

**NORTHAMPTON TOWN COUNCIL
POLICY AND FINANCE COMMITTEE
Minutes of the meeting held at 18.00 on 18th January 2022 in the Godwin Room of
Northampton Guildhall**

PRESENT: Cllrs Marriott (Chair), Alwahabi, Birch, Connolly, Hibbert, Holland-Delamere, Kilbride Purser, Russell, Tarasiewicz.

Officers in attendance: Mr S Carter (Town Clerk)

Also in attendance: 1 member of the public

44. Apologies

Apologies had been submitted by Councillor G Eales, T Eales, and Brown.

45. Declarations of Interest

None.

46. Minutes of the last meeting including updates as to the progress of any items

The committee considered the minutes of the meeting held 18th January 2021.

RESOLVED: That they be accepted as a true and accurate record of the meeting and that the Chair be authorised to sign the minutes.

The Clerk explained that Cllrs Marriott, Connolly and Holland-Delamere had been looking at the Standing Orders and Financial Regulations as part of the review and would be reporting back at a future meeting.

47. To receive and review the minutes of the Civic Matters Sub-Committee held 9th February 2022

Circulated with the agenda were the minutes of the Civic Matters Sub Committee meeting. The Chair highlighted that the Sub-Committee had recommended that a points based system be used to choose the Deputy Mayor was to be talked about in the next agenda item.

RESOLVED: That the recommendations contained with the minutes of this sub-committee meeting as attached at appendix A, be adopted.

48. Minutes of the Accounts Sub-Committee meetings for information, held on the dates below were circulated with the agenda:

10th February 2022 (attached at appendix B)

The minutes were **NOTED**.

49. Process for Selection of Deputy Mayor

The chair explained that the Town Clerk had been asked to compile a report on the different processes for electing the Deputy Mayor (who traditionally then goes on to become Mayor). The

options the Clerk was asked to compile a report on were:

- Seniority
- Largest group
- A points system based on that of the Borough Council

The Clerk highlighted that the election of the Mayor and the process used to archive it was for the members to decide and not for the Clerk to advise on. Therefore, the report was based on the Clerk's experience and how a system may work based on the NBC system as requested by the Chair.

The report detailed that at town and parish council level where political affiliation is not recognised within the legislation, the mayor was often selected on the basis of seniority or service but ultimately on the basis of who got the most votes. In councils where there was a political grouping the nomination would usually be controlled by the largest voting group.

The Clerk had contacted other clerks and nobody was aware of any councils that had used a points system at town and parish level. All had advised that even if a process were agreed it was advisory only and could be disregarded when coming to a vote

Seniority was often used as a factor for helping to decide the Deputy Mayor. Seniority would usually be calculated by term served on the respective council. Other factors would also be considered such as suitability, desire to undertake the role etc.

The default position was that the largest voting group (however that is defined) would select the Deputy Mayor. It was noted that legally, the Mayor, and Deputy mayor had to be appointed from councillors who are elected or co-opted to Northampton Town Council.

NBC used a points system to allow a group to nominate a Deputy Mayor. The Clerk understood that it was based on formula whereby each Cllr was worth a point which was reallocated each year. The group (defined along political lines at NBC), with the most points had the opportunity to nominate the Deputy Mayor with an expectation that they would become Mayor the following year and on the understanding and agreement that this would not be challenged. It was understood that the group could pass the opportunity and therefore not nominate somebody should they want, and therefore not be deducted any points.

The report explained that the way the scoring works is that the group nominating was then subtracted the total amount of Cllr seats e.g. Total seats, group nominating as 15 points, the nomination would cost 30 points, putting them on -15, but they would get 15 points in the following year (1 per member) putting them on 0 points.

If this process were put in place for the town council and if the groupings were aligned along the current political lines, then it would be as follows

Year	Labour Points	Conservative Points	Lib Dem Points	Result
2022	16	7	2	Labour nominate Dep Mayor

2023	Deducted 25 (total council seats) (-9), then given 16 to represent numbers in their group so would have 7 total points	+7 14 total points	+2 4 total points	Conservative nominate Dep Mayor
2024	7 + 16 23 total points	14 – 25=-11 +7=-4 -4 total points	+2 6 total points	Labour nominate Dep Mayor
2025	23 – 25=-2 +16 14 total points	-4 + 7 3 total points	+2 8 total points	Labour nominate Dep Mayor
2026 Election would have happened in 2025 so based on current groupings	14 – 25=-11 +16 5 total points	3 + 7 10 total points	8 + 2 10 total points	Points tie Conservative or Lib Dem to nominate Dep Mayor
2027	5 + 16 21 total points	10 + 7 17 total points (unless nom Dep Mayor in previous year in which case -8 total points)	10 + 2 12 total points (unless nominating Dep Mayor in previous year in which case -15 total points)	Labour to nominate Dep Mayor
2028	21 – 25=-4 +16 12 total points	17 + 7 = 24 Or -8+7=-1	12+2+14 Or -15+2=-13	Depends on 2026

