

STURMINSTER NEWTON TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE FINANCE & POLICY COMMITTEE

HELD ON WEDNESDAY 26th NOVEMBER 2025 AT 7.15PM IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER



PRESENT:

Cllr P Batstone
Cllr L Cooper
Cllr N Dobson (Chair)

Cllr A Donaldson
Cllr H Lacey
Cllr J Rose (Vice Chair)

ALSO PRESENT:

Cllr S Trim

IN ATTENDANCE:

K Squire (Town Clerk), J Drew (Office Administrator)

MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC: 4

MINUTE NO	COMMENTS
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| 25/26/189 | <p>To receive comments and questions from members of the public</p> <p>No comments were received by members of the public in attendance but two residents who could not attend in person had emailed and these were read. Both were raising concerns and objections regarding item 25/26/197, for reasons such as; disproportionate financial responsibility, high precept, financial risk, council tax being based on property band not income, catchment area being North Dorset not just Sturminster Newton, financial commitment open to creep if other funding ceases.</p> |
| 25/26/190 | <p>Apologies for absence</p> <p>Apologies were received from Cllr Mantock. These apologies were accepted by members.</p> |
| 25/26/191 | <p>To approve declarations of interest and written applications for dispensation</p> <p>No interests were declared and no written requests for dispensation received.</p> |
| 25/26/192 | <p>To approve the minutes of the previous Finance & Policy Committee meeting held on 22nd October 25</p> <p>The minutes of the Finance & Policy Committee meeting held on 22nd October 25, having been circulated and published prior to the meeting, were taken as a true and correct record and duly signed by the Chair.</p> |
| 25/26/193 | <p>Financial Matters:</p> <p>1. To approve any payments over £2000</p> <p>The Clerk advised that she had paid the electrical works for the Youth Club and the Millwright invoice as both works had been completed both had been previously approved by Council.</p> |

- 25/26/194 To consider a report from the Internal Auditor following interim internal audit.**
The Committee noted the recommendations in the report. The Clerk will add the Asset register and Staffing structure to the website.
The Committee resolved to recommend the internal audit report to Full Council for approval.
- 25/26/195 To approve the following policies:**
- **Investments**
 - **Reserves**
 - **Social Media**
 - **Lost Property**
- The Committee resolved to approve the above listed policies which had been previously circulated with the agenda.**
- 25/26/196 To consider draft budget for 2026/2027.**
The Clerk confirmed that the draft budget previously circulated:
- included the increases discussed at the 22nd October 25 Committee meeting.
 - Included costs to cover staff training including courses needed for new members of staff. Plus £2k for Councillor training in anticipation of recommendations from DAPTC.
 - Included estimated running costs for the Youth Club but she was concerned that the business rates may need to be increased when figures are known.
 - Did not include any projects, new equipment or extra grounds staff which could be discussed at Full Council in the 17th December 25 when the tax base is known.
- The Committee resolved to recommend the draft operational budget to Full Council to consider expenditure in addition to the operational figures when the tax base figures are known.**

25/26/197 To consider a request from the Vale Family Hub to increase the Town Council precept to make a recurring donation to the Vale Family Hub each year of £25,000.

The Committee considered the request from the Vale Family Hub along with the Clerk's report circulated with the agenda.

- **The Committee resolved to recommend to Full Council that there is insufficient information and time to demonstrate due diligence in the use of public funds for allocation in the 26/27 budget. The request significantly exceeds the limits of the current Grants Policy, and substantial policy changes would be required before a grant of this scale could be considered.**
- **The Committee further resolved to recommend that a Working Party be established to engage with local organisations, better understand their operations, and explore potential ways the Council might work with and support them. The Working Party should undertake public consultation as part of this work and report its findings and recommendations to the Committee within an agreed timeframe. The Working Party would not have delegated financial authority.**

The Committee chair added that he had been informed that the Dorset Association of Parish and Town Councils (DAPTC) were working with Dorset Council to try to change criteria of funding to include running costs. He suggested the Council could write in support of this move and the Clerk could encourage others to do likewise.

25/26/198 To receive information from members and proposals for future business
Cllr Lacey suggested that the Council look at some professional mentoring or training for a member of the office staff to make better use of social media in engaging with the community.

The Chair closed the meeting at 8.04pm

Chairs Signature..... Date Approved