



# Ross-on-Wye Town Council

**Minutes of the meeting of the Finance & Personnel Committee**  
held on Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> January 2020 at 7.00pm  
at The Corn Exchange, High Street, Ross-on-Wye, Herefordshire, HR9 5HL

Present: Councillor D Ciolte, Councillor D Ravenscroft, Councillor L Stark and  
Councillor J Utting (Chairman)  
Ex Officio Members: Councillor D Lister and Councillor J Roberts

In attendance: Mrs S Robson - Town Clerk  
There were no members of the public and no members of the press present.

**FP20/01#01**      **Apologies for Absence**  
Councillor K Fowler

**FP20/01#02**      **Declarations of Interest**  
None

**FP20/01#03**      **Dispensations**  
None

**FP20/01#04**      **Public Participation**  
There were no members of the public present.

**FP20/01#05**      **To resolve to exclude members of the press and public**  
[Public Bodies \(Admission to Meetings\) Act 1960](#)  
To agree any items to be dealt with after the public (including the press) have  
been excluded as publicity would prejudice the public interest by reason of the  
confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

Proposed: Councillor Ravenscroft  
Unanimous

Seconded: Councillor Lister

**RESOLVED – that agenda item FP20/01# 12 - ‘Staff in Confidence’ be treated as  
confidential and be dealt with after the Public (including the Press) have been  
excluded.**

**FP20/01#06**      **Finance & Personnel Committee Meeting Minutes** - to confirm and sign the  
minutes of the previous meeting of the Finance & Personnel Committee held on  
Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> November 2019.  
[LGA 1972, Sch 12 para41 \(1\).](#)

**RESOLVED – that the minutes of the previous meeting of the  
Finance & Personnel Committee held on Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> November 2019 be signed  
as a correct record.**

7.01pm      Councillor Ciolte arrived at the meeting

**FP20/01#07 Action Review Summary – to receive and review outstanding actions**

Members were advised that investigations into alternative banks have not progressed.

**RESOLVED – to receive and note the report.**

**FP20/01#08 Town Clerk's Report - to receive and note update from Town Clerk**

- On site Councillor Planning Training – HALC – date to be advised
- Civic Reception – Conde Twinning Visit – more information to follow

7.06pm Councillor Roberts arrived at the meeting

**FP20/01#09 Finance**

i) To receive and note the Committee's year to date expenditure and income

**Noted**

ii) To receive and note the Council's Bank balances and review the balances of general and earmarked reserves.

**Noted**

**FP20/01#10 Bank Reconciliations**

[Financial Regulations Clause 2.2](#)

To receive confirmation from the appointed verifier that the bank reconciliations have been checked to the Council's bank statements for the third quarter 2019/2020.

**RESOLVED – to receive and accept the written report from Councillor Fowler to confirm that everything is in order, the cashbook balances to the bank reconciliations and bank statements are all in balance.**

**FP20/01#11 Budget Setting**

To consider report from RFO and one-year draft budget commencing 2020/21 and to agree recommendations to Full Council for the budget and precept request.

The Clerk reminded the Committee of the Council's commitment to capping the precept in line with either the rate of increase which HC was capped at or the rate of RPI. Committee was advised that for 2020/21 local authorities would be able to increase council tax by a core principle of up to 2% without holding a local referendum. Committee noted it was this increase rather than RPI, which was running at a higher rate, which had been used to calculate the budget. The 2% increase was used as the calculator on the Band D equivalent and taking into account the small increase in the tax base over the last year would see a 3% precept increase.

The Committee noted the comments from the Amenities Committee regarding the need to invest further in CCTV at locations in areas where vandalism was occurring. There was an 'in principle' agreement this would be supported once costings were known and could be funded from the Council's reserves.

The Clerk and Chairman were thanked for their work in producing a balanced budget and for taking account of the Council's priorities as adopted by the Council from the 'Away Day'.



