orders provide otherwise, voting on a question shall be by a show of hands. At the request of a councillor, the voting on any question shall be recorded so as to show whether each councillor present and voting gave his/her vote for or against that question. Such a request shall be made before moving on to the next item of business on**



the agenda.

- u The minutes of a meeting shall include an accurate record of the following:
  - i. the time and place of the meeting;
  - ii. the names of councillors present and absent;
  - iii. interests that have been declared by councillors;
  - iv. whether a councillor left the meeting when matters that they held interests in were being considered;
  - v. if there was a public participation session; and
  - vi. the resolutions made.
- v  **A councillor who has a disclosable pecuniary interest or another interest as set out in the council's code of conduct in a matter being considered at a meeting is subject to statutory limitations or restrictions under the code on his/her right to participate and vote on that matter** (see 13 below).
- w  **No business may be transacted at a meeting unless at least one-third of the whole number of members of the council are present and in no case shall the quorum of a meeting be less than three.** *See standing order 4d(viii) below for the quorum of a committee or sub-committee meeting.*
- x  **If a meeting is or becomes inquorate no business shall be transacted** and the meeting shall be closed. The business on the agenda for the meeting shall be adjourned to another meeting.
- y A meeting shall not exceed a period of 2 1/2 hours except in a unanimous vote to continue.

#### 4. Committees and sub-committees

- a **Unless the council determines otherwise, a committee may appoint a sub-committee whose terms of reference and members shall be determined by the committee.**
- b **The members of a committee may include non-councillors unless it is a committee which regulates and controls the finances of the council.**
- c **Unless the council determines otherwise, all the members of an advisory committee and a sub-committee of the advisory committee may be non-councillors.**
- d The council may appoint standing committees or other committees as may be necessary, and:
  - i. shall determine their terms of reference;
  - ii. shall determine the number and time of the ordinary meetings of a standing committee up until the date of the next annual meeting of full council;
  - iii. shall permit a committee, other than in respect of the ordinary meetings of a committee, to determine the number and time of its meetings;
  - iv. shall, subject to standing orders 4(b) and (c) above, appoint and determine the terms of office of members of such a committee;

- v. may, subject to standing orders 4(b) and (c) above, appoint and determine the terms of office of the substitute members to a committee whose role is to replace the ordinary members at a meeting of a committee if the ordinary members of the committee confirm to the Proper Officer 7 days before the meeting that they are unable to attend;
- vi. shall, after it has appointed the members of a standing committee, appoint the chairman of the standing committee;
- vii. shall permit a committee other than a standing committee, to appoint its own chairman at the first meeting of the committee;
- viii. shall determine the place, notice requirements and quorum for a meeting of a committee and a sub-committee which shall be no less than three;
- ix. shall determine if the public may participate at a meeting of a committee;
- x. shall determine if the public and press are permitted to attend the meetings of a sub-committee and also the advance public notice requirements, if any, required for the meetings of a sub-committee;
- xi. shall determine if the public may participate at a meeting of a sub-committee that they are permitted to attend; and
- xii. may dissolve a committee.

## 5. Ordinary council meetings

- a In an election year, the annual meeting of the council shall be held on or within 14 days following the day on which the new councillors elected take office.**
- b In a year which is not an election year, the annual meeting of a council shall be held on such day in May as the council may direct.**
- c If no other time is fixed, the annual meeting of the council shall take place at 6pm.**
- d In addition to the annual meeting of the council, at least three other ordinary meetings shall be held in each year on such dates and times as the council directs.**
- e The first business conducted at the annual meeting of the council shall be the election of the Mayor and Deputy Mayor of the Council.**
- f The Mayor of the Council, unless he/she has resigned or becomes disqualified, shall continue in office and preside at the annual meeting until his/her successor is elected at the next annual meeting of the council.**
- g The Deputy Mayor of the Council, unless he/she resigns or becomes disqualified, shall hold office until immediately after the election of the Mayor of the Council at the next annual meeting of the council.**
- h In an election year, if the current Mayor of the Council has not been re-elected as a member of the council, he/she shall preside at the meeting until a successor Mayor of the Council has been elected. The current Mayor of the Council shall not have an original vote in respect of the election of the new Mayor of the Council but must give a casting vote in the case of an equality of votes.**
- i In an election year, if the current Mayor of the Council has been re-elected as a member of the council, he/she shall preside at the meeting until a new Mayor of the Council has been elected. He/she may exercise an original vote in respect of the election of the new Mayor of the Council and must give a casting vote in the case of an equality of**

**votes.**

- j Following the election of the Mayor of the Council and Deputy Mayor of the Council at the annual meeting of the council, the business of the annual meeting shall include:
- i. **In an election year, delivery by the Mayor of the Council and councillors of their acceptance of office forms unless the council resolves for this to be done at a later date. In a year which is not an election year, delivery by the Mayor of the Council of his/her acceptance of office form unless the council resolves for this to be done at a later date;**
  - ii. Confirmation of the accuracy of the minutes of the last meeting of the council;
  - iii. Receipt of the minutes of the last meeting of a committee;
  - iv. Consideration of the recommendations made by a committee;
  - v. Appointment of members to existing committees;
  - vi. Appointment of any new committees in accordance with standing order 4 above;
  - vii. Review of arrangements, including any charters and agency agreements, with other local authorities and review of contributions made to expenditure incurred by other local authorities;
  - viii. Review of representation on or work with external bodies and arrangements for reporting back;
  - ix. In an election year, to make arrangements with a view to the council remaining eligible to exercise the general power of competence in the future;
  - x. Determining the time and place of ordinary meetings of the full council up to and including the next annual meeting of full council.

## **6. Extraordinary meetings of the council and committees and sub-committees**

- a **The Mayor of the Council may convene an extraordinary meeting of the council at any time.**
- b **If the Mayor of the Council does not or refuses to call an extraordinary meeting of the council within 7 days of having been requested in writing to do so by two councillors, any two councillors may convene an extraordinary meeting of the council. The public notice giving the time, place and agenda for such a meeting must be signed by the two councillors.**
- c The chairman of a committee [or a sub-committee] may convene an extraordinary meeting of the committee [or the sub-committee] at any time.
- d If the chairman of a committee [or a sub-committee] does not or refuses to call an extraordinary meeting within 7 days of having been requested by to do so by 7 councillors, those 7 councillors may convene an extraordinary meeting of a committee [and a sub-committee]. The statutory public notice giving the time, venue and agenda for such a meeting must be signed by the 7 councillors

## **7. Previous resolutions**

- a A resolution shall not be reversed within six months except either by a special motion, which requires written notice by at least 8 councillors to be given to the Proper Officer in accordance with standing order 9 below, or by a motion moved in pursuance of the recommendation of a committee or a sub-committee.
- b When a motion moved pursuant to standing order 7(a) above has been disposed of, no similar motion may be moved within a further six months.

## **8. Voting on appointments**

- a Where more than two persons have been nominated for a position to be filled by the council and none of those persons has received an absolute majority of votes in their favour, the name of the person having the least number of votes shall be struck off the list and a fresh vote taken. This process shall continue until a majority of votes is given in favour of one person. A tie in votes may be settled by the casting vote exercisable by the chairman of the meeting.

## **9. Motions for a meeting that require written notice to be given to the Proper Officer**

- a A motion shall relate to the responsibilities of the meeting which it is tabled for and in any event shall relate to the performance of the council's statutory functions, powers and obligations or an issue which specifically affects the council's area or its residents.
- b No motion may be moved at a meeting unless it is on the agenda and the mover has given written notice of its wording to the Proper Officer at least 10 clear days before the meeting (unless the Chairman and Clerk agree that it may be 6). Clear days do not include the day of the notice or the day of the meeting.
- c The Proper Officer may, before including a motion on the agenda received in accordance with standing order 9(b) above, correct obvious grammatical or typographical errors in the wording of the motion.
- d If the Proper Officer considers the wording of a motion received in accordance with standing order 9(b) above is not clear in meaning, the motion shall be rejected until the mover of the motion resubmits it in writing to the Proper Officer so that it can be understood at least 6 clear days before the meeting.
- e If the wording or subject of a proposed motion is considered improper, the Proper Officer shall consult with the chairman of the forthcoming meeting or, as the case may be, the councillors who have convened the meeting, to consider whether the motion shall be included in the agenda or rejected.

- f Subject to standing order 9(e) above, the decision of the Proper Officer as to whether or not to include the motion on the agenda shall be final.
- g Motions received shall be recorded in a book for that purpose and numbered in the order that they are received.
- h Motions rejected shall be recorded in a book for that purpose with an explanation by the Proper Officer for their rejection.