The Clerk summarised by stating that ultimately it was for members to decide who they intend to nominate as Deputy Mayor and inform the Town Clerk accordingly. It was customary that when electing the Mayor and Deputy Mayor formally at the Annual Council meeting/Mayor Making that this was not challenged.

It was commented that to take the politics out of the nominating of the Deputy mayor would be good and would give everyone a chance regardless of affiliation. Members also noted that the points system worked at the borough council and this was a fair way of operating.

In response to a question the Clerk confirmed that a Mayor can serve more than one term and in consecutive years.

The Clerk reemphasised that whatever was agreed was only a customary agreement and could be ignored by the largest group.

RESOLVED: That the Town Council operate a points based system as detailed in the minute to allocate the Deputy Mayoralty to a group

50. Consideration to hold committee meetings in the community by utilising local community centres/venues etc

A report was circulated detailing a proposal put forward by the Chair to host some committee meetings out with the Guildhall and in the community.

It was explained that the hosting of meetings in different areas of Northampton was potentially a great way to introduce the town council and get the communities involved and engaged.

The Clerk stated that theming the agenda around the area where the meeting was to be held, for example a presentation and/or item(s) on the agenda connected to the area would be crucial to make attendance worthwhile. In addition, it would have to be well publicised to make residents aware.

The opportunity to hold a planning meeting in the ward where there is an application that has a lot of community interest may also be a means of connecting with the communities and ensuring that they had the opportunity to have their say.

The Clerk advised that if this was to proceed, councillors would need assist the Clerk by informing him of any suitable venues and speakers and also any topics of interest that could be added to the agenda of a committee.

The committee supported the proposal, stating that it was a great idea. They emphasised that publicising it would be key, and councillors would need to play a role in this too. Consideration and planning would also need to be given with regards to the agenda well in advance to make it relevant to the area where the meeting was to be held.

RESOLVED: That the Council looks to hold some committee meetings in wards around Northampton in the coming municipal year.

52. Re allocation of the Civic Matters Sub Committee to become a working group

A report was circulated recommending that this sub-committee be reallocated a working group.

The nature of the business undertaken was more suitable for a Working Group and it would allow greater member engagement given that it could be held remotely. Reports would be drafted following a working group meeting which would go to the Policy and Finance Committee for consideration.

RESOLVED: That the Civic Matters Sub-Committee be re-designated as a Working Group.

53. Annual Town Meeting

It was explained in a report that Town and Parish Councils were legally required to hold a Parish Meeting annually (not to be confused with Annual Town Council Meeting/Mayor making). This was a meeting that registered electors of the parish were entitled to attend.

The meeting usually took the form of a question and answer session with the Mayor acting as the host and Chair with support from the clerk. This meeting must be held between 1 March and 1 June every year. The Clerk explained that was not a meeting of the Council and there was no requirement

for councillors to attend and no summons issued, though of course they were welcome to attend and sit with the Mayor.

This year, the meeting was scheduled for the 9th May, either directly before or after the Council meeting also scheduled for that date.

Many councils made use of this meeting to invite partner organisations to address the parishioners and answer questions. In our case the Clerk explained that he was minded to invite a representative from WNC and the local policing team.

The Clerk also asked that the council authorises the provision of tea and coffee and delegates the organisation to the Clerk in consultation with the Mayor and Chair of Policy and Finance.

A possible format could be:

- Welcome and opening statement by Town Mayor
- Short report from committee Chairs on the work of their committees followed by Q & A
- Report from local police representative followed by Q & A
- Report from WNC representative followed by Q & A
- Closing of the meeting by Town Mayor

Officers were planning to prepare an annual report for this meeting which will focus on the work of the town council in the first year and talk about upcoming plans too. Committee Chairs would be asked to contribute towards this.

Members agreed that this was a good idea and suggested that a representative from the housing association also be invited. Members agreed to put the date of the meeting back to later in May to allow more time to organise.

RESOLVED: That the Annual Town Meeting be moved to later in May and that delegation be given to the Clerk, in conjunction with the Mayor and Chair of the Policy and Finance Committee to organise.

