



## **HEXHAM TOWN COUNCIL**

**I GIVE NOTICE** that a meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee will be held on 26 September 2023 at 5.30pm at the Town Council office, when the following items will be discussed:

### **A G E N D A**

1. Apologies for absence.
2. To receive minutes of the Finance and General Purposes Committee meeting held on 5 September 2023, enclosed.
3. Matters arising, if any.
4. Declarations of interest (see enclosed).
5. To receive bank reconciliation and budget income and expenditure report to 31 August 2023 (attached).
6. To consider unused budgets in 2022/23 and significant under or overspends.
7. To review and recommend re-adoption of the Safeguarding Policy (see enclosed).
8. To agree exclusion of the public during consideration of agenda items 9 and 10.
9. To consider applications and agree 2024/25 Grant Aid (see enclosed).
10. To consider any staffing matters.
11. To note the next meeting will be held on 24 October at 5.30pm.

Jane Kevan  
Locum Town Clerk  
19 September 2023

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H agenda 0923 No2 FandGPCCommittee

**HEXHAM TOWN COUNCIL**  
**MINUTES OF THE TOWN COUNCIL FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE**  
**MEETING HELD ON 5 SEPTEMBER 2023 (5.30pm-6.30pm)**

23/28	PRESENT: Councillors F Hartland, S Ball, A Baty, M Domingue (online) and A Smith.
23/29	APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: Councillors D Kennedy, S Fairless-Aitken and J Ord.
23/30	MINUTES of the meeting held on 25 July 2023, having been circulated, were AGREED subject to removing the second paragraph at minute FGP23/26.
23/31	MATTERS ARISING: It was noted that the proposed action relating to a meeting with the Council's Accountant will not be pursued; that the Hexham Living Wage Group agreed funding has been paid; and that the locum Clerk will produce a report on the 2022/23 unused budgets, and significant under or overspends for the next meeting.
23/32	DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST: There were no declarations made.
23/33	FINANCIAL REPORT: The bank statement and account reconciliation together with the 2023/24 budget report to 31 July 2023 were received and accepted. Copies are attached to the minutes.
23/34	HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY: It was AGREED to recommend to Full Council that the previous policy be readopted.
23/35	BUSINESS CONTINUITY PLAN: It was AGREED to recommend to Full Council that the previous plan, with some updates as attached to the agenda, be readopted.
23/36	<p>FUNDING APPLICATION PROCESS: It was AGREED that some minor amendments/additions are needed to the Grant Aid application forms and also that a policy should be adopted for other funding, together with a separate application form. Considerations discussed included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Applicants displaying the HTC logo on relevant publicity materials</li> <li>• Information being provided on poverty proofing links</li> <li>• That funding applications will be considered quarterly (deadlines being 1<sup>st</sup> January, April, July and October)</li> <li>• Information being provided on how an event will be promoted</li> <li>• Use of the HTC support banners</li> <li>• How an event will be self-funding as far as possible</li> <li>• Addressing disrepute</li> </ul> <p>It was further AGREED that this will be relisted on a future agenda.</p>
23/37	EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC: It was resolved and AGREED in accordance with Section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 that as publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the

	confidential nature of the business about to be transacted, namely consideration of any funding applications and staffing matters, it is advisable in the public interest that the public and press be temporarily excluded from the meeting and they were requested to withdraw.
23/38	FUNDING APPLICATIONS: It was noted that none had been received.
23/39	STAFFING MATTERS: It was noted that all Councillors will shortly receive a confidential update.
23/40	NEXT MEETING: It was AGREED that the next Committee meeting will be held at 5.30pm on Tuesday 26 September 2023, primarily to consider Grant Aid applications, with the following meeting to be held at 5.30pm on Tuesday 24 October.

Action Log

Produce a report on the 2022/23 unused budgets, and significant under or overspends (minute 23/31)	Locum Clerk
Refer the H&S Policy to Full Council (minute 23/34)	Locum Clerk
Refer the Business Continuity Plan to Full Council (minute 23/35)	Locum Clerk
Further consider the funding application process (minute 23/36)	All
Provide all Councillors with a staffing update (minute 23/39)	Councillors Kennedy and Hartland

Chairman .....

**HEXHAM TOWN COUNCIL - DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**  
**FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE**

Under the Code of Conduct adopted by the Council on 3 September 2012 Councillors must declare if they have a disclosable interest in any matters under consideration.

To do so Councillors must use one of the following statements:

1. "I have a disclosable pecuniary interest  
in..... (for example) Agenda item 3,  
Planning application number 13/1234".  
(NOTE: Code of Conduct paragraphs 11&15 apply).
  
2. "I have a disclosable personal interest  
in..... (for example) Agenda item 4,  
Grant aid application by Hexham Youth Initiative  
(NOTE: Code of Conduct paragraph 13 applies).

Councillors should familiarise themselves with the Code of Conduct regarding the definitions of (A) pecuniary interest and (B) other personal interest and their obligations when declaring any interest.

To ensure Councillors interests are correctly minuted please use one of the above statements when declaring an interest.

NB. Should a Councillor wish to take part in the consideration and voting on a matter or matters in which he/she has a disclosable interest then they may request a dispensation be granted to enable them to take part in the discussion and voting on it but at least 10 days' notice must be given for any dispensation request.