## **10. Motions at a meeting that do not require written notice**

- a The following motions may be moved at a meeting without written notice to the Proper Officer;
  - i. to correct an inaccuracy in the draft minutes of a meeting;
  - ii. to move to a vote;
  - iii. to defer consideration of a motion;
  - iv. to refer a motion to a particular committee or sub-committee;
  - v. to appoint a person to preside at a meeting;
  - vi. to change the order of business on the agenda;
  - vii. to proceed to the next business on the agenda;
  - viii. to require a written report;
  - ix. to appoint a committee or sub-committee and their members;
  - x. to extend the time limits for speaking;
  - xi. to exclude the press and public from a meeting in respect of confidential or sensitive information which is prejudicial to the public interest;
  - xii. to not hear further from a councillor or a member of the public;
  - xiii. to exclude a councillor or member of the public for disorderly conduct;
  - xiv. to temporarily suspend the meeting;
  - xv. to suspend a particular standing order (unless it reflects mandatory statutory requirements);
  - xvi. to adjourn the meeting; or
  - xvii. to close a meeting.

## **11. Handling confidential or sensitive information**

- a The agenda, papers that support the agenda and the minutes of a meeting shall not disclose or otherwise undermine confidential or sensitive information which for special reasons would not be in the public interest.
- b Councillors and staff shall not disclose confidential or sensitive information which for special reasons would not be in the public interest.

## **12. Draft minutes**

- a If the draft minutes of a preceding meeting have been served on councillors with the

agenda to attend the meeting at which they are due to be approved for accuracy, they shall be taken as read.

- b There shall be no discussion about the draft minutes of a preceding meeting except in relation to their accuracy. A motion to correct an inaccuracy in the draft minutes shall be moved in accordance with standing order 10(a)(i) above.
- c The accuracy of draft minutes, including any amendment(s) made to them, shall be confirmed by resolution and shall be signed by the chairman of the meeting and stand as an accurate record of the meeting to which the minutes relate.
- d If the chairman of the meeting does not consider the minutes to be an accurate record of the meeting to which they relate, he/she shall sign the minutes and include a paragraph in the following terms or to the same effect:  
“The chairman of this meeting does not believe that the minutes of the meeting of the ( ) held on [date] in respect of ( ) were a correct record but his/her view was not upheld by the meeting and the minutes are confirmed as an accurate record of the proceedings.”
- e Upon a resolution which confirms the accuracy of the minutes of a meeting, the draft minutes or recordings of the meeting for which approved minutes exist shall be destroyed.

### 13. Code of conduct and dispensations

*See also standing order 3(t) above.*

- a All councillors and non-councillors with voting rights shall observe the code of conduct adopted by the council.
- b Unless he/she has been granted a dispensation, a councillor or non-councillor with voting rights shall withdraw from a meeting when it is considering a matter in which he/she has a disclosable pecuniary interest. He/she may return to the meeting after it has considered the matter in which he/she had the interest.**
- c Unless he/she has been granted a dispensation, a councillor or non-councillor with voting rights shall withdraw from a meeting when it is considering a matter in which he/she has another interest if so required by the council’s code of conduct. He/she may return to the meeting after it has considered the matter in which he/she had the interest**
- d Dispensation requests shall be in writing and submitted to the Proper Officer** as soon as possible before the meeting, or failing that, at the start of the meeting for which the dispensation is required.
- e A decision as to whether to grant a dispensation shall be made by the Proper Officer and that decision is final.
- f A dispensation request shall confirm:
  - i. the description and the nature of the disclosable pecuniary interest or other interest to



## 15. Proper Officer

- a The Proper Officer shall be either (i) the clerk or (ii) other staff member(s) nominated by the council to undertake the work of the Proper Officer when the Proper Officer is absent.
- b The Proper Officer shall:
- i. **at least three clear days before a meeting of the council, a committee and a sub-committee serve on councillors, by delivery or post at their residences or, by agreement with each councillor, by email, a signed summons confirming the time, place and the agenda.**  
*See standing order 3(b) above for the meaning of clear days for a meeting of a full council and standing order 3 (c) above for a meeting of a committee.*
  - ii. **give public notice of the time, place and agenda at least three clear days before a meeting of the council or a meeting of a committee or a sub-committee (provided that the public notice with agenda of an extraordinary meeting of the council convened by councillors is signed by them);**
  - iii. subject to standing order 9 above, include on the agenda all motions in the order received unless a councillor has given written notice at least 6 days before the meeting confirming his/her withdrawal of it;
  - iv. **convene a meeting of full council for the election of a new Chairman of the Council, occasioned by a casual vacancy in his/her office;**
  - v. facilitate inspection of the minute book by local government electors;
  - vi. **receive and retain copies of byelaws made by other local authorities;**
  - vii. retain acceptance of office forms from councillors;
  - viii. retain a copy of every councillor's register of interests;
  - ix. process all requests made under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and Data Protection Act 1998, in accordance with and subject to the council's policies and procedures relating to the same;
  - x. receive and send general correspondence and notices on behalf of the council except where there is a resolution to the contrary;
  - xi. manage the organisation, storage of, access to and destruction of information held by the council in paper and electronic form;
  - xii. arrange for legal deeds to be executed;  
*See also standing order 22 below.*
  - xiii. arrange or manage the prompt authorisation, approval, and instruction regarding any payments to be made by the council in accordance with the council's financial regulations
  - xiv. record every planning application notified to the council and the council's response to the local planning authority;
  - xv. refer a planning application received by the council to the Chairman of the Planning & Highways Committee (or in his/her absence the Vice-Chairman) within two working days of receipt to facilitate an extraordinary meeting if the nature of a planning application requires consideration before the next ordinary meeting of the Planning & Highways committee or full Council meeting;
  - xvi. manage access to information about the council via the publication scheme; and



- xvii. retain custody of the seal of the council which shall not be used without a resolution to that effect.  
*See also standing order 22 below.*

## **16. Responsible Financial Officer**

- a The council shall appoint appropriate staff member(s) to undertake the work of the Responsible Financial Officer when the Responsible Financial Officer is absent.

## **17. Accounts and accounting statements**

- a “Proper practices” in standing orders refer to the most recent version of Governance and Accountability for Local Councils – a Practitioners’ Guide.
- b All payments by the council shall be authorised, approved and paid in accordance with the law, proper practices and the council’s financial regulations.
- c The Responsible Financial Officer shall supply to each councillor as soon as practicable after 30 June, 30 September and 31 December in each year a statement to summarise:
  - i. the council’s receipts and payments for each quarter;
  - ii. the council’s aggregate receipts and payments for the year to date;
  - iii. the balances held at the end of the quarter being reported

and which includes a comparison with the budget for the financial year and highlights any actual or potential overspends.

- d As soon as possible after the financial year end at 31 March, the Responsible Financial Officer shall provide:
  - i. each councillor with a statement summarising the council’s receipts and payments for the last quarter and the year to date for information; and
  - ii. to the full council the accounting statements for the year in the form of Section 1 of the annual return, as required by proper practices, for consideration and approval.
- e The year-end accounting statements shall be prepared in accordance with proper practices and applying the form of accounts determined by the council (receipts and payments, or income and expenditure) for a year to 31 March. A completed draft annual return shall be presented to each councillor before the end of the following month of May. The annual return of the council, which is subject to external audit, including the annual governance statement, shall be presented to council for consideration and formal approval before 30 June.

## **18. Financial controls and procurement**

- a. The Council shall consider and approve financial regulations drawn up by the Responsible Financial Officer, which shall include detailed arrangements in respect of the following:

- i. the keeping of accounting records and systems of internal controls;
  - ii. the assessment and management of financial risks faced by the Council;
  - iii. the work of the independent internal auditor in accordance with proper practices and the receipt of regular reports from the internal auditor, which shall be required at least annually;
  - iv. the inspection and copying by councillors and local electors of the Council's accounts and/or orders of payments; and
  - v. whether contracts with an estimated value below **£25,000** due to special circumstances are exempt from a tendering process or procurement exercise.
- b. Financial regulations shall be reviewed regularly and at least annually for fitness of purpose.
- c. **A public contract regulated by the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 with an estimated value in excess of £25,000 but less than the relevant thresholds referred to in standing order 18(f) is subject to the "light touch" arrangements under Regulations 109-114 of the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 unless it proposes to use an existing list of approved suppliers (framework agreement).**
- d. Subject to additional requirements in the financial regulations of the Council, the tender process for contracts for the supply of goods, materials, services or the execution of works shall include, as a minimum, the following steps:
  - i. a specification for the goods, materials, services or the execution of works shall be drawn up;
  - ii. an invitation to tender shall be drawn up to confirm (i) the Council's specification (ii) the time, date and address for the submission of tenders (iii) the date of the Council's written response to the tender and (iv) the prohibition on prospective contractors contacting councillors or staff to encourage or support their tender outside the prescribed process;
  - iii. the invitation to tender shall be advertised in a local newspaper and in any other manner that is appropriate;
  - iv. tenders are to be submitted in writing in a sealed marked envelope addressed to the Proper Officer;
  - v. tenders shall be opened by the Proper Officer in the presence of at least one councillor after the deadline for submission of tenders has passed;
  - vi. tenders are to be reported to and considered by the appropriate meeting of the Council or a committee or sub-committee with delegated responsibility.
- e. Neither the Council, nor a committee or a sub-committee with delegated responsibility for considering tenders, is bound to accept the lowest value tender.

