

# Midsomer Norton Full Town Council Meeting

Midsomer Norton Town Council

## **Agenda - 2 September 2024**

---

### **Midsomer Norton - Full Town Council Agenda**

---

**To: All Members of Midsomer Norton Town Council**

---

- 1 Welcome**

---

- 2 Declaration of Interest**

---

- 3 Public Session**

---

- 4 Town Hall Project Management Report**

---

- 5 Mayor's Announcements**

---

- 6 Confirmation of Previous Minutes**

---

- 7 Co-option of a Town Councillor**

---

- 8 Policies**

---

- 9 Staffing Committee**

---

- 10 Formation of a Budget Working Party**

---

- 11 Grant Application from Midsomer Norton and District Carnival Association**

---

- 12 Appointment of the Internal Auditor for 2024-2025**

---

- 13 Proposal to renew the lease on Wellow Brook Walk**

- 
- 14**                      **Formal Council Representative for the High Street Regeneration Steering Group**
- 
- 15**                      **To note reports from the following Committees and to ratify any actions**
- 
- 16**                      **Reports from the Town Trust**
- 
- 17**                      **Reports from Councillors representing Outside Bodies**
- 
- 18**                      **Code of Conduct Complaint**
- 
- 19**                      **Date of Next Meeting**
- 
- 20**                      **Exclusion of the Press and Public**
- 
- 21**                      **Investigation Report into the Effectiveness of Midsomer Norton Town Council**

# Table of contents

02/09/2024 19:00 - 21:00

---

|  |           |
|--|-----------|
| <b>1 - Welcome</b>   | <b>6</b>  |
| <hr/>  |           |
| <b>2 - Declaration of Interest</b>   | <b>7</b>  |
| <hr/>  |           |
| <b>3 - Public Session</b>  | <b>8</b>  |
| <hr/>  |           |
| <b>4 - Town Hall Project Management Report</b>                                       | <b>9</b>  |
| <hr/>  |           |
| <b>5 - Mayor's Announcements</b>   | <b>10</b> |
| <hr/>  |           |
| <b>Attachments</b>   |           |
| Mayors announcements August 24   | 11        |
| <b>6 - Confirmation of Previous Minutes</b>  | <b>13</b> |
| <hr/>  |           |
| <b>Attachments</b>   |           |
| Minutes Full Town Council 1st July 2024  | 14        |
| <b>7 - Co-option of a Town Councillor</b>  | <b>19</b> |
| <hr/>  |           |
| <b>8 - Policies</b>  | <b>20</b> |
| <hr/>  |           |
| <b>Attachments</b>   |           |
| Changes to the Financial Regulations   | 21        |
| Financial Regulations 2024   | 22        |
| <b>9 - Staffing Committee</b>  | <b>42</b> |
| <hr/>  |           |
| <b>10 - Formation of a Budget Working Party</b>                                      | <b>43</b> |
| <hr/>  |           |
| <b>Attachments</b>   |           |
| Terms of Reference - Budget Working Party  | 44        |
| <b>11 - Grant Application from Midsomer Norton and District Carnival Association</b> | <b>45</b> |
| <hr/>  |           |
| <b>12 - Appointment of the Internal Auditor for 2024-2025</b>                        | <b>46</b> |
| <hr/>  |           |
| <b>Attachments</b>   |           |
| Appointment of the Internal Auditor for 2024   | 47        |
| <b>13 - Proposal to renew the lease on Wellow Brook Walk</b>                         | <b>48</b> |
| <hr/>  |           |
| <b>14 - Formal Council Representative for the High Street</b>                        | <b>49</b> |

|   |           |
|---|-----------|
| <b>Regeneration Steering Group</b>  | <b>49</b> |
| <hr/>   |           |
| <b>15 - To note reports from the following Committees and to ratify any actions</b>     | <b>50</b> |
| <hr/>   |           |
| <b>Attachments</b>  |           |
| Draft Minutes Finance and Operations Meeting 17th July 2024                             | 51        |
| Draft Minutes Staffing Committee 5th August 2024  | 54        |
| <b>16 - Reports from the Town Trust</b>   | <b>56</b> |
| <hr/>   |           |
| <b>Attachments</b>  |           |
| Current terms of reference for the Town Trust   | 57        |
| <b>17 - Reports from Councillors representing Outside Bodies</b>                        | <b>58</b> |
| <hr/>   |           |
| <b>18 - Code of Conduct Complaint</b>   | <b>59</b> |
| <hr/>   |           |
| <b>19 - Date of Next Meeting</b>  | <b>60</b> |
| <hr/>   |           |
| <b>20 - Exclusion of the Press and Public</b>   | <b>61</b> |
| <hr/>   |           |
| <b>21 - Investigation Report into the Effectiveness of Midsomer Norton Town Council</b> | <b>62</b> |
| <hr/>   |           |

1

---

## 1 - Welcome

---

## 2 - Declaration of Interest

1. Members to declare any interests which are not currently entered in the member's register of interests or he/she has not notified the Monitoring Officer of it.
2. To receive written request for dispensation for disclosable pecuniary interests
3. To grant any request for dispensation as appropriate

| For Decision

---

## 3 - Public Session

This section (at the Chair's discretion may last up to 20 minutes) is not part of the formal meeting of the Council and minutes will not be produced.



## 4 - Town Hall Project Management Report

To receive a progress report from the Town Hall Project Management Team.

For Information

## 5 - Mayor's Announcements

For Information

### Attachments

[Mayors announcements August 24.docx](#)

## **Mayors Announcements July and August 2024**

### **Midsomer Norton Town Fayre 2024**

It was a real pleasure to attend the Midsomer Norton Fayre on Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> July, which took place at the Town Park and Somer Centre site, on Gullock Tynning. I was able to witness the incredible range of activities and attractions taking place, and see so many residents and visitors enjoying themselves and contributing to such a wonderful atmosphere. Over three thousand people attended during the afternoon.

I was proud to take local MPs Dan Norris and Anna Sabine around the Fayre, and show them what a vibrant, positive, and community-minded town, we have. From school maypole dancing to the Town Show, from the creative art displays to the many and varied community stalls, the best of the local community was on display for all to see.

Thank you to the volunteers and staff of the Community Trust, who work so hard throughout the year on this and other events, as well as to all the other volunteers and individuals who were involved in its success.

Midsomer Norton Town Council is very pleased to support and provide the main funding of the event, with valuable support from several other local businesses and groups.

### **Merriman Theatre Group production of Our House**

Merriman Theatre Group put on a fantastic and thoroughly professional production of Our House, at Writhlington School's Dragonfly Theatre, on 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> July. I was very pleased to attend the latest production from this important local organisation, which is managed and directed by Graeme Savage. A large and very talented cast, of young people, really engaged the audience, and continued the incredibly successfully tradition of Merriman productions.

There are upcoming productions of Chicago and Barnum later this year, by other Merriman groups.

### **Invite the Mayor to your event or organisation**

The Town Council now has an online booking system to allow people to request the attendance of the Mayor, or other Town Council representative, at an event. The booking form can be found on the Council website. Many groups, businesses and organisations really value the support and interest of the Mayor, as well as other Councillors, allowing them to share the work they do.

**Mayor of Midsomer Norton at Midsomer Norton Town Fayre 2024**

With Dan Norris, West of England Metro Mayor, and North East Somerset MP.

With Anna Sabine, Frome and East Somerset MP.

With MNR Rotary club, and MNR Tangent groups, raising money for local causes.