54. Asset Mapping Exercise

The Clerk gave a brief update highlighting that the working group had agreed that all councillors be asked to map their wards. The priority was to map the large assets, buildings, parks, etc. All councillors had been sent a login but should contact the Town Clerk if the link had expired.

NOTED

There being no more business the meeting concluded at 18.55 hours.

Signed.....Chair

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Appendix A to Policy and Finance Committee minutes 28th February 2022

**NORTHAMPTON TOWN COUNCIL
Civic Matters Sub-Committee**

**Minutes of the meeting held on 9th February 2021 at 12.00 in the Farmer Room in
Northampton Guildhall**

PRESENT: Councillors Marriott (Chair), Meredith, Choudary

Also present: Cllr Birch

In attendance: Mr S Carter (Town Clerk) Ms L Hawkins (Civic and Mayoralty Officer)

15. Apologies

Apologies were submitted from Cllrs Lane and Ashraf

16. Declarations of interest

There were none.

17. Minutes of last meeting

The minutes of the meeting held 15 December 2021 were approved and signed as a true and accurate record.

18. OLB

It was **RECOMMENDED** that the Town Clerk in conjunction with the Chair be delegated to make any necessary changes to the Operation London Bridge protocol and implementation including the authorisation of any expenditure. Given the sensitivity and requirement to make quick decisions, this was the advice that had come from NALC and the LGA.

Remembrance Day was discussed in terms of procession order and robing in relation to the OLB procession order and the Jubilee parade.

It was agreed the Deputy Mayor was to wear a red robe for future civic events.

19. Protocol regarding the election of the Town Mayor

The NBC points based new mayor election process and formula were discussed. The Chair advised that he intended to discuss this further at the Policy and Finance Committee meeting.

It was noted that the Conservative party donated their NBC points to Cllr Meredith (Liberal Democratic) enabling him to be Mayor for 2022/2023.

The Clerk highlighted that in his position he was unable to offer any advice on the what process should be used other than to say that whatever was decided, it would be a gentleman's agreement as there

was no formal legislation around protocols or selecting the Mayor and that ultimately it would be for the largest voting group to abide with a protocol or not.

The Clerk was asked to compile a report based on three options, Largest Group, Seniority and Points System to go to the Policy and Finance Committee. The Clerk confirmed that he would do this but that it would be for members to debate and decide.

NOTED

20. Mayoral Driver

Members discussed the report provided regarding Mayoral Drivers. It included two local authority jobs in Manchester and London for a Mayoral driver illustrating to the type of contract, remuneration etc. that was on offer elsewhere. Issues had arisen with a lack of drivers and the availability of the current drivers due to other commitments taken on over lockdown when the Mayoral jobs virtually ceased. This had meant that often that sometimes, the Mayor had been unable to make an engagement.

It was agreed to speak to the main driver regarding guaranteed hours and to discuss this further at a future meeting.

NOTED

21. Civic Procession in Queens Jubilee Parade

It was reported that The Lord Lieutenant was working with WNC on arranging a large parade in Northampton in its capacity as County Town to mark the Queen's Jubilee. It was understood that this parade, scheduled for Saturday 4 June 2022 would involve military personnel and civic dignitaries. There was debate on whether the Mayor and councillors or just the Mayor should take part in the civic procession. Given that it was not a Town Council event it was agreed that we would await formal invitation from the Lord Lieutenant, advising whether they wanted just the Mayor or the Mayor and councillors.

NOTED

22. Tree Planting

The Civic and Mayoralty Officer updated members on the progress of the Mayoral Tree planting. It was agreed that a second tree would be planted in honour of the Queen's Platinum Jubilee Green Canopy.

The Mayor's consort was to plant their tree in a separate event as was tradition at Victoria Park and it was confirmed that permission had been granted from WNC.

NOTED

23. Mayoral Logo

Circulated was a request from the Mayor to introduce a new logo for the Mayoralty, which was simple and could be used on items easier than the current one which was very detailed. The proposal put forward by the Mayor and as detailed below showed a stylised castle encircled by a Mayoral chain.



The Members liked the design presented however, all agreed that it was not as Mayoral as the existing logo, for example it did not include or make reference to the Mace which was a symbol of the Mayoralty. It was agreed after deliberation and **RECOMMENDED** to keep the current Mayoral Emblem for the reasons stated and that a change during a Mayoral term would be confusing.

The NTC logo was discussed, however it was agreed to hold off on this pending the outcome of the city status bid.

24. Civic Service

Members were updated on the progress of the Civic Service planned for the 20th February, all actions had been taken and the Service was ready to go ahead.