- f. **Where the value of a contract is likely to exceed the threshold specified by the Office of Government Commerce from time to time, the Council must consider whether the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 or the Utilities Contracts Regulations 2016 apply to the contract and, if either of those Regulations apply, the Council must comply with procurement rules. NALC's procurement guidance contains further details.**

## **19. Handling staff matters**

- a A matter personal to a member of staff that is being considered by a meeting of council or the Staffing Committee is subject to standing order 11 above.
- b Subject to the council's policy regarding absences from work, the council's most senior member of staff shall notify the chairman of the Staffing Committee or, if he/she is not available, the vice-chairman of the Staffing Committee, of absence occasioned by illness or other reason and that person shall report such absence to the Staffing Committee at its next meeting.
- c The chairman of the Staffing Committee or in his/her absence, the vice-chairman shall upon a resolution conduct a review of the performance and annual appraisal of the work of Clerk. The reviews and appraisal shall be reported in writing and is subject to approval by resolution by the Staffing Committee.
- d Subject to the council's policy regarding the handling of grievance matters, the council's most senior employee (or other employees) shall contact the chairman of the Staffing Committee or in his/her absence, the vice-chairman of the Staffing Committee in respect of an informal or formal grievance matter, and this matter shall be reported back and progressed by resolution of the Staffing Committee.
- e Subject to the council's policy regarding the handling of grievance matters, if an informal or formal grievance matter raised by the Clerk relates to the chairman or vice-chairman of the Staffing Committee, this shall be communicated to another member of the Staffing Committee, which shall be reported back and progressed by resolution of the Staffing Committee.
- f Any persons responsible for all or part of the management of staff shall treat the written records of all meetings relating to their performance, capabilities, grievance or disciplinary matters as confidential and secure.
- g The council shall keep all written records relating to employees secure. All paper records shall be secured and locked and electronic records shall be password protected.

- h Only persons with line management responsibilities shall have access to staff records referred to in standing orders 19(f) and (g) above if so justified.
- i Access and means of access by keys and/or computer passwords to records of employment referred to in standing orders 19(f) and (g) above shall be provided only to the Clerk and/or the Mayor of the Council or the Chair of the Staffing Committee.

## 20. Requests for information

- a Requests for information held by the council shall be handled in accordance with the council's policy in respect of handling requests under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Data Protection Act 1998.
- b Correspondence from, and notices served by, the Information Commissioner shall be referred by the Proper Officer to the Mayor or Deputy Mayor in his/her absence. The full council shall have the power to do anything to facilitate compliance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

## 21. Relations with the press/media

- a Requests from the press or other media for an oral or written comment or statement from the Council, its councillors or staff shall be handled in accordance with the Council's Media Policy.

## 22. Execution and sealing of legal deeds

*See also standing orders 15(b)(xii) and (xvii) above.*

- a A legal deed shall not be executed on behalf of the council unless authorised by a resolution.
- b **Subject to standing order 22(a) above, the council's common seal shall alone be used for sealing a deed required by law. It shall be applied by the Proper Officer in the presence of two councillors who shall sign the deed as witnesses.**

## 23. Communicating with District and County or Unitary councillors

- a An invitation to attend a meeting of the council shall be sent, together with the agenda, to the councillor of the District and County Council representing its electoral ward.
- b Unless the council determines otherwise, a copy of each letter sent to the District and County Council shall be sent to the District or County Council councillor representing its electoral ward.

## 24. Restrictions on councillor activities

- a Unless authorised by a resolution, no councillor shall:

- i. inspect any land and/or premises which the council has a right or duty to inspect; or
- ii. issue orders, instructions or direction

## **25. Standing orders generally**

- a All or part of a standing order, except one that incorporates mandatory statutory requirements, may be suspended by resolution in relation to the consideration of an item on the agenda for a meeting.
- b A motion to add to or vary or revoke one or more of the council's standing orders, except one that incorporates mandatory statutory requirements, shall be proposed by a special motion, the written notice by at least two thirds of the councillors to be given to the Proper Officer in accordance with standing order 9 above.
- c The Proper Officer shall provide a copy of the council's standing orders to a councillor as soon as possible after he/she has delivered his/her acceptance of office form.
- d The decision of the chairman of a meeting as to the application of standing orders at the meeting shall be final.

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### Next review due:

**May 2024.**



## CREWKERNE TOWN COUNCIL

### Financial Regulations

#### 1. General

- 1.1 These financial regulations shall govern the conduct of the financial transactions of Crewkerne Town Council and may only be amended or varied by resolution of the Council.
- 1.2 The Town Clerk is the Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) as defined by the Local Government Finance Act.
- 1.3 The RFO under the policy direction of the Policy and Resources Committee (P&R Committee) shall be responsible for the proper administration of the council's financial affairs.
- 1.4 The RFO shall be responsible for ensuring the proper production of financial management information.
- 1.5 The Finance Officer (FO) will be responsible for day-to-day operation of the Council's accounting procedures and work as directed by the RFO, to achieve all the Council's financial and accounting objectives.
- 1.6 An independent and competent Internal Auditor shall be appointed each year and shall carry out the work required by the Council in accordance with proper practices. In order to demonstrate objectivity and independence the Internal Auditor shall be free from any conflicts of interest and shall have no involvement in the financial decision making, management or control of the Council.
- 1.7 The Council shall be responsible for ensuring that the financial management is adequate and effective and that the Council has a system of internal controls which facilitates the effective exercise of its functions and which manages risk.
- 1.8 The Council shall review at least once a year the effectiveness of its systems of internal controls and shall produce a statement on internal control with its statements of accounts.

#### 2. Annual Estimates

- 2.1 Proposals for expenditure shall be formulated and submitted to the P&R Committee in respect of revenue services and capital projects for inclusion in the rolling capital programme not later than the end of October each year.
- 2.2 Detailed estimates of income and expenditure on revenue services, and receipts and payment on capital account, shall be prepared each year by the FO as directed by the RFO.

- 2.3 The P&R Committee shall review the estimates and submit them to the full Town Council for ratification before the required date as advised by ~~S.S.D.C.~~ **Somerset Council** each year and shall recommend the precept to be levied for the ensuing financial year.
- 2.4 The estimates may be amended at the beginning of each financial year to reflect the preceding year end position and the RFO shall supply each member with a copy of the approved estimates.
- 2.5 The amended capital and revenue budgets shall form the basis of financial control for the ensuing year.

### **3. Budgetary Control**

- 3.1 Expenditure on the revenue account may be incurred up to the amounts included in each approved committee budget.
- 3.2 No expenditure may be incurred which cannot be met from the amount provided in the appropriate committee revenue budget unless a virement or overspend has been approved by the full Town Council.
- 3.3 The RFO shall provide a quarterly statement of income and expenditure to date under each head of the approved annual revenue and capital budgets to the Town Council, comparing actual expenditure against that planned.
- 3.4 The ~~Clerk~~ RFO may incur expenditure on behalf of the Council which is necessary to carry out any repair replacement or other work which is of such extreme urgency that it must be done at once, whether or not there is any budgetary provision for the expenditure, subject to a limit of £1,500 in consultation with the Committee Chair (or Vice Chair or Mayor in the absence of the Committee Chair). The RFO ~~Clerk~~ shall report the action to the appropriate committee as soon as practicable thereafter.
- 3.5 Where expenditure is incurred in accordance with regulation 3.4 above and the sum required cannot be met from savings made elsewhere within that committee's approved budget, it shall be subject to the provision of a supplementary estimate approved by the P&R Committee or the Town Council.
- 3.6 Unspent provisions in the revenue budget shall be reviewed in February each year and only carried forward as part of the amended budget when reviewed by the P&R Committee and approved by the Full Town Council.
- 3.7 No expenditure shall be incurred in relation to any capital project and no contract entered into or tender accepted involving expenditure on capital account unless the Committee concerned is satisfied that it is contained in the rolling capital programme and that the necessary capital funds are available, or the requisite borrowing approval can be obtained.
- 3.8 All capital works shall be administered in accordance with the Council's financial regulations relating to contracts.

### **4. Accounting and Audit**

- 4.1 All accounting procedures and financial records of the Council shall be determined by the RFO as required by the Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2011.