**Mayor of Midsomer Norton at Merriman Theatre Group's production of Our House, with Graeme Savage.**



---

## 6 - Confirmation of Previous Minutes

To confirm the Minutes of the Town Council Meeting held on 1st July 2024

For Decision

### Attachments

[Minutes Full Town Council 1st July 2024.docx](#)



## Midsomer Norton Town Council

Council Offices, The Town Hall, The Island, Midsomer Norton, BA3 2HQ  
Phone: 01761 418701 Email: [townclerk@msn-tc.gov.uk](mailto:townclerk@msn-tc.gov.uk)  
Mayor: Councillor Martyn Plant Locum Town Clerk: Lee Jakeman

### 1 - Present

Cllrs Lynda Robertson, Shaun Hughes, Deborah Thatcher, Wendy Gregory, Cheryl Scott, Charlotte Lucas, Martyn Plant (Chair)

Apologies were received from Cllrs Gordon MacKay and Tim Wells

Also in attendance - Lee Jakeman (Locum Town Clerk), Kate Egan (Deputy Town Clerk) and Jo Corbett (Office Manager)

### 2 - Welcome

Cllr Martyn Plant welcomed everyone to the meeting.

### 3 - Declaration of Interest

1. Members to declare any interests which are not currently entered in the member's register of interests, or he/she has not notified the Monitoring Officer of it.
2. To receive written request for dispensation for disclosable pecuniary interests
3. To grant any request for dispensation as appropriate

### Decision:

There were no declaration of interests for requests for dispensations from the Councillors.

### 4 - Public Session

This section (at the Chair's discretion may last up to 20 minutes) is not part of the formal meeting of the Council and minutes will not be produced.

There were two members of the public in attendance.

### 5 - Mayor's Announcements

The Council noted the Mayor's Announcements, they had been sent out prior to the meeting.

### 6 - Confirmation of Previous Minutes

To confirm the Minutes of the Town Council Meeting held on 3rd June 2024

### Decision:

The Council RESOLVED to accept the minutes from the Town Council Meeting held on 3rd June 2024 as a true record, these were signed and dated by the Chair.

## 7 - Allocation of Grants from Midsomer Norton

Proposal to approve Grant applications for the first award of 2024-2025. Applications have been received from the following. Copies of the applications have been sent separately.

1. Avon Somerset Police - £1,000
2. Dial A Ride - £1,000
3. Farenheit Baton Twirlers - £1,000
4. Somerset Farmers Market - £4,500 over three years, £1,500 each year
5. MHA Communities - £782.40
6. Midsomer Norton Netball Club - £1750
7. Swan Advice Network - £983
8. Midsomer Norton Rugby Football Club - £800
9. Trauma Breakdown - £5,000
10. Hearttalks CIC £1,000

### **Decision:**

In reviewing the applications submitted members noted that the total value of the requests exceeded the amount budgeted for. Members further noted that the grants policy caps the maximum level of grant at £1,000. Members also considered in general that grants for new or novel applications should be given support ahead of standard revenue costs for organisations.

The Council RESOLVED to approve the following grant applications and award the monies requested: -

Dial A Ride - £1,000.00

Somerset Farmers Market - £1,000.00

MHA Communities - £782.40

Midsomer Norton Netball Club - £500.00

Swan Advice Network - £983.00

Midsomer Norton Rugby Football Club - £800.00

Heart talks CIC - £1,000

The Council also RESOLVED that the following application lacked sufficient detail for a decision to be made (and that the Clerk should write to unsuccessful applicants in order they might submit an application).

Avon Somerset Police

Farenheit Baton Twirlers

Trauma Breakdown

Midsomer Norton Netball Club, although awarded a small amount will be contacted for further information.

## 8 - Connect Youth South West (YCSW)

To receive correspondence from YCSW regarding a planned consultation on a review the need of young people in relation to youth work and to consider the use of the draft youth service consultation questionnaire prepared by the YCSW.

### **Decision:**

The Council NOTED the correspondence and supported the questionnaire although further information will be requested as to how the consultation would be managed.

## 9 - Committees

1. Proposal to elect a Councillor to the Staffing Committee and the Planning Committee
2. To agree a date for a Staffing Committee Meeting
3. To consider moving the Finance and Operations Committee currently scheduled for Monday 15th July 7pm to Monday 22nd July due to unavailability of Councillors.

### **Decision:**

1. **Proposal to elect a Councillor to the Staffing Committee and the Planning Committee**

The Council RESOLVED Cllr Wendy Gregory be appointed to the Planning Committee, this was proposed by Cllr Cheryl Scott and seconded by Cllr Deborah Thatcher.

Cllr Martyn Plant proposed Cllr Cheryl Scott be appointed to the Staffing Committee and was seconded by Cllr Lynda Robertson. The vote was not carried.

2. **To agree a date for a Staffing Committee Meeting**

The Council RESOLVED that a provisional date of 5th August at 5.30pm but this will be confirmed once room availability is confirmed.

3. **To consider moving the Finance and Operations Committee meeting currently scheduled for Monday 15th July 7pm to Monday 22nd July due to unavailability of Councillors**

The Council RESOLVED to move the Finance and Operations Committee meeting, but the 22nd clashed with a Town Trust Meeting so the Chair of the Finance Committee and the RFO will agree a date between them.

## 10 - Strategy Development

1. Proposal that the contractor appointed begins the Strategy developments works for the Council before the summer recess.
2. Councillors identify dates that are most likely to be suitable for a strategy visioning day, the idea was to hold this on a Saturday.

### **Decision:**

1. **Proposal that the contractor appointed begins the Strategy developments works for the Council before the summer recess.**

The Council RESOLVED that Council HR and Governance Support be contacted to start producing the questionnaire so Councillors can start putting together responses over the summer recess.

2. **Councillors identify dates that are most likely to be suitable for a strategy visioning day, the idea was to hold this on a Saturday.**

The Councillors RESOLVED to delay the strategy visioning day until the results of the questionnaire have been compiled.



## **11 - Town Hall Update**

To receive an update from the Town Clerk regarding elements of the Town Hall Project and consider funding elements associated but outside of the scope of the fixed price project.

### **Decision:**

The Council RESOLVED to delegate to the Town Clerk to appoint a competent contractor for the removal of chattels from the Town Hall and their storage until they can be returned to the Town Hall for about 3-4 months.

The Council also RESOLVED to delegate to the Town Clerk to appoint a competent contractor, to provide sufficient dehumidifiers to remove damp from existing walls.

## **12 - To note reports from the following Committees and to ratify any actions**

To receive an update from the Chairs of the following Committees

- Finance and Operations Committee
- Planning Committee

The Council NOTED the verbal updates from the Chairs of the Finance and Operations Committee and the Planning Committee.

## **13 - Reports from Councillors representing Outside Bodies**

Verbal reports from Councillors representing the Town Council on outside Bodies

There were no reports from Councillors representing the Town Council on outside Bodies.

## **14 - Exclusion of the Press and Public**

Proposal under Section 1, Paragraph 2 of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business because publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

### **Decision:**

The Council RESOLVED that under Section 1, Paragraph 2 of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business because publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

## **15 - Allotment Lease**

Proposal to accept the conditions and yearly rental for the Allotments. This is following the negotiations between the Working Party and the Allotment Association.

### **Decision:**

The Council RESOLVED to accept the conditions and yearly rental for the Allotments. These will now be passed to the Allotment Association for approval and signature.

## **16 - Staffing Issues**

To receive an update regarding the recruitment process for the post of office administrator and to confirm the appointment.

### **Decision:**

The Council RESOLVED to confirm the appointment of the Office Administrator as advised in the Report on the topic, distributed with the agenda.

## **17 - Date of Next Meeting**

The next Full Council Meeting will be held on Monday 2nd September commencing at 7pm

---

## 7 - Co-option of a Town Councillor

To consider an application for co-option of a Town Councillor onto the Town Council.  
(a) Signature of the acceptance of office form

For Decision

---

## 8 - Policies

1. Proposal to approve the updated Financial Regulations issued by NALC in April

For Decision

### **Attachments**

[Changes to the Financial Regulations.docx](#)

[Financial Regulations 2024.docx](#)

## Changes to the Financial Regulations

The Model Financial Regulations have been updated by the National Association of Local Council (NALC) in April 2024. They were last updated in 2019.