Proposed: Councillor Utting  
Unanimous

Seconded: Councillor Stark

**RESOLVED – to approve recommendation from the Finance Committee to Full Council adoption of the 2020/2021 balanced budget of £563,478.00 and set the precept at £515,328.00 which equates to a Band D equivalent for Ross-on-Wye of £131.24.**

7.55pm Councillor Ravenscroft left the meeting

**FP20/01#12**

**In view of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted, it is likely that the press and public will be excluded during consideration of this item (Item FP20/01 # 05 above refers)**

**Staff in Confidence - Staffing Update**

To receive a verbal report from the Town Clerk on a number of Staff Updates.

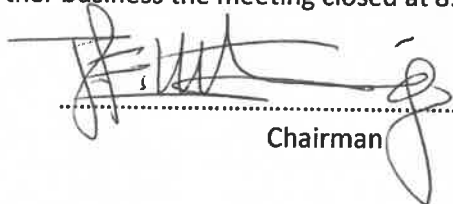
- i) To receive a verbal report regarding staff probationary periods.
- ii) To note confirmation of reduction in LGPS employer contribution rate
- iii) To receive a verbal report on training delivery and needs.

Proposed: Councillor Utting  
Unanimous

Seconded: Councillor Lister

**RESOLVED – to receive and note the verbal report and to confirm the appointment of the Office Administrator on a permanent basis with effect from 6<sup>th</sup> February 2020 subject to having successfully completed the six-month probationary period.**

There being no further business the meeting closed at 8.00pm

  
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Chairman

17 March 2020  
.....  
Date



# Ross-on-Wye Town Council

**Minutes of the meeting of the Finance & Personnel Committee**  
held on Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> March 2020 at 7.00pm  
at The Corn Exchange, High Street, Ross-on-Wye, Herefordshire, HR9 5HL

Present: Councillors L Stark and J Utting (Chairman)  
Ex Officio Members: Councillors D Lister and J Roberts  
Substitute Member: Councillor C Bartrum

In attendance: Mrs S Robson - Town Clerk  
There were no members of the public and no members of the press present.

**FP20/03#13**      **Apologies for Absence**  
Councillor Ravenscroft

**FP20/03#14**      **Declarations of Interest**  
None

**FP20/03#15**      **Dispensations**  
None

**FP20/03#16**      **Public Participation**  
There were no members of the public present.

**FP20/03#17**      **To resolve to exclude members of the press and public**  
[Public Bodies \(Admission to Meetings\) Act 1960](#)  
To agree any items to be dealt with after the public (including the press) have been excluded as publicity would prejudice the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

Proposed: Councillor Roberts  
Unanimous

Seconded: Councillor Lister

**RESOLVED – that agenda item FP20/03# 24 - ‘Staff in Confidence’ be treated as confidential and be dealt with after the Public (including the Press) have been excluded.**

**FP20/03#18**      **Finance & Personnel Committee Meeting Minutes** - to confirm and sign the minutes of the previous meeting of the Finance & Personnel Committee held on Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> January 2020.  
[LGA 1972, Sch 12 para41 \(1\).](#)

**RESOLVED – that the minutes of the previous meeting of the Finance & Personnel Committee held on Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> January 2020 be signed as a correct record.**

**FP20/03#19**      **Action Review Summary** – to receive and review outstanding actions

Members were advised that investigations into alternative banks have not progressed.

**RESOLVED – to receive and note the report.**

**FP20/03#20**      **Town Clerk's Report** - to receive and note update from Town Clerk

- Public Conveniences – potential budget gap due to legislation not coming forward in relation to the abolition of business rates in time for April 2020
- Accounts – Year end closedown – 30<sup>th</sup> April 2020 – remote access due to Coronavirus restrictions on travel/social distancing

**FP20/03#21**      **Finance**

- i)      To receive and note the Committee's year to date expenditure and income

**Noted**

- ii)     To receive and note the Council's Bank balances and review the balances of general and earmarked reserves.

**RESOLVED – to recommend to Full Council the transfer of £162.88 from the Market Store Grant EMR to the Town Team Portas Grant EMR.**

**FP20/03#22**      **Policies**

To approve incorporation of the NALC recommendations into the Council's adopted Financial Regulations

The Committee agreed to rectify several other minor inconsistencies.