- 4.2 The RFO shall be responsible for ensuring that the completed annual accounts of the Council are presented as soon as practicable after the end of the financial year and shall submit them and report thereon to the Council.
- 4.3 The RFO shall be responsible for completing the Accounts of the Council contained in the Annual Return (as supplied by the Auditor appointed from time to time by the Audit Commission or other legally authorised body) and for submitting the Annual Return for approval and authorisation by the Council within the timescale set by the Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2011, or set by the Auditor.
- 4.4 The following principles shall be observed in connection with accounting duties:
- a) The duty of providing information, calculating, checking and recording sums due to, or from, the Council should be separated as far as possible from the duty of collecting or dispersing them.
  - b) Officers charged with the duty of examining and checking the accounts of cash transactions should not be engaged in any of those transactions.
- 4.5 The RFO shall be responsible for ensuring that there is an adequate and effective system of internal audit of the Council's accounting, control systems, financial and other operations in accordance with Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2011 as amended. Any officer or member of the Council shall, if the RFO requires or Internal Auditor requires, make available such documents of the Council which relate to their accounting and other records as appear to the RFO or Internal Auditor to be necessary for the purpose of the audit and shall supply the RFO or Internal Auditor with such information and explanation as the RFO or Internal Auditor considers necessary for that purpose.
- 4.6 The Internal Auditor shall carry out the work required by the RFO, or by the Council, with a view to satisfactory completion of the Internal Auditor's Report section of the Annual Return as compiled annually by the Audit Commission or other legally authorised body. The Internal Auditor, who shall be competent and independent of the operations of the Council, shall report to Council in writing on a regular basis with a minimum of one annual report in respect of each financial year.
- 4.7 The Council shall conduct an annual review of the effectiveness of the system of internal audit.
- 4.8 The RFO shall make arrangements for the opportunity for inspection of the accounts, books, and vouchers as required by the latest audit guidance.
- 4.9 The RFO shall, as soon as practicable, bring to the attention of all councillors any correspondence or report from the Internal or External Auditor, unless the correspondence is of a purely administrative matter.

## **5. Banking Arrangements and Cheques**

- 5.1 The Council's banking arrangements shall be made by the RFO and approved by the P&R Committee. They shall be reviewed periodically for efficiency.
- 5.2 A schedule of payments required forming part of the agenda for the meeting shall be prepared under the review of the RFO and together with relevant invoices etc. presented to Council. A nominated councillor shall verify the schedule of payments to the invoices prior to the commencement of the meeting. If the schedule is in order it shall be authorised by a resolution of the Council and signed by the chair or vice chair of the meeting. The detail shall be shown in the minutes of the meeting.



- 5.3 Internet banking payments (including salary payments by BACS) and cheques drawn on the bank account in accordance with the schedule referred to in the previous paragraph shall be authorised by two councillors from a pool to be determined by the full council after elections or as required. BACS salary notice of payments telephoned through to the bank shall be signed by two councillors and countersigned by the Clerk.
- 5.4 Payments may be made by internet banking transfer, provided that:
- The internet banking arrangements identifies the Finance Officer, the Deputy Clerk and the RFO as system administrators only, with no authority to approve payments.
  - The bank mandate identifies a number of Councillors who are authorised to approve transactions. These nominated Councillors shall be identical to those determined by the Council as cheque signatories.
  - The internet banking payment authorisation process requires authorisation separately by two of the above nominated Councillors.
  - The Finance Officer will ensure that copies of the invoices for payment are available to the Councillors assigned to authorise the payment.
  - The Finance Officer retains evidence showing which two Councillors approved the payment.
  - The Finance Officer retains a record of the details of all suppliers with which transactions are made, and these are checked regularly for validity and confirmed by the RFO.
  - Passwords associated with accessing the internet banking system are under no circumstances to be stored on the Council computers.

## 6. Payment of Accounts

- 6.1 Apart from petty cash payments all payment shall be effected either by cheque or through use of the Town Council's Corporate Purchase card or by internet banking transfer.
- 6.2 The Town Council Corporate Purchase card is to be restricted to use by the Clerk RFO and Finance Officer. The card shall be subject to automatic payment in full each month and shall be restricted to a maximum spend each month of £3,000. Before any order is placed using the Corporate Purchase card, a Purchase Authority shall be signed by two Councillors who are cheque signatories. For purchases above the value of £50, the Purchase Authority shall in addition be signed by two Councillors who are cheque signatories.
- 6.3 Additionally, with regard to pre-authorised minor purchases made on behalf of the Council by officers, or on occasion, by councillors, re-imbusement may be made on debit card purchases only together with the receipt in the normal manner referred to in 5.2.
- 6.4 All invoices for payment shall be examined, verified and certified by the officer issuing the order. Before certifying an invoice the officer shall satisfy himself/herself that the work, goods or services to which the invoice relates have been received, carried out, examined and approved. The Amenities Operations Manager will check and verify all work and purchases of a technical nature and corresponding invoices prior to authorisation by the RFO.
- 6.5 ~~Duly certified~~ Invoices shall be duly certified as to whether all payments made are legal and within the powers of the council. ~~They shall be examined and examine them~~ in relation to arithmetical accuracy and authorisation, and ~~shall coded them~~ to the appropriate expenditure head. All possible steps shall be taken to settle all invoices submitted, and which are in order, within 30 days of their receipt.
- 6.6 If thought appropriate by the council, payment of certain accounts may be made by variable direct debit or Standing Order, provided that the initial instructions are signed by two councillors from the pool of authorised cheque signatories and any payments are entered on the schedule referred to in 5.2 above.

- 6.7 If a payment is necessary to avoid a charge to interest under the Late Payment of Commercial Debts (Interest) Act 1998, and the due date for payment is before the next scheduled meeting of council, where the Finance Officer and Clerk RFO certify that there is no dispute or other reason to delay payment, the RFO may (notwithstanding para 6.3) take all steps necessary to settle such invoices provided that a list of such payments shall be submitted to the next appropriate meeting of council.
- 6.8 All duly certified invoices will then be entered on the schedule referred to in 5.2 above.
- 6.9 The RFO may provide petty cash to officers for the purposes of defraying operational and other expenses. Vouchers for payments made shall be forwarded to the RFO with a claim for reimbursement:
- a) The RFO shall maintain a petty cash float to a limit of £125 for the purpose of defraying operational and other expenses. Vouchers for payments made from petty cash shall be kept to substantiate the payment. Periodic reconciliation shall be carried out by the Finance Officer and checked by the RFO Clerk or Deputy Clerk.
  - b) Income received must not be paid into the petty cash float but must be separately banked, as provided elsewhere in these regulations.
  - c) Periodic payments to reimburse the petty cash float shall be shown separately on the schedule of the payment of money presented to the council (under 5.2 above).

## **7. Payment of Salaries and Wages**

- 7.1 The Mayor and the RFO Clerk shall sign an internal document to the Finance Officer stating the staff salary amendments at the start of each financial year. All subsequent staff cost of living increases shall be checked for accuracy by the RFO or another officer. The payment of all salaries shall be calculated by the Finance Officer in accordance with the payroll records and the rules of PAYE and National Insurance currently operating and salaries shall be as agreed by council.
- 7.2 The payments list of salaries by bank transfer shall be signed by two councillors and the RFO Clerk (or in his their absence the Deputy Clerk) shall countersign and check the list, and provide the special password as authority for the payments to be made. The passwords shall be locked securely by the RFO. In the absence of the Finance Officer the BACS payment form shall be produced by the Deputy Clerk, countersigned and checked by the RFO Clerk, who will provide the password. The bank transfer instructions will be retained.
- 7.3 All time sheets shall be certified as to accuracy by or on behalf of the RFO Clerk.

## **8. Loans and Investments**

- 8.1 All loans and investments shall be negotiated by the RFO in the name of the council, and shall be for a set period in accordance with council policy. Changes to loans and investments should be reported to the P&R committee at the earliest opportunity.
- 8.2 All investments of money under the control of the council shall be in the name of the council.
- 8.3 All borrowing shall be effected in the name of the council, after obtaining the necessary borrowing approval. Any application for borrowing shall be approved by council as to terms and purpose.

8.4 All investment certificates and other documents relating thereto shall be retained in the custody of the RFO in metal cabinet in their Clerk's office with other bank statements.

## **9. Income**

9.1 The collection of all sums due to the council shall be the responsibility of and under the custody of the RFO.

9.2 Particulars of all charges to be made for work done, services rendered or goods supplied shall be notified to the Administration Officer who will raise the invoices and the Finance Officer shall ensure prompt receipt. Aged debtors will be periodically reviewed with the RFO who shall be ultimately responsible for the collection of all accounts due to the council.

9.3 The council will review all fees and charges regularly, following a report of the RFO Clerk.

9.4 Any sums found to be irrecoverable and any bad debts shall be reported to the P&R Committee and by approval may be written off in the year.