The document has not been tracked as the document has been rewritten but below are notes of the amendments made.

1. Bold text indicates legal requirements, which a council cannot change or suspend.
2. For the rest each council needs to adapt the model to suit its size and structure. For example, some councils have both a clerk and RFO, possible with several more staff, while others have a single employee as clerk/RFO. Some councils have committees, some have a high level of delegation, and some make all decisions at full council meetings. Many now use online payment methods, but others still rely on cheques.
3. Curly brackets have been removed as they indicated words, sentences or sections that can be removed if not applicable or amended to fit the council's circumstances. An example is the removal of the word council and replacing it with the finance committee.
4. The Town Council employ a separate RFO and is referred to throughout the documents.
5. In section 4 the Town Council has a Finance and Operations Committee, currently future years are not forecast in the budget.
6. In section 5.6 the Council issues an open invitation to tender when quoting for works.
7. In section 5.9 online prices are acceptable evidence
8. In section 5.16, a councillor will not be instructed to place an order unless it is by a resolution of the council.
9. In section 5.20, the minimum order for official orders is more than £500.00.
10. Section 6 covers delegation to committees or to officers, approval of invoices individually or in batches, or for approval of regular contractual payments at the beginning of the year.
11. Section 10 deals with petty cash, the Town Council do not maintain any form of cash float.
12. Section 5 deals with delegation – The Clerk and RFO have delegated expenditure up to £2,000, the finance committee have delegated expenditure up to £5,000 and full council for all items over £5,000.
13. In an emergency the Clerk may authorise expenditure of up to £2,000 where there is serious risk to the delivery of council services or to public safety.



# **Midsomer Norton Town Council**

## **Financial Regulations**

These Financial Regulations were adopted by the Council on: -

To Be Reviewed – May 2025

NALC Model Financial Regulations April 2024 for England

## Contents

|  |    |
|--|----|
| 1. General.....  | 3  |
| 2. Risk management and internal control.....                               | 4  |
| 3. Accounts and audit.....   | 5  |
| 4. Budget and precept.....   | 7  |
| 5. Procurement.....  | 8  |
| 6. Banking and payments .....  | 11 |
| 7. Electronic payments.....  | 12 |
| 8. Cheque payments .....   | 14 |
| 9. Payment cards .....   | 14 |
| 10. Petty Cash.....  | 15 |
| 11. Payment of salaries and allowances .....                               | 15 |
| 12. Loans and investments .....  | 16 |
| 13. Income.....  | 16 |
| 14. Payments under contracts for building or other construction works..... | 17 |
| 15. Stores and equipment.....  | 17 |
| 16. Assets, properties and estates .....                                   | 18 |
| 17. Insurance.....   | 18 |
| 18. Charities .....  | 19 |
| 19. Suspension and revision of Financial Regulations .....                 | 19 |
| Appendix 1 - Tender process.....   | 20 |

## 1. General

- 1.1. These Financial Regulations govern the financial management of the council and may only be amended or varied by resolution of the council. They are one of the council's governing documents and shall be observed in conjunction with the council's Standing Orders.
- 1.2. Councillors are expected to follow these regulations and not to entice employees to breach them. Failure to follow these regulations brings the office of councillor into disrepute.
- 1.3. Wilful breach of these regulations by an employee may result in disciplinary proceedings.
- 1.4. In these Financial Regulations:
  - 'Accounts and Audit Regulations' means the regulations issued under Sections 32, 43(2) and 46 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014, or any superseding legislation, and then in force, unless otherwise specified.
  - "Approve" refers to an online action, allowing an electronic transaction to take place.
  - "Authorise" refers to a decision by the council, or a committee or an officer, to allow something to happen.
  - 'Proper practices' means those set out in *The Practitioners' Guide*
  - *Practitioners' Guide* refers to the guide issued by the Joint Panel on Accountability and Governance (JPAG) and published by NALC in England or Governance and Accountability for Local Councils in Wales – A Practitioners Guide jointly published by One Voice Wales and the Society of Local Council Clerks in Wales.
  - 'Must' and **bold text** refer to a statutory obligation the council cannot change.
  - 'Shall' refers to a non-statutory instruction by the council to its members and staff.



1.5. The Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) holds a statutory office, appointed by the council. The RFO.

- acts under the policy direction of the council.
- administers the council's financial affairs in accordance with all Acts, Regulations and proper practices.
- determines on behalf of the council its accounting records and control systems.
- ensures the accounting control systems are observed.
- ensures the accounting records are kept up to date.
- seeks economy, efficiency and effectiveness in the use of council resources; and
- produces financial management information as required by the council.

1.6. **The council must not delegate any decision regarding:**

- **setting the final budget or the precept (council tax requirement).**
- **the outcome of a review of the effectiveness of its internal controls**
- **approving accounting statements.**
- **approving an annual governance statement.**
- **borrowing.**
- **declaring eligibility for the General Power of Competence; and**
- **addressing recommendations from the internal or external auditors**

1.7. In addition, the council shall:

- determine and regularly review the bank mandate for all council bank accounts.
- authorise any grant or single commitment in excess of £5,000; and

## **2. Risk management and internal control**

2.1. **The council must ensure that it has a sound system of internal control, which delivers effective financial, operational and risk management.**

2.2. The Clerk with the RFO shall prepare, for approval by the council, a risk management policy covering all activities of the council. This policy and consequential risk management arrangements shall be reviewed by the council at least annually.

2.3. When considering any new activity, the Clerk with the RFO shall prepare a draft risk assessment including risk management proposals for consideration by the council.

- 2.4. **At least once a year, the council must review the effectiveness of its system of internal control, before approving the Annual Governance Statement.**
- 2.5. **The accounting control systems determined by the RFO must include measures to:**
- **ensure that risk is appropriately managed.**
  - **ensure the prompt, accurate recording of financial transactions.**
  - **prevent and detect inaccuracy or fraud; and**
  - **allow the reconstitution of any lost records.**
  - **identify the duties of officers dealing with transactions and**
  - **ensure division of responsibilities.**
- 2.6. At least once in each quarter, and at each financial year end, a member other than the Chair shall be appointed to verify bank reconciliations (for all accounts) produced by the RFO. The member shall sign and date the reconciliations and the original bank statements (or similar document) as evidence of this. This activity, including any exceptions, shall be reported to and noted by the Finance Committee.
- 2.7. Regular back-up copies shall be made of the records on any council computer and stored either online or in a separate location from the computer. The council shall put measures in place to ensure that the ability to access any council computer is not lost if an employee leaves or is incapacitated for any reason.

### **3. Accounts and audit**

- 3.1. All accounting procedures and financial records of the council shall be determined by the RFO in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations.
- 3.2. **The accounting records determined by the RFO must be sufficient to explain the council's transactions and to disclose its financial position with reasonably accuracy at any time. In particular, they must contain:**
- **day-to-day entries of all sums of money received and expended by the council and the matters to which they relate.**
  - **a record of the assets and liabilities of the council.**
- 3.3. The accounting records shall be designed to facilitate the efficient preparation of the accounting statements in the Annual Governance and Accountability Return.