**HEXHAM TOWN COUNCIL**  
**FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE**  
**19 SEPTEMBER 2023**

The following budgets were unused in 2022/23:

<b>Budget Heading</b>	<b>Reference and Budget</b>	<b>Notes</b>
Professional fees	6095 (£2000)	No costs incurred
Trees maintenance	7410 (£1000)	No survey done?
Wydon Park Allotments	7030 (£150)	No costs incurred
VMS Units	7160 (£1000)	No costs incurred
Street signs – Repair/Maintain	7170 (£4000)	2023/24 budget decreased
War Memorial Reserve	5096 (£500)	No costs incurred
Flowerbeds and tubs – Renew/Replace	7110 (£750)	2023/24 budget increased
Support to access cultural events	5150 (£2400)	Not used (no 2023/24 budget)
Town Plan Development Reserve	5500 (£1000)	Not used (no 2023/24 budget)

Notes on other significant variances in 2022/23:

<b>Budget Heading</b>	<b>Reference</b>	<b>Notes</b>
Cemetery fees	4010	Anticipated income was £109,250, actual was £77,437
Bank Charges	5060	Over budget: the £250 budget was exceeded by £72.44
External Audit	5070	Under budget: £1000 charged from £1200 budget
Elections Reserve	5090	Over budget as election required for the Priestpople ward after a resignation
Internal Accounting and Audit	6000	Under budget (£2930 invoiced from £3800 budget)
Staff welfare	6010	Over budget (£395.80 spent from £300 budget)
Councillors and Employees Training	6080	Under budget (only £834.60 spent from £2000 budget)
Tourism Support Fund	6096	Under budget (£5282 awarded from £10000 budget)
PPE	7300	Under budget (£661.28 spent from £1500 budget)
Machines/Equipment – Renew/Replace	7315	Under budget (£14351 spent from £20000 budget)
Machines/Equipment – Repair/Maintain	7320	Over budget (£6761 spent from £5000 budget) Budget increased to £7000 for 2023/24
Non-specific Expenses	800	Under budget (£907 creditreceived in March)
Heat/Light	7370	Under budget (£2669.27 spent from £5000 budget)

Water Rates	7390	Under budget ((£851.62 spent from £2000 budget) Budget decreased to £1600 for 2023/24
Insurance (not motor)	7420	Over budget (premium was £7422.80: budget was £6800)
Floodlights – Repair/Maintain	7450	Under budget (£1228.38 spent from £3000 budget)
Town Clock – Repair/Maintain	7460	Under budget (£165 spent from £900 budget)
Dene Park Allotments	7000	Under budget (£480 spent from £800 budget)
Quatre Bras Allotments	7020	Under budget (£1485 spent from £4000 budget) Budget decreased to £2000 for 2023/24
Seats – Repair, etc	7130	Under budget (£123 spent from £1000 budget)
VMS Units	7160	Under budget (£145 spent from £1000 budget)
Play Areas – Repair/Maintain	7190	Under budget (£1985 spent from £10000 budget)
Sustainability	7215	Under budget (£1129 spent from £3000 budget)
Events	7805	Over budget (£7117 spent from £6000 budget) Budget increased to 10000 for 2023/24
Town Twinning (Council expenses)	7870	Under budget (£331 spent from £1000 budget)
Mayor's Annual Reception	7070	Under budget (£54 spent from £700 budget)

**HEXHAM TOWN COUNCIL**  
**FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE**  
**19 SEPTEMBER 2023**

**REVIEW OF SAFEGUARDING POLICY**

The Committee is requested to consider and recommend the following Safeguarding Policy to Full Council. It was adopted in April 2022.

**HEXHAM TOWN COUNCIL**  
**SAFEGUARDING POLICY**

**SAFEGUARDING (CHILD PROTECTION AND VULNERABLE PERSONS)  
POLICY**

**Introduction**

Hexham Town Council is committed to taking all reasonable precautions to safeguard the welfare of children and vulnerable persons that use its services and promotes a safeguarding culture and environment.

**Safeguarding**

The Council will endeavour to safeguard children and vulnerable persons, in that:

- The welfare of the child and vulnerable adult is paramount.
- All children and vulnerable adults have the right to protection from abuse.
- All suspicions and allegations of abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately.
- All staff, volunteers and elected members of the Council have a responsibility to report concerns to the Town Clerk.
- No staff, volunteers and elected members of the Council are to deal with situations of abuse or to decide if abuse has occurred.

**Duty of care**

- Any member of staff or Councillor working alone with a vulnerable adult or children will be subject to a DBS check.
- Hexham Town Council has a 'duty of care' to protect others from harm; this includes a range of processes including risk assessment and health & safety practices.
- Allegations or suspicions of inappropriate behaviour by a member of staff or Councillor, or concerns for the safety of a child or vulnerable person at a Town Council meeting or event must be referred immediately to the Town Clerk who will refer the matter to Onecall for investigation.
- A member of staff or Councillor who feels their concern for the welfare of a child or vulnerable person has not been sufficiently advanced has a duty of care to call Onecall themselves.

- Allegations or suspicions of inappropriate behaviour by the Town Clerk will be referred immediately to the Chair of the Council for investigation.

**You must refer, you must not investigate.**

Onecall number: 01670 536 400

Email: [onecall@northumberland.gov.uk](mailto:onecall@northumberland.gov.uk)

Policy adopted by Hexham Town Council on 11 April 2022, to be reviewed October 2024.