9.5 All sums received on behalf of the council shall be banked intact as directed by the RFO. In all cases all receipts shall be deposited with the council's bankers with such frequency as the RFO considers necessary.

9.6 A reference to the related debt, or otherwise, indicating the origin of each cheque, shall be entered on the paying-in slip.

9.7 Every transfer of official money from one member of staff to another shall be signed for by the receiving officer.

9.8 Personal cheques shall not be cashed out of money held on behalf of the council.

9.9 The RFO shall ensure prompt completion any VAT Return that is required. Any repayment claim due in accordance with VAT Act 1994 section 33 shall be made usually on a monthly basis.

## **10. Orders for Work, Goods and Services.**

10.1 An official order or letter shall be issued for all work, goods and services unless a formal contract is to be prepared or an official order would be inappropriate e.g. petty cash purchases. Copies of orders issued shall be maintained.

10.2 Order books shall be controlled by the RFO.

10.3 All officers are responsible for obtaining value for money at all times. An officer issuing an official order is to ensure as far as reasonable and practicable that the best available terms are obtained in respect of each transaction, usually by obtaining at least two quotations or estimates from appropriate suppliers, subject to the de minimus provisions in Regulation 11.1 below.

10.4 The RFO shall verify the lawful nature of any proposed purchase before the issue of any order, and in the case of new or infrequent purchases or payments, the RFO shall ensure that the statutory authority shall be reported to the meeting at which the order is approved so that the minutes can record the power being used.

## 11. Contracts

11.1 Procedures as to contracts are as follows:

- a) Every contract whether made by the council or by a committee to which the power of making contracts has been delegated shall comply with these financial regulations, and no exception from any of the following provisions of these financial regulations shall be made otherwise than by direction of the council or in an emergency by such a committee as aforesaid provided that these financial regulations shall not apply to contracts which relate to items (i) to (v) below:
  - i) for the supply of gas, electricity, water, sewerage and telephone services
  - ii) for specialist services such as are provide by solicitors, accountants, surveyors and planning consultants
  - iii) for work to be executed or materials to be supplied which consist of repairs to or parts for existing machinery or equipment or plant
  - iv) for work to be executed or goods or materials to be supplied which constitute an extension of an existing contract by the council
  - v) for additional audit work of the external auditor up to an estimated value of £500 (in excess of this sum the **Clerk and** RFO shall act after consultation with the Chairman and Vice Chairman of Council)
  - vi) for goods or materials proposed to be purchased which are proprietary articles and/or which are sold only at a fixed price.
- b) Where the council intends to procure or award a public supply contract, public service contract or public works contract as defined by The Public Contracts Regulations 2015 ("The Regulations") which is valued at £25,000 or more, the council shall comply with the relevant requirements of the Regulations<sup>1</sup>.
- c) The full requirement of The Regulations, as applicable, shall be followed in respect of the tendering and award of a public supply contract, public service contract or public works contract which exceed thresholds in The Regulations set by the Public Contracts Directive 2014/24/EU (which may change from time to time).
- d) When applications are made to waive financial regulations relating to contracts to enable a price to be negotiated without competition, the reason shall be embodied in a recommendation to council.
- e) Such invitation to tender shall state the general nature of the intended contract and the **RFO Clerk** shall obtain the necessary technical assistance to prepare a specification in appropriate cases. The invitation shall in addition state that tenders must be addressed to the **RFO Clerk** in the ordinary course of post. Each tendering firm shall be supplied with a specifically marked envelope in which the tender is to be sealed and remain sealed until the prescribed date for opening tenders for that contract.
- f) All sealed tenders shall be opened at the same time on the prescribed date by the **RFO Clerk** in the presence of at least one member of council.
- g) Any invitation to tender issued under this regulation shall be subject to Standing Orders part 18, 'Financial Controls & Procurement' and shall refer to the terms of the Bribery Act 2010.
- h) When it is to enter into a contract of less than £25,000 in value for the supply of goods or materials or for the execution of works or specialist services other than such goods,

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<sup>1</sup> The Regulations require councils to use the Contracts Finder website to advertise contract opportunities, set out the procedures to be followed in awarding new contracts and to publicise the award of new contracts.

materials, works or specialist services as are excepted as set out in paragraph (a) the total contract value shall be calculated and where this is:

- i) exceeding £10,000 in value the RFO Clerk shall invite quotes from at least three contractors. For expenditures of between £3,000 and £10,000, quotations shall be obtained from at least two contractors.
  - ii) for expenditures of £3,000 or less in value the Chairman of the spending committee or his/her appointed Vice Chairman together with the RFO Clerk or the duly authorised deputy shall have executive power.
- i) Every exception made by a committee to which the power of making contracts has been delegated shall be reported to the council and the report shall specify the emergency by which the exception shall have been justified.
  - j) If less than three quotes are received for contracts valued above £3,000 or if all the quotes are identical the council may make such arrangements as it thinks fit for procuring the goods or materials or executing the works. The number of quotations received shall be recorded in the minutes.
  - k) The council shall not be obliged to accept the lowest or any tender, quote or estimate.

## **12. Payments Under Contracts for Building or Other Construction Works**

- 12.1 Payments 'on account' of the contract sum shall be made within the time specified in the contract by the RFO upon authorised certificates of the architect or other consultants or suitably qualified persons engaged to supervise the contract (subject to any percentage withholding as may be agreed in the particular contract)
- 12.2 Where contracts provide for payment by instalments the RFO shall maintain a record of all such payments. In any case when it is estimated that the total cost of the work carried out under a contract, excluding agreed variations, will exceed the contract sum by 5% or more a report shall be submitted to the appropriate committee.
- 12.3 Any variation to a contract or addition to or omission from a contract must be approved by the council and RFO Clerk in writing to the contractor before any work has begun, the appropriate committee being informed where the final cost is likely to exceed the financial provision.

## **13. Stores and Equipment**

- 13.1 The officer in charge of each section shall be responsible for the care and custody of stores and equipment in that section.
- 13.2 Delivery notes must be obtained in respect of all goods received into store and goods must be checked as to order and quality at the time delivery is made.
- 13.3 Stocks shall generally be maintained at the minimum levels consistent with operational requirements.
- 13.4 The RFO supported by the Amenities Operations Manager and FO shall be responsible for an annual check of all stocks and stores.

## **14. Properties and Estates**

- 14.1 The RFO Clerk shall make appropriate arrangements for the custody of all title deeds of properties owned by the council. The RFO shall ensure a record is maintained of all properties owned by the council, recording the location, extent, plan, reference, purchase details, nature of the interest, tenancies granted, rents payable and purpose for which held in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2011.
- 14.2 No property shall be sold, leased or otherwise disposed of without the authority of the council, together with any other consents required by law, save where the estimated value of any one item of tangible movable property does not exceed £50.

## **15. Insurance**

- 15.1 Following an annual risk assessment review, the RFO shall effect all insurances and negotiate all claims on the council's insurers.
- 15.2 The RFO Clerk shall give prompt notification to the Finance Officer of all new risks, properties or vehicles which require to be insured and of any alterations affecting existing insurances.
- 15.3 The RFO shall keep a record of all insurances effected by the council and the property and risks covered thereby and annually review it.
- 15.4 The RFO shall be notified of any loss liability or damage or of any event likely to lead to a claim and shall report these to council at the next available meeting.
- 15.5 All appropriate employees of the council shall be included in a suitable fidelity guarantee insurance which shall cover the maximum risk exposure as determined by the council.

## **16. Charities**

- 16.1 The council is sole trustee of the War Commemoration Trust Recreation Ground and the RFO shall ensure that separate accounts are kept of the funds held and financial reports made in such form as shall be appropriate, in accordance with Charity Law and legislation, or as determined by the Charity Commission. The RFO shall arrange for any Audit or Independent Examination as may be required by Charity Law or any Governing Document.

## **17. Risk management**

- 17.1 The council is responsible for putting in place arrangements for the management of risk. The RFO shall ensure that the appropriate officer undertakes a regular review and prepares and promotes risk assessment statements in respect of all activities of the council.
- 17.2 When considering any new activity the Amenities Operations Manager with the RFO Clerk shall prepare a draft Risk Assessment for the activity and shall bring a draft addressing the legal and financial liabilities and risk management issues that arise to council for consideration and, if thought appropriate, adoption.

## **18. Revision of Financial Regulations**

- 18.1 It shall be the duty of the P&R Committee to review the financial regulations of the council from time to time and to make such amendments as the committee considers are required.

## FINANCIAL PROCEDURES

The Council Accounts are computerised using AdvantEdge software.  
All council financial procedures will comply with the statement of financial regulations.

### Income

Money received by the Town Council is banked on the day of receipt unless it arrives after the bank has closed. Such un-banked money is kept in a locked money box in a locked cupboard in the office over-night. Receipts are issued for all monies received. Receipts will also record the relevant invoice numbers where appropriate. A further record of receipts is the bank paying-in book which will also show a record of the receipt number to which the money refers.