- 3.4. The RFO shall complete and certify the annual Accounting Statements of the council contained in the Annual {Governance and Accountability} Return in accordance with proper practices, as soon as practicable after the end of the financial year. Having certified the Accounting Statements, the RFO shall submit them (with any related documents) to the council, within the timescales required by the Accounts and Audit Regulations.
- 3.5. **The council must ensure that there is an adequate and effective system of internal audit of its accounting records and internal control system in accordance with proper practices.**
- 3.6. **Any officer or member of the council must make available such documents and records as the internal or external auditor consider necessary for the purpose of the audit** and shall, as directed by the council, supply the RFO, internal auditor, or external auditor with such information and explanation as the council considers necessary.
- 3.7. The internal auditor shall be appointed by the council and shall carry out their work to evaluate the effectiveness of the council's risk management, control and governance processes in accordance with proper practices specified in the Practitioners' Guide.
- 3.8. The council shall ensure that the internal auditor:
- is competent and independent of the financial operations of the council.
  - reports to council in writing, or in person, on a regular basis with a minimum of one written report during each financial year.
  - can demonstrate competence, objectivity and independence, free from any actual or perceived conflicts of interest, including those arising from family relationships; and
  - has no involvement in the management or control of the council.
- 3.9. Internal or external auditors may not under any circumstances:
- perform any operational duties for the council.
  - initiate or approve accounting transactions.
  - provide financial, legal or other advice including in relation to any future transactions; or
  - direct the activities of any council employee, except to the extent that such employees have been appropriately assigned to assist the internal auditor.
- 3.10. For the avoidance of doubt, in relation to internal audit the terms 'independent' and 'independence' shall have the same meaning as described in The Practitioners Guide.

- 3.11. The RFO shall make arrangements for the exercise of electors' rights in relation to the accounts, including the opportunity to inspect the accounts, books, and vouchers and display or publish any notices and documents required by the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014, or any superseding legislation, and the Accounts and Audit Regulations.
- 3.12. The RFO shall, without undue delay, bring to the attention of all councillors any correspondence or report from internal or external auditors.

#### **4. Budget and precept**

- 4.1. **Before setting a precept, the council must calculate its council tax requirement for each financial year by preparing and approving a budget, in accordance with The Local Government Finance Act 1992 or succeeding legislation.**
- 4.2. Budgets for salaries and wages, including employer contributions shall be reviewed by the council at least annually in October for the following financial year and the final version shall be evidenced by a hard copy schedule signed by the Clerk and the Chair of the Council. The RFO will inform committees of any salary implications before they consider their draft their budgets.
- 4.3. No later than October each year, the RFO shall prepare a draft budget with detailed estimates of all receipts and payments/income and expenditure for the following financial year, taking account of the lifespan of assets and cost implications of repair or replacement.
- 4.4. Unspent budgets for completed projects shall not be carried forward to a subsequent year. Unspent funds for partially completed projects may only be carried forward (by placing them in an earmarked reserve) with the formal approval of the full council.
- 4.5. Each committee (if any) shall review its draft budget and submit any proposed amendments to the Finance committee not later than the end of November each year.
- 4.6. The draft budget with any committee proposals, including any recommendations for the use or accumulation of reserves, shall be considered by the Finance committee and a recommendation made to the council.
- 4.7. Having considered the proposed budget and the council shall determine its council tax requirement by setting a budget. The council shall set a precept for this amount no later than the end of January for the ensuing financial year.

- 4.8. **Any member with council tax unpaid for more than two months is prohibited from voting on the budget or precept by Section 106 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 and must and must disclose at the start of the meeting that Section 106 applies to them.**
- 4.9. The RFO shall **issue the precept to the billing authority no later than the end of February** and supply each member with a copy of the agreed annual budget.
- 4.10. The agreed budget provides a basis for monitoring progress during the year by comparing actual spending and income against what was planned.
- 4.11. Any addition to, or withdrawal from, any earmarked reserve shall be agreed by the Finance and Operations.

## **5. Procurement**

- 5.1. **Members and officers are responsible for obtaining value for money at all times.** Any officer procuring goods, services or works should ensure, as far as practicable, that the best available terms are obtained, usually by obtaining prices from several suppliers.
- 5.2. The RFO should verify the lawful nature of any proposed purchase before it is made and in the case of new or infrequent purchases, should ensure that the legal power being used is reported to the meeting at which the order is authorised and also recorded in the minutes.
- 5.3. Every contract shall comply with these the council's Standing Orders and these Financial Regulations, and no exceptions shall be made, except in an emergency.
- 5.4. **For a contract for the supply of goods, services or works where the estimated value will exceed the thresholds set by Parliament, the full requirements of The Public Contracts Regulations 2015 or any superseding legislation ("the Legislation"), must be followed in respect of the tendering, award and notification of that contract.**
- 5.5. Where the estimated value is below the Government threshold, the council shall (with the exception of items listed in paragraph 6.12) obtain prices as follows:
- 5.6. For contracts estimated to exceed £60,000 including VAT, the Clerk shall advertise an open invitation for tenders in compliance with any relevant provisions of the Legislation. Tenders shall be invited in accordance with Appendix 1.

- 5.7. **For contracts estimated to be over £30,000 including VAT, the council must comply with any requirements of the Legislation<sup>1</sup> regarding the advertising of contract opportunities and the publication of notices about the award of contracts.**
- 5.8. For contracts greater than £2,000 excluding VAT the Clerk or RFO shall seek at least 3 fixed price quotes.
- 5.9. where the value is between £500 and £2,000 excluding VAT, the Clerk or RFO shall try to obtain 3 estimates which might include evidence of online prices, or recent prices from regular suppliers.
- 5.10. For smaller purchases, the clerk shall seek to achieve value for money.
- 5.11. **Contracts must not be split into smaller lots to avoid compliance with these rules.**
- 5.12. The requirement to obtain competitive prices in these regulations need not apply to contracts that relate to items (i) to (iv) below:
- i. specialist services, such as legal professionals acting in disputes.
  - ii. repairs to, or parts for, existing machinery or equipment.
  - iii. works, goods or services that constitute an extension of an existing contract.
  - iv. goods or services that are only available from one supplier or are sold at a fixed price.
- 5.13. When applications are made to waive this financial regulation to enable a price to be negotiated without competition, the reason should be set out in a recommendation to the Finance and Operations committee. Avoidance of competition is not a valid reason.
- 5.14. The council shall not be obliged to accept the lowest or any tender, quote or estimate.
- 5.15. Individual purchases within an agreed budget for that type of expenditure may be authorised by:
- the Clerk, under delegated authority, for any items below £2,000 excluding VAT.
  - a duly delegated committee of the council for all items of expenditure within their delegated budgets for items under £5,000 excluding VAT

---

<sup>1</sup> The Regulations require councils to use the Contracts Finder website if they advertise contract opportunities and also to publicise the award of contracts over £30,000 including VAT, regardless of whether they were advertised.

- in respect of grants, a duly authorised committee within any limits set by council and in accordance with any policy statement agreed by the council.
- the council for all items over £5,000.

Such authorisation must be supported by a minute (in the case of council or committee decisions) or other auditable evidence trail.

- 5.16. No individual member, or informal group of members may issue an official order unless instructed to do so in advance by a resolution of the council or make any contract on behalf of the council.
- 5.17. No expenditure may be authorised that will exceed the budget for that type of expenditure other than by resolution of the council or a duly delegated committee acting within its Terms of Reference except in an emergency.
- 5.18. In cases of serious risk to the delivery of council services or to public safety on council premises, the clerk may authorise expenditure of up to £2,000 excluding VAT on repair, replacement or other work that in their judgement is necessary, whether or not there is any budget for such expenditure. The Clerk shall report such action to the Chair as soon as possible and to the council as soon as practicable thereafter.
- 5.19. No expenditure shall be authorised, no contract entered into, or tender accepted in relation to any major project, unless the council is satisfied that the necessary funds are available and that where a loan is required, Government borrowing approval has been obtained first.
- 5.20. An official order or letter shall be issued for all work, goods and services above £500 excluding VAT unless a formal contract is to be prepared or an official order would be inappropriate. Copies of orders shall be retained, along with evidence of receipt of goods.
- 5.21. Any ordering system can be misused and access to them shall be controlled by the RFO.