Proposed: Councillor Utting  
Unanimous

Seconded: Councillor Stark

**RESOLVED – to adopt the revised Financial Regulations with immediate effect.**

7.26pm Councillor Lister left the meeting

**FP20/03#23**      **Twinning**

To confirm expenditure towards hosting a Civic Reception for the Conde Twinning Visit from the 2020/21 budget.

The Committee was informed that both twinning visits have been postponed on the grounds of public health. It is hoped to reschedule the Conde visit later in the year. It was noted the likely costs of hosting the reception at the Larruperz would be £300.00.

7.28pm Councillor Lister returned to the meeting

**FP20/03#24**      **In view of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted, it is likely that the press and public will be excluded during consideration of this item (Item FP20/03 # 17 above refers)**

**Staff in Confidence - Staffing Update**

- i)      To receive a verbal report from the Town Clerk on a number of Staff Updates.

Members received the Briefing Note which had been circulated in advance which outlined the Council's contingency plans in the wake of the Coronavirus outbreak. It was acknowledged no plan could cover all scenarios but there were three principles the Council should adhere to, which were, in order of importance

- Health and welfare of the staff, councillors and families
- Health and welfare of the community (litter bins, toilets and cemetery)
- Short term and medium to long term duty to continue to run the Council in order to try and maintain headway and general duties

ii) To appoint three Members to a Panel for the purposes of conducting the Town Clerk's Appraisal

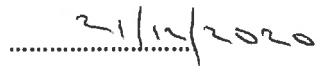
Proposed: Councillor Utting  
Unanimous

Seconded: Councillor Stark

**RESOLVED – to receive and note the verbal report in relation to contingency arrangements and appoint Councillors Utting, Roberts and Lister to be the nominated Panel to conduct the Town Clerk's appraisal.**

There being no further business the meeting closed at 8.00pm

  
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Chairman

  
.....  
Date



# Ross-on-Wye Town Council

## Minutes of the meeting of the Finance & Personnel Sub-Committee held on Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> October 2020 at 7.00pm

The meeting was conducted on-line in accordance with  
[Local Authorities \(Coronavirus\) \(Flexibility of Local Authority Meetings\) \(England\) Regulations 2020](#)

Present: Councillors C Bartrum (Chairman), L Stark and J Winder.  
Ex Officio Members: Councillor Utting.

In attendance: Mrs L Wilcox – Acting Clerk and Mrs H Holmes – Finance & Admin Assistant.  
There were no members of the public and no members of the press present.

**FP20/10#25**

### **Apologies for Absence**

[Local Government Act 1972 s85 \(1\)](#)

Councillor K Fowler

**RESOLVED – To accept the apologies given**

Not present: Councillors D Ciolte and P Symonds.

**FP20/10#26**

### **Declarations of Interest**

None

**FP20/10#27**

### **Dispensations**

None

**FP20/10/28**

### **Public Participation**

There were no members of the public present.

**FP20/10/29**

### **To resolve to exclude members of the press and public**

[Public Bodies \(Admission to Meetings\) Act 1960](#)

To agree any items to be dealt with after the public (including the press) have been excluded as publicity would prejudice the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted

Proposed: Councillor Winder

Seconded: Councillor Utting

Unanimous

**RESOLVED – that agenda item FP20/10#40 - 'Staff in Confidence' be treated as confidential and be dealt with after the Public (including the Press) have been excluded.**

**FP20/10#30**

### **Election of Deputy Finance & Personnel Sub-Committee Chairman**

Councillor Winder proposed Councillor Fowler (in her absence) and Councillor Utting indicated his willingness to be Deputy

Proposed: Councillor Bartrum

Seconded: Councillor Stark

Unanimous

**RESOLVED – that Councillor Utting be Deputy Chairman**

**FP20/10#31**      **Finance & Personnel Committee Meeting Minutes** - to confirm and sign the minutes of the previous meeting of the Finance & Personnel Committee held on Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> March 2020  
[LGA 1972, Sch 12 para41 \(1\)](#).