Seating arrangements in the Church were discussed – Father Coss was to be provided the RSVP list on the Thursday prior to the event.

Numbers of attendees are expected to be circa 50 people.

NOTED

The meeting closed at 14.10

Chair.....

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Appendix B to Policy and Finance Minutes 28th February 2022

**NORTHAMPTON TOWN COUNCIL
ACCOUNTS SUB COMMITTEE**

**Minutes of the meeting held on 10th February 2022 at 11.00
in Room 5 of the Town Council Offices at Northampton Guildhall**

PRESENT: Councillors Marriott (Chair), Birch, Hibbert.

In attendance: Officers: Mr S Carter (Town Clerk) and Mrs C Maclellan (Finance Officer).

34. APOLOGIES

Cllr. B Purser

35. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors Birch and Marriott declared a non-pecuniary interest in relation to the Groundworks receipt and payment to Semilong and Trinity neighbourhood Forum.

36. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held 12th January 2022 were circulated with the agenda.

RESOLVED: That they be approved as a true record and that the Chair be authorised to sign them.

37. REVENUE BUDGET 2021/22

The Town Clerk and Finance Officer presented the Budget control report for month 10, Bank Reconciliation, and Receipts and Cash Payments Documentation (attached at appendix A) for the period to 31 January 2022, and January Bank Statement, all of which were noted and signed by all Cllrs. present.

The Finance Officer highlighted the following movement in month 10 compared to the previous month's budget:

4130 Insurance up by 31% due to recent payment for the muniments valuation.

4540, Town Twinning was moved from central Administration to Civic and Democratic as requested.

4155 Accounting support, 4156 Audit Fees, 4170 Community Grant & 4300 Service Charge are all near 100% as would be expected as we are heading towards the end of the financial year.

In response to the question raised regarding muniments insurance, the Town Clerk agreed to investigate and review security risk and would explore with how we would arrange taking on responsibility for our own designated areas. He advised that he would arrange to speak

with WNC, The Insurers and the Museum. The Town Clerk also agreed to share the asset list and valuation documents with Councillors present.

In response to the question of any other expected costs regarding allotments, the Town Clerk explained that he was in discussions with WNC to determine activity and further potential costs and any 3rd party management relationships currently in place. It was noted that the Town Clerk and Assistant Town Clerk were to visit Southfields that same day.

In response to equipment needed to support NTC in terms of ongoing requirements such as a presentation screen (TV screen and stand), shredder for confidential waste, replacement chairs and tea & coffee equipment it was agreed that the Town Clerk could arrange to source the equipment needed.

It was also noted that discussions should be held with WNC regarding the poor state of the chairs in the Farmer room to see if they could be replaced or whether that would be for the town council.

The Revenue budget was **NOTED** and signed by all Cllrs. present.

38. PAYMENT OF ACCOUNTS

In response to queries regarding costs associated to Mayoralty it was agreed that the Town Clerk would explore how these could be reviewed independently and consideration should be given to how the process of approval should work moving forward.

In response to the question raised regarding Groundworks Grant, it was explained the grant received into NTC bank account would be used as a holding account only, NTC would then pay the money to Semilong and Trinity Neighbourhood Forum who would spend the money as planned and would reconcile at the end of the financial year. Semilong and Trinity would provide a copy of the reconciliation to NTC and would repay any funds not used back to NTC, NTC would then pay Groundworks. It was agreed that the reconciliation report would be shared with the Accounts Subcommittee.

In response to the question raised for Pitney Bowes the Finance Officer explained that the mechanism Pitney Bowes used for billing was confusing, in that invoices presented often had brought forward amounts from previous invoices included in the charge due, despite the fact that the brought forward amount had been paid. The FO went on to explain that the Administrative Assistant was drafting an internal control process to ensure that all postage costs were being managed and recorded appropriately and would therefore balance to the invoice charges received.

RESOLVED: That the accounts as detailed below be approved for payment.