## **6. Banking and payments**

- 6.1. The council's banking arrangements, including the bank mandate, shall be made by the RFO and authorised by the council; banking arrangements shall not be delegated to a committee. The council has resolved to bank with Unity Trust Bank. The arrangements shall be reviewed annually for security and efficiency.
- 6.2. The council must have safe and efficient arrangements for making payments, to safeguard against the possibility of fraud or error. Wherever possible, more than one person should be involved in any payment, for example by dual online authorisation or dual cheque signing. Even where a purchase has been authorised, the payment must also be authorised, and only authorised payments shall be approved or signed to allow the funds to leave the council's bank.
- 6.3. All invoices for payment should be examined for arithmetical accuracy, analysed to the appropriate expenditure heading and verified to confirm that the work, goods or services were received, checked and represent expenditure previously authorised by the council before being certified by the RFO. Where the certification of invoices is done as a batch, this shall include a statement by the RFO that all invoices listed have been 'examined, verified and certified' by the RFO.
- 6.4. Personal payments (including salaries, wages, expenses and any payment made in relation to the termination of employment) may be summarised to avoid disclosing any personal information.
- 6.5. All payments shall be made by online banking, in accordance with a resolution of the council or duly delegated committee or a delegated decision by an officer, unless the council resolves to use a different payment method.
- 6.6. For each financial year the RFO may draw up a schedule of regular payments due in relation to a continuing contract or obligation (such as Salaries, PAYE, National Insurance, pension contributions, rent, rates, regular maintenance contracts and similar items), which the council {or a duly delegated committee} may authorise in advance for the year.
- 6.7. A copy of this schedule of regular payments shall be signed by two members on each and every occasion when payment is made - to reduce the risk of duplicate payments.
- 6.8. A list of such payments shall be reported to the next appropriate meeting of the Finance and Operations Committee} for information only.



- 6.9. The Clerk and RFO shall have delegated authority to authorise payments only in the following circumstances:
- i. any payments of up to £2,000 excluding VAT, within an agreed budget.
  - ii. payments of up to £2,000 excluding VAT in cases of serious risk to the delivery of council services or to public safety on council premises.
  - iii. any payment necessary to avoid a charge under the Late Payment of Commercial Debts (Interest) Act 1998 {or to comply with contractual terms}, where the due date for payment is before the next scheduled meeting of [the council], where the Clerk and RFO certify that there is no dispute or other reason to delay payment, provided that a list of such payments shall be submitted to the next appropriate meeting of Finance and Operations committee.
  - iv. Fund transfers within the councils banking arrangements up to the sum of £10,000, provided that a list of such payments shall be submitted to the next appropriate meeting of the Finance and Operations committee.
- 6.10. The RFO shall present a schedule of payments requiring authorisation, forming part of the agenda for the meeting, together with the relevant invoices, to the Finance and Operations committee. The committee shall review the schedule for compliance and, having satisfied itself, shall authorise payment by resolution. The authorised schedule shall be initialled immediately below the last item by the person chairing the meeting. A detailed list of all payments shall be disclosed within or as an attachment to the minutes of that meeting.

## **7. Electronic payments**

- 7.1. Where internet banking arrangements are made with any bank, the RFO shall be appointed as the Service Administrator. The bank mandate agreed by the council shall identify a number of councillors who will be authorised to approve transactions on those accounts and a minimum of two people will be involved in any online approval process. The RFO may be an authorised signatory, but no signatory should be involved in approving any payment to themselves.
- 7.2. All authorised signatories shall have access to view the council's bank accounts online.
- 7.3. No employee or councillor shall disclose any PIN or password, relevant to the council or its banking, to anyone not authorised in writing by the council or a duly delegated committee.
- 7.4. The Service Administrator shall set up all items due for payment online. A list of payments for approval, together with copies of the relevant invoices, shall be sent by email to all authorised signatories.

- 7.5. In the prolonged absence of the Service Administrator an authorised signatory shall set up any payments due before the return of the Service Administrator.
- 7.6. Two councillors who are authorised signatories shall check the payment details against the invoices before approving each payment using the online banking system.
- 7.7. Evidence shall be retained showing which members approved the payment online.
- 7.8. A full list of all payments made in a month shall be provided to the next Finance and Operations Committee meeting.
- 7.9. With the approval of the council in each case, regular payments (such as gas, electricity, telephone, broadband, water, National Non-Domestic Rates, refuse collection, pension contributions and HMRC payments) may be made by variable direct debit, provided that the instructions are [signed/approved online] by two authorised members. The approval of the use of each variable direct debit shall be reviewed by the council at least every two years.
- 7.10. Payment may be made by BACS or CHAPS by resolution of the council provided that each payment is approved online by two authorised bank signatories, evidence is retained, and any payments are reported to [the council] at the next meeting. The approval of the use of BACS or CHAPS shall be renewed by resolution of the council at least every two years.
- 7.11. If thought appropriate by the council, regular payments of fixed sums may be made by banker's standing order, provided that the instructions are approved online by two members, evidence of this is retained and any payments are reported to council when made. The approval of the use of a banker's standing order shall be reviewed by the council at least every two years.
- 7.12. Account details for suppliers may only be changed upon written notification by the supplier verified by the Clerk and the RFO. This is a potential area for fraud and the individuals involved should ensure that any change is genuine. Data held should be checked with suppliers every two years.
- 7.13. Members and officers shall ensure that any computer used for the council's financial business has adequate security, with anti-virus, anti-spyware and firewall software installed and regularly updated.
- 7.14. Remembered password facilities other than secure password stores requiring separate identity verification should not be used on any computer used for council banking.

## **8. Cheque payments**

- 8.1. Cheques or orders for payment in accordance in accordance with a resolution or delegated decision shall be signed by two members.
- 8.2. A signatory having a family or business relationship with the beneficiary of a payment shall not, under normal circumstances, be a signatory to that payment.
- 8.3. To indicate agreement of the details on the cheque with the counterfoil and the invoice or similar documentation, the signatories shall also initial the cheque counterfoil and invoice.
- 8.4. Cheques or orders for payment shall not normally be presented for signature other than at, or immediately before or after a Finance and Operations Committee meeting}. Any signatures obtained away from council meetings shall be reported to the Finance and Operations Committee at the next convenient meeting.

## **9. Payment cards**

- 9.1. Any Debit Card issued for use will be specifically restricted to the Clerk and the RFO and will also be restricted to a single transaction maximum value of £500 unless authorised by council or finance committee in writing before any order is placed.
- 9.2. A pre-paid debit card may be issued to employees with varying limits. These limits will be set by the council. Transactions and purchases made will be reported to [the council] and authority for topping-up shall be at the discretion of the council.
- 9.3. Any corporate credit card or trade card account opened by the council will be specifically restricted to use by the Clerk, RFO and Office Manager and any balance shall be paid in full each month.
- 9.4. Personal credit or debit cards of members or staff shall not be used except for expenses of up to £250 including VAT, incurred in accordance with council policy.

## 10. Petty Cash

- 10.1. The council will not maintain any form of cash float. All cash received must be banked intact. Any payments made in cash by the RFO (for example for postage or minor stationery items) shall be refunded on a regular basis, at least quarterly.
- a) Vouchers for payments made from petty cash shall be kept, along with receipts to substantiate every payment.
  - b) Cash income received must not be paid into the petty cash float but must be separately banked, as provided elsewhere in these regulations.
  - c) Payments to maintain the petty cash float shall be shown separately on any schedule of payments presented for approval.