**RESOLVED – that the minutes of the previous meeting of the Finance & Personnel Committee held on Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> March 2020 be signed as a correct record in due course.**

**FP20/10#32**      **Action Review Summary** – to receive and review outstanding actions

- The Chairman commented that Santander had given advance notification that they would be withdrawing their cash service in the near future. It was noted that the town council currently required cash for some of their day-to-day business and alternative card measures were briefly discussed

**RESOLVED – to discuss a cash policy at the next meeting.**

**FP20/10#33**      **Committee Clerk's Report** - to receive and note update from Town Clerk

Nothing to report

**FP20/10#34**      **Finance**

- To receive and note the Committee's year to date expenditure and income  
**Noted**
- To receive and note the Council's Bank balances and review the balances of general and earmarked reserves  
**Noted**
- To approve expenditure for two new laptops at a cost of £1450.00 plus vat from the Equipment/Furniture/Small Tools budget

Proposed: Councillor Winder  
Unanimous

Seconded: Councillor Utting

**RESOLVED – to amend the above proposal to purchase VPNs in addition to two new laptops from the Equipment/Furniture/Small Tools budget.**

**FP20/10#35**      **Bank Reconciliations**  
[Financial Regulations Clause 2.2](#)

To receive confirmation from the appointed verifier, Councillor Fowler that the bank reconciliations have been checked to the Council's bank statements from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2020 – 30<sup>th</sup> September 2020

**Confirmed.**

**FP20/10#36**      **Policies**

To review the Council's policy on the following:

- **Appraisal Policy**  
(last reviewed December 2018)  
Strengthening of the synergy between appraisal documents and the Council's business plan was raised and this would be discussed at the next Management Committee meeting



- **Purchasing Delegation Limits & Active Purchasing policy**  
(last reviewed October 2018)
- **Statement of Internal Control**  
(last reviewed December 2018)

Proposed: Councillor Utting

Seconded: Councillor Winder

Unanimous

**RESOLVED – to adopt the above three policies and to discuss strengthening the synergy between the Appraisal Policy and the Council’s Business Plan at the next Management Committee meeting.**

**FP20/10#37**

**Contract Renewal**

[Financial Regulations Clause 11.1d \(Application to waive Financial Regulation\)](#)

To consider a renewal to the Service Proposal for the supply of Employment Law/Health & Safety services for a three-year term 2020-2023 (existing contract with Ellis Whittam due to end 9<sup>th</sup> October 2020.)

When making their decision to waive Financial Regulations, members took into account the good service they had received from the company and the favourable terms on offer for the next three years but a competitive process would definitely be undertaken next time. The additional fee of £11.10 per employee per annum for Legal Expenses Insurance was deemed beneficial.

Proposed: Councillor Utting

Seconded: Councillor Stark

Unanimous

**RESOLVED – to waive Financial Regulation 11.1d and renew the contract with Ellis Whittam for the supply of Employment Law/Health & Safety services for a further three-year term 2020- 2023 to include Legal Expenses Insurance @ £11.10 per person per annum but to ensure that a competitive process is undertaken at the conclusion of the three-year term in 2023.**

**FP20/10#38**

**CCTV Service Level**

To note action under the Clerk’s delegated authority regarding the signing of the CCTV SLA for period 1<sup>st</sup> April 2020 – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025 as resolved by Full Council 19/02#31

**Noted**

**FP20/10#39**

**Insurance**

To note action under the Clerk’s delegated authority and receive a summary of the Council’s insurance policy renewed under the Long-Term Agreement

**Noted**

**FP20/10#40**

**In view of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted, it is likely that the press and public will be excluded during consideration of this item**

**(Item FP20/10 # 29 above refers)**

**Staff in Confidence - Staffing Update**

*Mrs Holmes left the meeting*

- To receive a verbal report on a number of Staff Updates

**Noted** - The Town Clerk’s appraisal had been completed.

- To approve payment of additional hours for the Projects Officer for a number of specific initiatives