Some income is transferred to the council by means of the BACS system. A record of such transfers is received from the payees and placed in a file. Further evidence of BACS payments is provided by the monthly Bank Statements.

Computer records are kept of all income transactions and are comprehensively backed up.

### Expenditure Payment of Invoices

Agreement for payment will be made by the RFO after having checked the invoice against an order or tender and where the sum has been agreed by the council. When the payment of an invoice has been authorised (normally at a Town Council Meeting), the FO will arrange for payment using either a cheque or through the online banking system.

#### Cheques

A cheque is made out and then signed by any two authorised Councillors, who also initial the counterfoil.

#### Online banking

The invoice value is entered through the online banking system and is authorised for payment online by any two authorised Councillors. A print out of the Councillor's authorisation is attached to the associated invoices.

A monthly statement of accounts to be paid will be presented to the Council for approval. The cheques will be signed, having previously been prepared and the online payments will have been authorised. Salary payments by BACS shall be made in accordance to Financial Regulations. The Inland Revenue returns and Superannuation payments may be paid promptly but must be recorded by payment method and description only on the monthly statement of accounts in order to preserve staff confidentiality. Some other bills may also be settled prior to the Council Meeting so as not to incur penalties for example (See financial regulations).

Where receipts are presented for sums under £25 payment may be made from petty cash. A petty cash box is kept together with the relevant receipts and reimbursement is carried out regularly.

Computer records are kept of all expenditure transactions, including petty cash payments. Computer records are held on an IT workgroup server and access to the secure shared data is via individual staff passwords. All computer records are backed up on an ongoing daily basis.

Actual expenditure and income against the budget is reported on a quarterly basis.

## **Bank Transfers**

The RFO will transfer funds to and from the 32 Day Notice and Business Call accounts as necessary to ensure that there are adequate funds in the Business Call account to cover all outstanding payments and taking advantage of higher interest on reserves in the 32 Day Notice Account.

There is “drip feed” arrangement between the Current Account and Business Call Account to maintain a daily Current Account balance of £50,000.

## **Salaries Records**

Each employee has a separate excel spreadsheet showing the employee’s name, rate of pay, the hours worked, the total gross wages earned and the deductions for national insurance, taxation and superannuation etc., together with the employer’s contributions, and finally the net amounts payable by the Council to the employee, and to HM Revenue & Customs (HMRC). Iris Payroll software is used to calculate the national insurance and taxation deductions, and employer contributions. The RFO Clerk will provide the Finance Officer with an internal document of the latest amended, approved salaries countersigned by the Mayor. National pay increase rises and incremental pay rise calculations will be double checked by the RFO Clerk and a copy of each spreadsheet shall be initialled accordingly and kept in the Audit File.

## **Bank Reconciliation**

Bank statements are received after the end of each month and all accounts are balanced with the computer records. After checking by the RFO, printed records are then placed in an Audit File and bank statements are kept in a separate file. A copy of the monthly Bank Reconciliation is presented to the Town Council Meeting.

## **Audit**

As soon as possible after 31<sup>st</sup> March the accounts are finalised and an income and expenditure account, balance sheet and Annual Return produced. At this stage the accounts have been audited by the Internal Auditor. They should then be approved and signed by resolution as soon as practicable after the end of the financial year and at least within the advised time limit. These accounts are then subject to audit by the External Auditors appointed by the Audit Commission or other authorised body. Prior to audit the approved accounts must be displayed on the public notice board for a given period of time and the public are given notice that the full accounts are available for inspection.

The RFO will ensure that the Council considers the annual internal and external written reports and demonstrates that by inclusion in the agendas and minutes. Following a satisfactory audit the accounts are signed off and a written statement from the auditor is added to the accounts statement. A public notice placed is on the board for the required time and subsequently retained, for audit evidence purposes.



## ROLE OF THE INDEPENDENT INTERNAL AUDITOR

The internal auditor shall:

- be allowed to have direct access to the Council
- have no other role or be related to any member within the Council
- prepare a report in writing in his/her own name and addressed to the Council
- be competent to carry out the work i.e.(i) shall have an understanding of basic accounting processes (ii) shall have an understanding of the role of internal auditor in reviewing systems rather than undertaking detailed checks that are more appropriately the responsibility of management (iii) shall have an awareness of risk management issues (iv) shall have an understanding of accounting requirements of the legal framework and powers of local councils.
- undertake the work in an ethical manner with integrity and objectivity.

### Responsibility

To report on the adequacy of the systems of financial control in operation. This will include:

1. Review of internal controls in place and their documentation as listed in Section 5 of the 'Governance and Accountability in Local Councils in England and Wales – A Practitioners' Guide'.
2. Review of minutes to ensure legal powers in place, recorded and correctly applied.
3. Testing of income and expenditure from minutes to cashbook, from bank statements to cashbook, from minutes to statements etc. including petty cash transactions.
4. Review and testing of systems and arrangements to prevent and detect fraud and corruption, including risk management processes.
5. Testing of disclosures.
6. Testing of specific internal controls and reporting findings to management.
7. The War Commemoration Trust Recreation Ground separate accounts and financial reports made in such form as shall be appropriate, in accordance with Charity Law and legislation, or as determined by the Charity Commission.
8. Reports of fraudulent or corruption findings depending on the type shall be reported to the Mayor in the first instance, the **RFO Clerk** (as appropriate), Chairman of Policy and Resources and the Council.

## DUTIES OF THE RESPONSIBLE FINANCIAL OFFICER

1. To prepare financial reports for the Policy and Resources committee, and/or the Council. These reports will cover budget monitoring, fund balances, receipts to date, payroll summary, payment of accounts, and other relevant current matters.
2. To prepare draft estimates. When approved by Council these will form the annual budget monitoring during the year. To report thereon to the Policy and Resources committee.
3. To submit the precept to the **District Unitary Council** and supply any breakdown requested.
4. To ensure regular banking (daily if necessary) of all money received and expended by the Council.

5. To ensure that all money due to the Council is billed and collected promptly.
6. To identify the duties of all officers, including the RFO dealing with financial transactions, and ensure, as far as possible, the division of responsibilities of those officers in relation to larger transactions. In other words ensure that there is as much internal checking as possible.
7. To manage cash flow and control investments and bank transfers.
8. To control payments by cheque, corporate card and online banking.
9. To handle the overall management of payroll, including Local Government Pension Scheme. To ensure prompt payment of tax and national insurance to the collector of taxes monthly. Also to ensure, where appropriate prompt payment of sums due to the pension authority.
10. To take overall responsibility for submission of monthly VAT returns and to deal with VAT inspections.
11. To verify the budget code of suppliers' invoices prior to certification for payment.
12. To ensure the preparation and balance of the final accounts are in accordance with the regulations and report thereon to Policy and Resources Committee and the Full Town Council.
13. To produce accounts and records for external audit in accordance with the regulations.
14. To arrange for internal audit material of all aspects of the Council's financial affairs.
15. To monitor compliance with the Council's financial regulations and ensure correct financial systems are in place.
16. To manage insurance risk. To process claims as necessary. To report annually to Policy and Resources Committee or council on insurance risk covered.
17. To ensure that the Council's register of property and assets is maintained.
18. To be familiar with the computerised accounting system in place.

**Version Control:**

Revision approved at Policy & Resources Committee meeting 14 Oct 2019, Min. No. 19/20 17

Revision approved at Policy & Resources Committee meeting 14 February 2022, Min. No. 21/22 34

Amended at Full Council meeting 18 December 2023, Min. No.

**Next Review due:**

May 2024.

<b>Report subject</b>	Meeting Dates in January 2024
<b>Committee name</b>	Full Council
<b>Meeting date</b>	Monday 18 <sup>th</sup> December 2023
<b>Report author</b>	K Sheehan, Town Clerk
<b>Report contact details</b>	<a href="mailto:townclerk@crewkerne-tc.gov.uk">townclerk@crewkerne-tc.gov.uk</a>

**1. Purpose**

- 1.1. To amend the published schedule of meeting dates in January 2024.

**2. Background information**

- 2.1. Following a request from the Somerset Association of Local Councils (SALC) and the Somerset branch of the Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC), Somerset Council has agreed to move the deadline for Town and Parish precept demands back to 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2024.

**3. Detailed consideration**

- 3.1. In order to give as much time as possible to gathering budget information before the precept setting meeting the following alterations to meeting dates in January is proposed:
- 3.1.1. Planning and Highways, Policy and Resources and Amenities Committee meetings previously scheduled for Monday 8<sup>th</sup> January be moved to Monday 15<sup>th</sup> January.
- 3.1.2. Full Council meeting previously scheduled for Monday 15<sup>th</sup> January be moved to Monday 29<sup>th</sup> January.