## 11. Payment of salaries and allowances

- 11.1. **As an employer, the council must make arrangements to comply with the statutory requirements of PAYE legislation.**
- 11.2. **Councillors' allowances (where paid) are also liable to deduction of tax under PAYE rules and must be taxed correctly before payment.**
- 11.3. Salary rates shall be agreed by the council, or a duly delegated committee. No changes shall be made to any employee's gross pay, emoluments, or terms and conditions of employment without the prior consent of the council or relevant committee.
- 11.4. Payment of salaries shall be made, after deduction of tax, national insurance, pension contributions and any similar statutory or discretionary deductions, on the dates stipulated in employment contracts.
- 11.5. Deductions from salary shall be paid to the relevant bodies within the required timescales, provided that each payment is reported, as set out in these regulations above.
- 11.6. Each payment to employees of net salary and to the appropriate creditor of the statutory and discretionary deductions shall be recorded in a payroll control account or other separate confidential record, with the total of such payments each calendar month reported in the cashbook. Payroll reports will be reviewed by the Staffing committee to ensure that the correct payments have been made.
- 11.7. Any termination payments shall be supported by a report to the council, setting out a clear business case. Termination payments shall only be authorised by the full council.
- 11.8. Before employing interim staff, the council must consider a full business case.

## **12.Loans and investments**

- 12.1. Any application for Government approval to borrow money and subsequent arrangements for a loan must be authorised by the full council and recorded in the minutes. All borrowing shall be in the name of the council, after obtaining any necessary approval.
- 12.2. Any financial arrangement which does not require formal borrowing approval from the Secretary of State (such as Hire Purchase, Leasing of tangible assets or loans to be repaid within the financial year) must be authorised by the full council, following a written report on the value for money of the proposed transaction.
- 12.3. The council shall consider the requirement for an Investment Strategy and Policy in accordance with Statutory Guidance on Local Government Investments, which must be written in accordance with relevant regulations, proper practices and guidance. Any Strategy and Policy shall be reviewed by the council at least annually.
- 12.4. All investment of money under the control of the council shall be in the name of the council.
- 12.5. All investment certificates and other documents relating thereto shall be retained in the custody of the RFO.
- 12.6. Payments in respect of short term or long-term investments, including transfers between bank accounts held in the same bank, shall be made in accordance with these regulations.

## **13.Income**

- 13.1. The collection of all sums due to the council shall be the responsibility of and under the supervision of the RFO.
- 13.2. The council will review all fees and charges for work done, services provided, or goods sold at least annually as part of the budget-setting process, following a report of the Clerk. The RFO shall be responsible for the collection of all amounts due to the council.
- 13.3. Any sums found to be irrecoverable, and any bad debts shall be reported to the council by [the RFO] and shall be written off in the year. The council's approval shall be shown in the accounting records.
- 13.4. All sums received on behalf of the council shall be deposited intact with the council's bankers, with such frequency as the RFO considers necessary. The origin of each receipt shall clearly be recorded on the paying-in slip or other record.
- 13.5. Personal cheques shall not be cashed out of money held on behalf of the council.

13.6. The RFO shall ensure that VAT is correctly recorded in the council's accounting software and that any VAT Return required is submitted from the software by the due date.

13.7. Any income that is the property of a charitable trust shall be paid into a charitable bank account. Instructions for the payment of funds due from the charitable trust to the council (to meet expenditure already incurred by the authority) will be given by the Managing Trustees of the charity meeting separately from any council meeting.

#### **14. Payments under contracts for building or other construction works.**

14.1. Where contracts provide for payment by instalments the RFO shall maintain a record of all such payments, which shall be made within the time specified in the contract based on signed certificates from the architect or other consultant engaged to supervise the works.

14.2. Any variation of, addition to or omission from a contract must be authorised by the Clerk to the contractor in writing, with the council being informed where the final cost is likely to exceed the contract sum by 5% or more, or likely to exceed the budget available.

#### **15. Stores and equipment**

15.1. The officer in charge of each section] shall be responsible for the care and custody of stores and equipment in that section.

15.2. Delivery notes shall be obtained in respect of all goods received into store or otherwise delivered and goods must be checked as to order and quality at the time delivery is made.

15.3. Stocks shall be kept at the minimum levels consistent with operational requirements.

15.4. The RFO shall be responsible for periodic checks of stocks and stores, at least annually.

## **16. Assets, properties and estates**

- 16.1. The Clerk shall make arrangements for the safe custody of all title deeds and Land Registry Certificates of properties held by the council.
- 16.2. The RFO shall ensure that an appropriate and accurate Register of Assets and Investments is kept up to date, with a record of all properties held by the council, their location, extent, plan, reference, purchase details, nature of the interest, tenancies granted, rents payable and purpose for which held, in accordance with Accounts and Audit Regulations.
- 16.3. The continued existence of tangible assets shown in the Register shall be verified at least annually, possibly in conjunction with a health and safety inspection of assets.
- 16.4. No interest in land shall be purchased or otherwise acquired, sold, leased or otherwise disposed of without the authority of the council, together with any other consents required by law. In each case a written report shall be provided to council in respect of valuation and surveyed condition of the property (including matters such as planning permissions and covenants) together with a proper business case (including an adequate level of consultation with the electorate where required by law).
- 16.5 No tangible moveable property shall be purchased or otherwise acquired, sold, leased or otherwise disposed of, without the authority of the council, together with any other consents required by law, except where the estimated value of any one item does not exceed £500. In each case a written report shall be provided to council with a full business case.

## **17. Insurance**

- 17.1. The RFO shall keep a record of all insurances effected by the council and the property and risks covered, reviewing these annually before the renewal date in conjunction with the council's review of risk management.
- 17.2. The Clerk shall give prompt notification to the RFO of all new risks, properties or vehicles which require to be insured and of any alterations affecting existing insurances.
- 17.3. The RFO shall be notified of any loss, liability, damage or event likely to lead to a claim, and shall report these to [the council] at the next available meeting. The RFO shall negotiate all claims on the council's insurers in consultation with the Clerk.
- 17.4. All appropriate members and employees of the council shall be included in a suitable form of security or fidelity guarantee insurance which

shall cover the maximum risk exposure as determined annually by the council, or duly delegated committee.

## **18. Charities**

- 18.1. Where the council is sole managing trustee of a charitable body the Clerk and RFO shall ensure that separate accounts are kept of the funds held on charitable trusts and separate 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 Clerk and RFO shall arrange for any audit or independent examination as may be required by Charity Law or any Governing Document.]

## **19. Suspension and revision of Financial Regulations**

- 19.1. The council shall review these Financial Regulations annually and following any change of clerk or RFO. The Clerk shall monitor changes in legislation or proper practices and advise the council of any need to amend these Financial Regulations.
- 19.2. The council may, by resolution duly notified prior to the relevant meeting of council, suspend any part of these Financial Regulations, provided that reasons for the suspension are recorded and that an assessment of the risks arising has been presented to all members. Suspension does not disapply any legislation or permit the council to act unlawfully.
- 19.3. The council may temporarily amend these Financial Regulations by a duly notified resolution, to cope with periods of absence, local government reorganisation, national restrictions or other exceptional circumstances.



## **Appendix 1 - Tender process**

- 1) Any invitation to tender shall state the general nature of the intended contract and the Clerk shall obtain the necessary technical assistance to prepare a specification in appropriate cases.
- 2) The invitation shall in addition state that tenders must be addressed to the Clerk in the ordinary course of post, unless an electronic tendering process has been agreed by the council.
- 3) Where a postal process is used, 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. All sealed tenders shall be opened at the same time on the prescribed date by the Clerk in the presence of at least one member of council.
- 4) Where an electronic tendering process is used, the council shall use a specific email address that will be monitored to ensure that nobody accesses any tender before the expiry of the deadline for submission.
- 5) Any invitation to tender issued under this regulation shall be subject to Standing Order [insert reference of the council's relevant standing order] and shall refer to the terms of the Bribery Act 2010.
- 6) Where the council, or duly delegated committee, does not accept any tender, quote or estimate, the work is not allocated and the council requires further pricing, no person shall be permitted to submit a later tender, estimate or quote who was present when the original decision-making process was being undertaken.

9

---

## 9 - Staffing Committee

To consider the proposal from Cllr Wendy Gregory to appoint her to the staffing committee.

| For Decision

---

## 10 - Formation of a Budget Working Party

To consider a recommendation to form a Budget Preparation Working Party and approve the Terms of Reference.