The Chairman outlined the additional duties undertaken

Proposed: Councillor Julian Utting  
Unanimous

Seconded: Councillor Winder

**RESOLVED – to approve payment of additional hours for the Projects Officer for a number of specific initiatives.**

- iii) To agree temporary uplift in salary for the Finance & Administration Assistant for deputising in the Clerk's absence

It was noted that the uplift figure in the confidential notes differed from the nationally agreed rates from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2020 and the figure was therefore amended accordingly

Proposed: Councillor Stark  
Unanimous

Seconded: Councillor Utting

**RESOLVED – to temporarily uplift the salary of the Finance & Administration Assistant for deputising in the Clerk's absence, using the current nationally agreed rates from 1<sup>st</sup> April for the uplift SCP.**

- iv) To delegate authority to the Clerk in consultation with the Council's HR Advisor to recruit to a temporary post for the purpose of digitising the Council's cemetery records, at a maximum cost of £2.5k

The Chairman outlined the need to digitise the Council's paper records to mitigate the risk of damage which would have a major impact on burial services provided by the Council and to facilitate on-line searches

Proposed: Councillor Utting  
Unanimous

Seconded: Councillor Winder

**RESOLVED – to delegate to the Clerk (in consultation with the Council's HR Advisor) to recruit to a temporary post to digitise the Council's cemetery records at a maximum cost of £2.5k.**

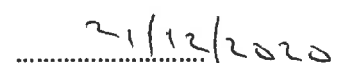
- v) To receive a verbal report confirming the outcome of the selection process for the Digital and Social Media Marketing and Events Co-ordinator.

The meeting was shown the successful candidate's blog and it was noted that her contract was being prepared. Arrangements were in place to familiarise the new officer with the area and it was hoped she would increase the current 3k volunteers, suggest Christmas activities for the benefit of local residents and businesses and liaise with Herefordshire Council on their initiatives

**RESOLVED – to employ a Digital & Social Media Marketing & Events Co-ordinator on a six-month fixed term contract (which may be extended) from 19<sup>th</sup> October at the agreed SCP.**

There being no further business the meeting closed at 8.30pm

  
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Chairman

  
.....  
Date



# Ross-on-Wye Town Council

## Minutes of the ordinary meeting of the Finance & Personnel Sub-Committee held on Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> December 2020 at 7.00pm

The meeting was conducted on-line in accordance with  
[Local Authorities \(Coronavirus\) \(Flexibility of Local Authority Meetings\) \(England\) Regulations 2020](#)

Present: Councillors C Bartrum (Chairman), K Fowler, L Stark, and J Winder.  
Ex Officio Member: Councillor J Utting.

In attendance: Mrs S Robson – Town Clerk and Councillor D Lister  
There were no members of the public and no members of the press present.

### FP20/12#41 Apologies for Absence

[Local Government Act 1972 s85 \(1\)](#)

#### No apologies received

Not present: Councillors D Ciolte and P Symonds.

### FP20/12#42 Declarations of Interest

[Local Authorities \(Model Code of Conduct\) Order 2007 SI No. 1159](#)

None

### FP20/12#43 Dispensations

None

### FP20/12#44 Public Participation

[Standing Orders Clause 3 \(e, f, g & h\)](#)

There were no members of the public present.

### FP20/12#45 To resolve to exclude members of the press and public

[Public Bodies \(Admission to Meetings\) Act 1960](#)

To agree any items to be dealt with after the public (including the press) have been excluded as publicity would prejudice the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted

Proposed: Councillor Winder  
Unanimous

Seconded: Councillor Utting

**RESOLVED – that agenda item FP20/12#54 - ‘Staff in Confidence’ be treated as confidential and be dealt with after the Public (including the Press) have been excluded.**

### FP20/12#46 Finance & Personnel Sub-Committee Meeting Minutes

[LGA 1972, Sch 12 para41 \(1\).](#)

To confirm and sign the minutes of the previous ordinary meeting of the Finance & Personnel Sub-Committee held on Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> October 2020

**RESOLVED – that the minutes of the previous ordinary meeting of the Finance & Personnel Sub-Committee held on Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> October 2020 be signed as a correct record in due course.**

**FP20/12#47 Action Review Summary** – to receive and review outstanding actions

- The Sub-Committee review of the Mayor’s Allowance Policy resulted in an agreement to keep the status quo and continue to process the allowance through the payroll which would account for tax/NI as applicable. The Clerk agreed to make investigations with the other market towns in the County.