**4. Financial implications**

None.

**5. Equalities considerations**

None.

**6. Recommendation**

- 6.1. It is recommended that the Council **RESOLVES** that:
- a) The meeting dates in January 2024 are changed as outlined in 3.1.1 and 3.1.2 above.



<b>Report subject</b>	Somerset Council services and assets: to note initial feedback from CTC survey on priorities in Crewkerne
<b>Committee name</b>	Full Council
<b>Meeting date</b>	Monday 18 <sup>th</sup> December 2023
<b>Report author</b>	K Sheehan, Town Clerk
<b>Report contact details</b>	<a href="mailto:townclerk@crewkerne-tc.gov.uk">townclerk@crewkerne-tc.gov.uk</a>

**1. Purpose**

- 1.1. To provide a summary of the feedback provided by residents in the Crewkerne Town Council survey on Somerset Council services in the town.

**2. Background information**

- 2.1. A short survey was conducted online, with hard copies made available in the Local Information Centre (LIC) and Library. The survey was promoted on social media and the Town Council website.
- 2.2. The survey asked respondents to consider the nine broad service areas which Somerset Council currently provides in Crewkerne.
- 2.3. Respondents were then asked to identify their top four priority services for the town.
- 2.4. A comment box was provided.

**3. Detailed consideration**

- 3.1. 205 responses were received in total. For context, this is more than double the response rate of the last Neighbourhood Plan survey which was delivered in hard copy to every household and had a duration of almost a month.
- 3.2. The attached chart shows the percentages reflecting the number of times each service area was selected as a top four priority.
- 3.3. The top four priority areas were:

1	Library Services	21%
2	Household Waste Recycling Centre	17%
3	Street Scene (fly tipping, cleaning, bin emptying)	16%
4	Highways functions (litter picking verges, highway channel clearance, verge maintenance, vegetation clearance, drain jetting and gully clearance, hedge trimming, weed treatment).	15%

**4. Financial implications**

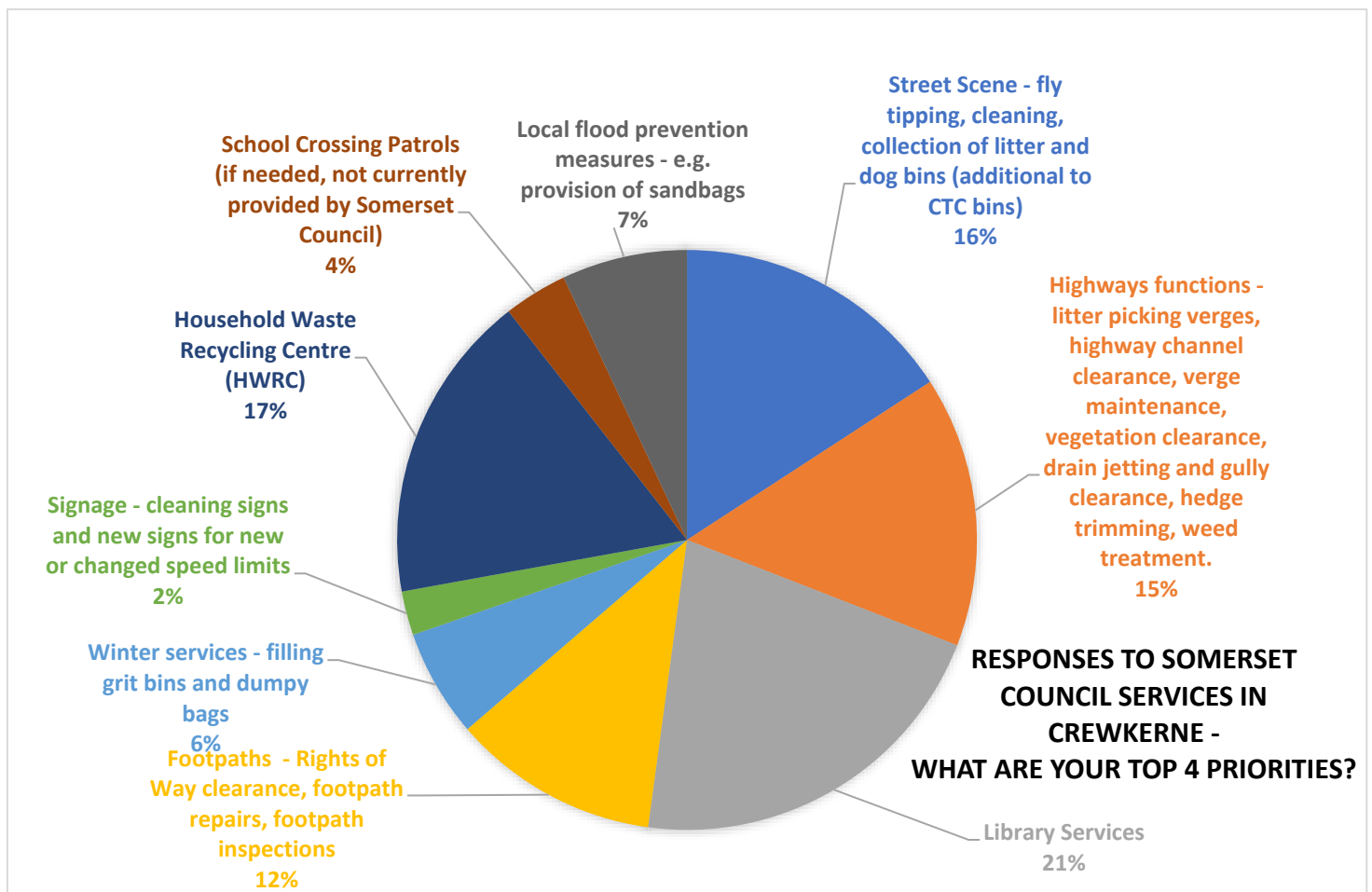
- 4.1. The survey was produced, circulated and analysed in house to keep costs down.
- 4.2. The data produced from the service will be used to inform Councillors as part of the budget setting process for 2024/25.

**5. Equalities considerations**

- 5.1. Noted that due to time constraints attached to the budget setting process there may be under-representation of some groups of respondents.

**6. Recommendation**

- 6.1. It is recommended that the Council **notes** the information provided.



<b>Report subject</b>	Bincombe Beeches Nature Trail: to resolve to apply for Wellbeing funding for updated nature trail artwork, interpretation boards and leaflets.
<b>Committee name</b>	Full Council
<b>Meeting date</b>	Monday 18 <sup>th</sup> December 2023
<b>Report author</b>	K Sheehan, Town Clerk
<b>Report contact details</b>	<a href="mailto:townclerk@crewkerne-tc.gov.uk">townclerk@crewkerne-tc.gov.uk</a>

### **1. Purpose**

- 1.1. To make a new resolution regarding wellbeing funding to support a grant application in January 2024 to deliver the legacy nature trail from the Bincombe Beeches autumn event.

### **2. Background information**

- 2.1. The Council previously resolved to apply for Health and Wellbeing funding from Somerset Association of Local Councils (SALC) towards the cost of the Bincombe Beeches event.
- 2.2. The fund had temporarily closed at this time, but will reopen in January. A resolution of council to apply for the funding is part of the application process.
- 2.3. The successful Bincombe Beeches event delivered three new chainsaw sculptures for the nature trail and the intention was to get the new trail 'artworked' and leaflets produced for collection from the LIC and interpretation boards updated, to encourage families and visitors to visit the area and interact with the nature reserve.
- 2.4. The funding could be used to offset the costs of this legacy of the event and meets the following objectives of the SALC fund:
  - Increasing physical activity
  - Social connection and families
  - Environment and climate change
  - Access to community services

### **3. Financial implications**

- 3.1. Further financial detail will be provided but there is a project earmarked reserve available to match any funding obtained through SALC.
- 3.2. At this stage, no financial commitment is required, only a resolution to apply for funding.

### **4. Equalities considerations**

- 4.1. Increasing engagement for all users of community open spaces.

- 4.2. Consideration of alternative and accessible formats of nature trail information will be required.

**5. Council Action Plan objectives**

- 5.1. Supports previously agreed Council Action Plan priorities:

- 1.1.2 Refresh interpretation boards.
- 1.1.3 Create a nature trail.
- 1.1.5 Additional chainsaw sculptures
- 9.5 Work with partners to deliver more community projects, trails and competitions.
- 10.1 Extend budgetary capacity by applying for supplementary grants.

**6. Recommendation**

- 6.1. It is recommended that the Council **RESOLVES** that:

- a) It will apply to the Health & Wellbeing fund in January 2024 as outlined above.



## Open Spaces Policy

### Introduction:

Crewkerne is blessed with fine countryside, much of it accessible, but people of all ages & backgrounds need open spaces close to where they live. Open space is land in some form of public ownership that is regularly available for recreational or sporting use by the community, and also includes a cemetery and churchyard. Open spaces are valued community assets improving public health, well-being and quality of life, and bringing regeneration benefits to an area.