For Decision

### Attachments

[Terms of Reference - Budget Working Party.docx](#)

**Midsomer Norton Town Council**  
**Revenue Budget 25/26 Preparation**  
**Working Group**  
**Terms of Reference**

1. The Working Group shall comprise of all members of the Town Council.
2. The Working Group has no power to make decisions on behalf of the Council.
3. The overarching role of the Revenue Budget 25/26 Working Group shall be to provide input to the RFO and Town Clerk for the development of a draft budget for consideration by the Finance & Operations Committee to include:
  - 3.1. A review of the current budget.
  - 3.2. To understand where expenditure is largely non-discretionary To consider recommendations for new or novel expenditure.
  - 3.3. To consider a desired level of any increase in the precept.
  - 3.4. To consider the target amount of the general reserve at the end of FY 25/26
  - 3.5. To understand the likely level of general reserve at the end of FT24/25.
  - 3.6. To consider input from Committees.
  - 3.7. To consider if Earmarked Reserves should. / can contribute the revenue budget for 24/25.
4. The Working Group will be dissolved once a draft budget has been produced and forwarded to the Finance & Operations Committee.

(Approved by Resolution of the Town Council, minute no \_\_\_\_\_, dated 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2024).

---

## 11 - Grant Application from Midsomer Norton and District Carnival Association

To consider the grant application from Midsomer Norton and District Carnival Association for £10,000 and to consider a recommendation that up to £8,000 be awarded (noting that the budget line is £8,000).

---

## 12 - Appointment of the Internal Auditor for 2024-2025

Proposal to appoint the Internal Auditor for 2024-2025.

| For Decision

### **Attachments**

[Appointment of the Internal Auditor for 2024.docx](#)

## **Appointment of the Internal Auditor for 2024-2025**

Proposal to appoint the Internal Auditor for Midsomer Norton for 2024-2025

“The authority needs to appoint an independent and competent person to undertake an effective internal audit to evaluate the effectiveness of its risk management, control and governance processes considering internal auditing guidance for smaller authorities. The internal auditor must be able to demonstrate independence from the council's financial decision making. The Clerk, RFO or Councillors (or close associates such as family members of those individuals) are not considered independent from the council's financial decision making”. (Practitioners Guide 2024)

Three companies were contacted, two of which provided detailed quotes, and one quoted a price within an email (Company B).

### **Company A - £875 + VAT**

A remote interim internal audit of income and expenditure and internal controls including payroll. This interim internal audit will also test compliance with the procurement requirements of the Financial Regulations. The interim internal audit will also review aspects of internal controls, governance, policies and procedures including risk assessment and insurances.

A remote year-end internal audit of the financial accounts, fixed assets, bank reconciliations, budgetary control, summary accounts disclosures in the Annual Return, and all remaining testing required for the AGAR Annual Return internal audit certificate including publication requirements.

### **Company B - £440**

An interim internal audit of income and expenditure and internal controls including payroll. This interim internal audit will also test compliance with the procurement requirements of the Financial Regulations. The interim internal audit will also review aspects of internal controls, governance, policies, and procedures including risk assessment and insurances.

A year-end internal audit of the financial accounts, fixed assets, bank reconciliations, budgetary control, summary accounts disclosures in the Annual Return, and all remaining testing required for the AGAR Annual Return internal audit certificate including publication requirements.

### **Company C - £70.00 + VAT per hour. Travel costs for on-site visits are charged at the standard HMRC rate of 45p per mile.**

The first (interim audit) concentrates on the governance and accountability functions of the council and deals with procedural aspects of the audit (Financial Regulations, Standing Orders, risk assessments, internal control systems, processes, policies, etc.).

The second (final audit) focuses on the financial aspects and the checking of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) and supporting information being submitted to the external auditors.

### **Recommendation**

To appoint Company A as the Internal Auditor for Midsomer Norton Town Council for the financial year 2024-2025.

---

## 13 - Proposal to renew the lease on Wellow Brook Walk

To note that the Lease with the Duchy of Cornwall for land at Wellow Brook Walk which commenced on 1st January 2016 expires on 31st December 2025.

Members are asked to consider renewing the lease for a further period and give delegation to the Clerk to begin negotiations if the Council are minded to renew the lease.

The recommendation is to delegate to the Clerk to begin negotiations with the Duchy of Cornwall for extension of the lease for a period at least 10 years. (Note, provision for legal fees need to be made within the 2025-2026 budget, circa £1,500).

For Decision



---

## 14 - Formal Council Representative for the High Street Regeneration Steering Group

- To provide an update on an initial meeting of the (B&NES) High St Regeneration Steering Group held on Thursday 11 July
- To consider a recommendation to appoint Cllr Gordon MacKay as the Town Council representative for the High Street Regeneration Steering Group.

| For Decision

---

## 15 - To note reports from the following Committees and to ratify any actions

To receive an update from the Chairs of the following Committees

- Finance and Operations Committee
- Planning Committee
- Staffing Committee

For Information

### Attachments

[Draft Minutes Finance and Operations Meeting 17th July 2024.docx](#)

[Draft Minutes Staffing Committee 5th August 2024.docx](#)



**Midsomer Norton Town Council**

**Council Offices, The Town Hall, The Island, Midsomer Norton, BA3 2HQ**

**Phone: 01761 418701 Email: [townclerk@msn-tc.gov.uk](mailto:townclerk@msn-tc.gov.uk)**

**Mayor: Councillor Martyn Plant Locum Town Clerk: Lee Jakeman**

**1 - Present**

Cllrs Cheryl Scott, Martyn Plant (Chair) and Deborah Thatcher

**2 - Apologies for Absence**

Cllrs Shaun Hughes and Charlotte Lucas

**3 - Welcome**

Cllr Martyn Plant as Chair of the Finance and Operations Committee welcomed everyone to the meeting.

**4 - Public Session**

This section (at the Chair's discretion may last up to 20 minutes) is not part of the formal meeting of the Council and minutes will not be produced.

There was one member of the public in attendance.

**5 - Declarations of Interest and Dispensations**

1. Members to declare any interests which are not currently entered in the member's register of interests or he/she has not notified the Monitoring Officer of it.
2. To receive written requests for dispensation for disclosable pecuniary interests.
3. To grant any request for dispensation as appropriate.

There were no declarations of interest or requests for dispensations.

**6 - Confirmation of Previous Minutes**

Proposal to approve the previous minutes from the meeting held on 17th June 2024.

**Decision:** The Committee RESOLVED to approve the minutes from the Finance and Operations Committee held on 17th June 2024 as a true record, these were signed and dated by the Chair.

**7 - Remembrance Day - Sunday 10th November 2024**

Proposal for the Council to cover the cost of the Band leading the parade on Sunday 10th November 2024.

**Decision:** The Committee RESOLVED that the Town Council would cover the cost of the Band leading the parade on Remembrance Day on Sunday 10th November 2024

## **8 - Removal of the old Town Council Website**

Proposal to stop the monthly hosting with SoVision for [www.midsomernortontowncouncil.co.uk](http://www.midsomernortontowncouncil.co.uk).

**Decision:** The Committee RESOLVED to stop the monthly hosting for [www.midsomernortontowncouncil.co.uk](http://www.midsomernortontowncouncil.co.uk) but to keep the domain name. A copy of the website will also be requested and this will be kept in a secure place.

## **9 - Phone Contracts for Staff**

Proposal for the Council to approve phone contracts for all members of staff.

**Decision:** The Committee RESOLVED to allocate a budget of £5,000 over three years for mobile phones and give delegation to the Town Clerk to approve the Contract.

## **10 - Approval of payments and signature of the monthly bank reconciliation.**

1. Proposal to approve and sign the end of year Bank Reconciliation,
2. Approve the payments made during June 2024
3. To note the three month budget review
4. To note the expenditure on the Town Hall Refurbishment which also includes a report from the Midsomer Norton High Street Regeneration Steering Group.