**RESOLVED – to receive and note the report.**

**FP20/12#48 Committee Clerk’s Report** - to receive and note update from Town Clerk

- Low claims rebate adjustment for 2019/20 from the Insurer in the sum of £344.98 has been received
- Mayor’s Charity account – the Memorandum of Understanding has been signed and future funds will be managed by Ross CDT. Changes to the current bank account mandate will be made to reflect the current mayor and deputy

**RESOLVED – to receive and note the report.**

**FP20/12#49 Finance**

- To receive and note the Committee’s year to date expenditure and income

**Noted**

- To receive and note the Council’s Bank balances and review the balances of general and earmarked reserves

**Noted**

**FP20/12#50 Finance – Internal Audit 2020/2021**

To receive and accept the Interim Internal Audit Report dated 11<sup>th</sup> October 2020 and consider the conclusions.

The Sub-Committee was pleased the report confirmed no issues had been raised for formal comment or recommendation.

**RESOLVED – to receive and accept the Report. The Members thanked the Clerk for her work in running a ‘tight ship’.**

**FP20/12#51 Telephone Contract**

To note contract end dates for existing services and consider moving the telephony system to a cloud based hosted contract for the provision of phones and faster fibre broadband.

The Sub-Committee saw the advantage of moving to a more flexible system with improved functionality which would take advantage of advances in technology to enable new ways of working.

Proposed: Councillor Stark  
Unanimous

Seconded: Councillor Fowler

**RESOLVED – to accept the Officer Recommendation and enter into a three-year Contract for the provision of phone and broadband services with Midland Comms at a Contract Cost sum of £3980.00 plus vat**

**FP20/12#52 Budget**

[Financial Regulations \(Section 3 Annual Estimates and Forward Planning\)](#)

- Agree the one-year budget forecast as part of the 2021/ 2022 budget submission,
- ensure that any capital project (including building maintenance) has an appropriate project plan identifying the schedule of works (to an appropriate level of detail) and the source of funds e.g. budget or reserves,
- identify impact of capital projects on revenue budget for the first 5 years.

The Sub-Committee considered the draft budget, the Clerk reported that whilst in general the figures would not change much there was one exception, that of the proposed expansion of the CCTV System. The additional cameras, if approved, would be installed at the Skatepark, the Ropewalk and the Bandstand areas. The capital and revenue costs had been split out for clarity.

Proposed: Councillor Utting  
Unanimous

Seconded: Councillor Fowler

**RESOLVED – to recommend the draft budget for 2021/22, including the costs for the expansion of the CCTV System, to the Management Committee for approval.**

**FP20/12#53 Policies**

To review the Council’s policy on the following;

- Annual Investment Strategy – last reviewed November 2019
- Code of Conduct for Employees - last reviewed June 2019
- Twinning Policy - last reviewed November 2017

Proposed: Councillor Utting  
Unanimous

Seconded: Councillor Winder

**RESOLVED – to adopt the three policies with the minor recommended changes.**

**FP20/12#54 In view of the nature of the business to be transacted, it is likely that the press and public will be excluded during consideration of this item (Item FP20/12 # 45 above refers)**

**Staff in Confidence - Staffing Update**

- i) To receive a verbal report on a number of Staff Updates.
  - Update on the progress of the digitisation of the cemetery records
  - Update on homeworking arrangements with the installation of new VPN

**Noted**

- ii) To discuss the existing Amenities Team structure and consider future options

There was a lengthy discussion about the existing activities and scope of works carried out within the Team which has been in its existing format for 2 years. During this time there has been an active drive towards efficiencies but it was recognised that the workload puts pressure on the current resources.

**RESOLVED – to refer this back to the Amenities Sub-Committee to consider a fully costed report with recommendations.**

There being no further business the meeting closed at 8.40pm

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Chairman

.....  
Date