As well as providing space for recreation and exercise, parks & open spaces perform a considerable range of other vital functions for the community such as the following: -

- a. Habitat for wildlife and movement corridors for animals, important to local nature conservation.
- b. Flood protection providing areas for rainfall to drain away.
- c. Space for trees, too large for many gardens, which in turn provide shade, climate regulation and shelter.
- d. Air and water purification.
- e. Aesthetic & landscape enhancement and protection of green vistas.
- f. Sense of well-being, improving desirability of an area and increase in property value.
- g. A venue for social interaction, public art and community events.
- h. An outdoor classroom allowing children to explore and learn about the natural world.
- i. Land for community food growing and enjoying horticultural achievements.
- j. Protection of areas and structures of heritage value.
- k. Carbon sequestration in tackling the causes of climate change.

Environmental change and the need for increased biodiversity will have an effect on the way open spaces are managed.

### Open Spaces owned and managed by Crewkerne Town Council:

- Happy Valley Recreation Ground
- Barn Street Recreation Ground
- Bincombe Beeches Nature Reserve
- Severalls War Memorial Garden
- Henhayes Recreation Ground
- Southmead Play Area
- Severalls Bowling Green
- Severalls Tennis Courts
- ~~Severalls Allotments~~
- ~~Bincombe Allotments~~
- Townsend Cemetery
- St Bartholomew's Church Grounds

### **Objectives:**

Open spaces provide opportunities for all areas of our community and include play opportunities, places to walk and sit quietly, and protection for wildlife and social areas.

There is an agreed procedure for the upkeep of Open Spaces and these are maintained for the optimum use of all residents. This procedure is determined by Council Staff, in particular the Operations Manager, and is communicated to, and known, by all Grounds Staff. This will include details on where grass is to be cut, wild areas, areas of rewilding, frequency of maintenance, tree planting/pruning/removal, equipment inspections and records.

Sports pitches will be maintained to a reasonable standard and where a team requires additional work undertaken this can be done either at an additional cost to the Sports Club or with the written agreement of Crewkerne Town Council to undertake it themselves.

Upkeep of these Open Spaces remains under the control of Crewkerne Town Council and no additional work is to be undertaken in any Open Space without the written permission of Crewkerne Town Council. Any unauthorised work will be considered to be criminal damage and action taken accordingly.

### **Tree Policy**

#### **For Crewkerne Town Council owned trees, we will endeavour to:**

- Maintain our trees in a safe condition.
- Prune our trees when they are causing an actual nuisance, i.e. damage to buildings.

#### **Tree Works the Council are not able to do:**

- Prune privately owned trees.
- Prune trees back because they are overhanging.
- Systematically prune trees to control their size or height.
- Prune or remove trees in order to improve light.
- Prune or remove trees to improve a view.
- Prune or remove trees because of falling leaves, sap, seeds or debris.
- Prune or remove trees to improve television or satellite reception.

#### **Common tree related enquiries:**

If the tree does not belong to CTC and the resident is concerned about:

- Electricity cables (trees interfering with) and supply: National Grid (formerly Western Power) 0800 096 3080
- Telephone wires – BT Faults – 0800 800151
- Trees threatening or obstructing the Highway (including pavements) – Somerset Council Highways – 0300 123 2224
- Trees obstructing streetlights – Somerset Council Streetlight Department – 0345 601 0939
- Trees obstructing right of way – Somerset Council Highways – 0300 123 2224
- High evergreen hedges – refer to land owner or Somerset Council Tree Officer
- Nesting birds and roosting bats – contact the police – 101

- If the resident is unsure about which arborist to employ, helpful consumer advice and directories are available at [www.trees.org.uk](http://www.trees.org.uk)

### **Doing the work yourselves:**

In common law, a property owner can cut back overhanging branches to the boundary of their property. Crewkerne Town Council will usually have no objection to property owners carrying out this type of tree works or engaging a contractor at their own expense, **providing:**

- Access is not gained via Council land or trees, without written permission of the Town Clerk. 01460 74001.
- The tree is not situated within a Conservation Area or subject to a Tree Preservation Order. Refer to the Town Clerk. 01460 74001.
- That any work to the tree is not detrimental to its health or stability and is carried out in accordance with British Standard 2998:2010 – Tree Works.
- That the cut branches are disposed of in a responsible manner and that no unauthorised damage to Council property occurs.
- Works to any tree situated in a Conservation Area, whether Council or privately owned, should have the correct permissions obtained from the Local Planning Authority (LPA) before commencement.

No timber is to be removed by the public from Council open spaces without the express written permission of the Town Clerk.

### **Grass Cutting**

Grass cutting policy will be dependent on the area. Pitches will be maintained to a suitable standard. Should a club need maintenance to a higher standard then this should be made known to the Town Council for consideration. Permission must be in writing and at the club's cost. Other areas may be maintained in a different way to encourage biodiversity, increase wildlife habitat or to save costs. In these areas throughout the spring and summer, the grasses are allowed to grow to create a meadow effect and mown pathways are cut in between. **Wildflowers will also be actively sown in areas determined by the Town Clerk in conjunction with the Operations Manager.**

In the autumn the flat, open areas will be cut back before the winter. The time of this cut will be determined by the Town Council and timescales may vary depending on weather and staff capacity. Pathways may continue to be cut in the autumn/winter depending on the weather but the grass will be allowed to grow longer outside of these areas.

The Churchyard and Cemetery will have their own requirements which may be a mixture of continued grass cutting throughout the season and wilder areas.

### **Allotments**

**There are many benefits to an allotment and growing your own fruit, vegetables and flowers including better mental wellbeing, improved physical strength, less pesticides and reduced plastic packaging and Crewkerne Town Council provide allotments for community use. There do however need to be some rules on allotments:**

- Rent is charged and has to be paid on a regular basis. Rent overdue for more than 3 months will result in the allotment holder being given notice to vacate
- No allotment is to be used for commercial venture
- No animals are to be kept on allotments – this includes bee hives
- Allotments are to be kept clean and free of rubbish
- Allotments are to be regularly tended and if no work has been done to an allotment for a season, then the holder will be given notice to vacate.

Please refer to the full Allotment Policy for further details.

### **Dog Walking**

Crewkerne Town Council allows well behaved dogs in all its open spaces except Barn Street Recreation Ground which has a dog ban. Please respect this decision.

### **Invasive Species**

The public are not allowed to plant any plants, flowers or trees on Council Open Spaces without prior written agreement. Any non-native or invasive species will be removed, without warning, and disposed of or rehomed as necessary.

### **Financial implications:**

There are financial implications to Crewkerne Town Council for maintaining Open Spaces and changes may be made to agreed procedures to allow for budget management or special events. This decision can be made by the Town Clerk in conjunction with the Chair of Amenities Committee.

### **Biodiversity Considerations:**

The Natural England and Rural Communities Act of 2006 placed a duty on authorities in England (including Town Councils) to have regard to conserving biodiversity as part of their policy and decision-making processes. This was subsequently strengthened under the Environment Act of 2021 which asked public authorities to consider what they can do to enhance biodiversity in England. The first consideration of this duty must be completed by 1<sup>st</sup> January 2024.

This means a public authority must:

- Consider what they can do to conserve and enhance biodiversity.
- Agree policies and specific objectives based on their consideration.
- Act to deliver policies and achieve objectives.

### **What the Town Council will do:**

- Consider the impact on biodiversity in the decisions made by the Town Council, especially when commenting on planning applications.
- It will reduce the use of pesticides and herbicides used on Town Council owned land.
- It will regularly review how it manages the Open Spaces identified above, and consider where possible:
  - Leaving standing and fallen dead wood as a habitat for invertebrates.
  - Leaving leaf litter and dead vegetation wherever possible as a habitat for invertebrates.

- Removing invasive and non-invasive species that are detrimental to native flora or fauna as required.
- The Town Council will consider reducing the number of cuts in appropriate areas to allow the grasses to grow and be swathed in September.
- Ensure that there is a margin of uncut grass around the hedges to allow longer grasses to grow.
- Allow fallen tree branches to remain, if safe, to allow invertebrates to inhabit.
- To preserve the Lucombe Oak tree and encourage biodiversity the area under the tree will be left wilded and to protect the tree's root system.
- The Crewkerne Neighbourhood Plan is being drafted and the Town Council supports the discussion of biodiversity and added to the plan as necessary.
- Hedge cutting takes place twice a year. All hedges are cut outside of the bird nesting season.
- The Town Council will look to install bird boxes in Town Council owned trees.
- The Town Council will look to promote biodiversity via the Town Council website.

Approved: MEETING DATE MINUTE REFERENCE

Due for review: MONTH DATE