**Decision:** The Committee RESOLVED to approve the Bank Reconciliations for June 2024.

The Committee RESOLVED to approve the payments for June 2024

The Committee NOTED the three month budget review

The Committee NOTED the expenditure on the Town Hall Refurbishment

## **11 - Exclusion of the Press and Public**

Proposal under Section 1, Paragraph 2 of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business because publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

**Decision:** The Committee RESOLVED that under Section 1, Paragraph 2 of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business because publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

## **12 - Contract with Local Government Resource Centre (LGRC) for the Locum Clerk**

Proposal to approve the contract with LGRC and delegation for signature.

**Decision:** The Committee RESOLVED to approve the contract with Local Government Resource Centre (LHRC) for the Locum Clerk and give delegation to the Deputy Town Clerk to sign the paperwork.

### **13 - Date of Next Meeting**

Next Finance and Operations Committee Meeting to be held on Monday 16th September 2024

Meeting Closed 6.54pm



## Midsomer Norton Town Council

Council Offices, The Town Hall, The Island, Midsomer Norton, BA3 2HQ  
Phone: 01761 418701 Email: [townclerk@msn-tc.gov.uk](mailto:townclerk@msn-tc.gov.uk)  
Mayor: Councillor Martyn Plant Locum Town Clerk: Lee Jakeman

### 1 - Appointment of the Chair and Vice Chair of the Staffing Committee

Proposal to appoint the Chair and Vice Chair of the Staffing Committee for Midsomer Norton Town Council

**Decision:** The Committee **RESOLVED** to appoint Cllr Shaun Hughes as Chair of the Staffing Committee, this was proposed by Cllr Lynda Robertson and seconded by Cllr Deborah Thatcher. The Committee **RESOLVED** to appoint Cllr Deborah Thatcher as Vice Chair of the Staffing Committee, this was proposed by Cllr Shaun Hughes and seconded by Cllr Lynda Robertson.

### 2 - Present

Cllrs Shaun Hughes (Chair), Deborah Thatcher and Lynda Robertson

### 3 - Apologies

No apologies were received. Cllr Charlotte Lucas was marked as absent.

### 4 - Public Session

This section (at the Chair's discretion may last up to 20 minutes) is not part of the formal meeting of the Committee and minutes will not be produced

There were two members of the Members of the Public in attendance. A verbal statement was read out.

### 5 - Confirmation of Previous Minutes

Proposal to confirm the minutes of the Staffing Committee Meeting held on 24th April 2024

**Decision:** The Committee **RESOLVED** to accept the minutes from the Staffing Committee held on 22nd April as a true record, these were signed by the Chair and dated.

### 6 - Create a Working Group to consider the recruitment of the Town Clerk

Proposal to form a working group to provide input into the recruitment process for a new Town Clerk and to approve the terms of reference circulated with the agenda and to approve membership of the Working Group.

**Decision:** The Committee **RESOLVED** that the working party would compose of all members of the Staffing Committee. Following a slight amendment, the Committee **RESOLVED** to approve the Terms of Reference.

## 7 - Review the HR Policies

Receive and note the current HR policies and identify the ones that need reviewing by the end of the year.

The Committee identified the policies to be reviewed and these will be brought back to the Staffing Committee for approval.

## 8 - Staffing Budget

Review the current staffing budget and identify any additions for next year.

The Committee noted the current staffing budget.

## 9 - Date of Next Meeting

Monday 9th September at 5.30pm, Unit 14, South Street, Midsomer Norton.

## 10 - Exclusion of the Press and Public

Proposal under Section 1, Paragraph 2 of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business because publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

**Decision:** The Committee **RESOLVED** under Section 1, Paragraph 2 of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business because publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

## 11 - Office for Town Council Staff

Proposal for the Staffing Committee to consider the wellbeing of the staff and find adequate office space for the foreseeable future.

**Decision:** To acknowledge that new Council office accommodation needs to be sourced and request that the Clerk identifies suitable options for consideration by the Council in September.

## 12 - To Consider a staffing report

To Consider a confidential report relating to general staffing matters and any recommendations.

**Decision:** The Committee noted the confidential report and **RESOLVED** that the probation period of the Assistant Town Warden is completed.

Meeting closed 7.05pm.

---

## 16 - Reports from the Town Trust

- To note the Updated Masterplan for the Town Park.
- To note the Minutes of the Town Trust Management Committee Meeting held on 22nd July 2024
- Members are asked to review and adopt the Terms of Reference for the Town Trust Management Committee. In light of the appointment of the Town Trust Secretary. Recommendation: to adopt the terms of reference circulated with the agenda.

| For Decision

### **Attachments**

[Current terms of reference for the Town Trust.doc](#)



# Midsomer Norton Town Trust

## Town Trust Managing Committee Terms of Reference

**Scope of the Managing Committee** – All matters regarding management of the Town Trust's property and interests including building maintenance, health and safety, delegated financial management and managing the Trust's routine dealings with licence holders of the Trust's facilities and property.

**Purpose of the Management Committee** – The purpose of the Managing Committee is to manage and maintain the Trust's property basis on behalf of the Trustee and to provide regular management reports to the Trustee. In addition, the Management Committee will make recommendations to the Trustee covering long term priorities, budgetary provision, proposed improvements, and risk management.

**Membership** – Membership will be reviewed by the Trustee from time to time but will comprise of 4 Council Members supported by the Town Clerk as an Officer of the Corporate Trustee—Midsomer Norton Town Council who will act as the Managing Committee's Secretary—a Town Trust Secretary employed by the Town Trust. An external member or members will be appointed by the Managing Committee to carry out an ex-officio role providing specific expertise in areas pertinent to the core business of property management and maintenance. Such appointments are to be reported to the Trustee, but selection and appointment is to be delegated to the Managing Committee.

**Managing Committee Roles** – The Managing Committee will elect a Chair and a Treasurer from the appointed Council Members and will report the appointments to the Trustee.

**Frequency of Committee Meetings** – every three months as a minimum.

**Quorum** – 3 to include at least 2 elected Members of the Trustee.

**Decision Making (delegated powers)** – to decide on routine matters within the scope of the Managing Committee provided that the matters are not:

- Novel, contentious or outside the Trust's purpose namely the provision of facilities for recreation or other leisure-time occupation, or
- Outside of the financial delegations below

**Financial Delegations** – the Management Committee's delegated financial responsibility is as follows:

To commit expenditure from the Trust Fund as approved by the Trustees in the form of an annual management budget or in the first year from transfers of start-up funding. In addition, expenditure can be committed in order to:

- comply with statutory health and safety matters.
- carry out routine planned work within a schedule approved by the Trustee.

These terms of reference and the membership of the Management Committee are to be reviewed annually at a meeting of the Town Council, the Corporate Trustee.

## 17 - Reports from Councillors representing Outside Bodies

Verbal reports from Councillors representing the Town Council on outside Bodies

For Information

---

## 18 - Code of Conduct Complaint

To note that the Monitoring Officer had received a Code of Conduct complaint in relation to a Midsomer Norton Town Councillor and to note the following decision:

"Based on the findings set out above the Deputy Monitoring Officer takes no action as to the complaint and if proven, would not be a breach of the Code of Conduct under which the subject member was operating at the time of the alleged misconduct."

For Information

---

## 19 - Date of Next Meeting

The next Full Council Meeting will be held on Monday 7th October commencing at 7pm

For Information

---

## 20 - Exclusion of the Press and Public

Proposal under Section 1, Paragraph 2 of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business because publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

---

## 21 - Investigation Report into the Effectiveness of Midsomer Norton Town Council

To consider the investigation report into the effectiveness of Midsomer Norton Town Council and recommendations contained within the report.

| For Decision