Invoice Date	Invoice No	A/c Name	Net Value	VAT	Invoice Total	Total Supplier Balance to pay
04/02/2022	1016	Abington Wind Band	£ 150.00	£ -	£ 150.00	£ 150.00
09/12/2021	MAYORS EXPENSES JANU	Mayor Rufia Ashraf (Expenses)	£ 376.91	£ -	£ 376.91	£ 376.91
29/12/2021	INV-0038	Classic Carriages of Northampton	£ 850.00	£ -	£ 850.00	
04/02/2022	INV-0041	Classic Carriages of Northampton	£ 630.00	£ -	£ 630.00	£ 1,480.00
14/01/2022	B2302	Coram James Limited	£ 3,145.20	£ 629.04	£ 3,774.24	£ 3,774.24
20/01/2022	276	Council for Voluntary Service Northampton	£ 36.00	£ 7.20	£ 43.20	
02/02/2022	293	Council for Voluntary Service Northampton	£ 36.00	£ 7.20	£ 43.20	£ 86.40
14/01/2022	356466	Horizon Telecom Ltd	£ 502.00	£ 100.40	£ 602.40	£ 602.40
18/12/2021	68482	Mayfair Cars (Northampton) Ltd	£ 121.00	£ 24.20	£ 145.20	
31/12/2021	68510	Mayfair Cars (Northampton) Ltd	£ 145.20	£ 29.04	£ 174.24	
22/01/2022	68722	Mayfair Cars (Northampton) Ltd	£ 105.60	£ 21.12	£ 126.72	
31/01/2022	68795	Mayfair Cars (Northampton) Ltd	£ 105.60	£ 21.12	£ 126.72	
30/01/2022	15594	Microshade Business Consultants Ltd	£ 295.00	£ 59.00	£ 354.00	
04/02/2022	15729	Microshade Business Consultants Ltd	£ 47.50	£ 9.50	£ 57.00	
06/02/2022	15653	Microshade Business Consultants Ltd	£ 470.74	£ 94.15	£ 564.89	£ 1,548.77
31/01/2022	STUART EXPENSESJAN22	Stuart Carter (Expense Claims)	£ 32.42	£ -	£ 32.42	£ 32.42
01/12/2021	88888984746-9800677	Anglian Water t/a Wave Utilities	£ 20.39	£ 4.08	£ 24.47	
10/12/2021	88888984746	Anglian Water t/a Wave Utilities	£ 0.13	£ 0.02	£ 0.15	
10/12/2021	88888984746-9854709	Anglian Water t/a Wave Utilities	-£ 971.34	-£ 194.27	-£ 1,165.61	
10/12/2021	88888984758-9854712	Anglian Water t/a Wave Utilities	£ 976.87	£ 195.38	£ 1,172.25	
01/01/2022	88888984758-9934322	Anglian Water t/a Wave Utilities	£ 13.35	£ 2.67	£ 16.02	£ 47.28
18/01/2022	424000622394	West Northamptonshire Council	£ 31.92	£ 6.38	£ 38.30	
28/01/2022	424000622268	West Northamptonshire Council	£16,159.12	£ -	£ 16,159.12	
28/01/2022	424000622404	West Northamptonshire Council	£ 93.00	£ -	£ 93.00	£ 16,290.42
			£23,372.61	£1,016.23	£ 24,388.84	£ 24,388.84
Additional Payments not posted to system / Amendments						
17/01/2022	GROUNDWORK UK R/C	Semilong and Trinity Neighbourhood Forum	£ 6,796.00	£ -	£ 6,796.00	£ 6,796.00
05/02/2022	68896	Mayfair Cars	£ 66.00	£ 13.20	£ 79.20	£ 79.20
08/01/2022	BI710022	Pitney Bowes	£ 206.90	£ -	£ 206.90	£ 206.90
09/02/2022	424000640512	West Northamptonshire Council	£ 33.25	£ 6.65	£ 39.90	
09/02/2022	424000640541	West Northamptonshire Council	£ 19.95	£ 3.90	£ 23.94	£ 63.84
08/02/2022	VOI0025127	Zen Office	£ 34.70	£ 6.94	£ 41.64	£ 41.64
<p>£145 received in the bank 21/12/21. I emailed the bank to establish further detail - no response, so I rang them and I asked if it could be interest and they said yes, however it actually relates to the Mayors Gala, therefore I will need to move funds from bank interest to the Mayors Gala.</p>						
Salaries / HMRC / Pension payments Feb						
Salaries (Net) for Feb including Mayoral Allowance						£ 11,215.88
HMRC Feb						£ 4,752.92
Pension Feb						£ 4,838.96
Grant payment						
CCF11	Emma Rice and WEJ Knight Almshouses		Phippsville	Cllr Stevens		£1,335.00

Following review of the bank statement and bank reconciliation, a discussion was held regarding the investment of bank funds. The Town Clerk invited Councillors Birch and Hibbert to attend a call (to be arranged with 3rd party supplier namely CCLA about their cash deposit fund. The Town Clerk made the point that priority was always security over return, but that in this case, it was about spreading the cash over many back accounts. The return would remain low, but this could be looked once this element was sorted

39. Interim Audit

Tabled for information and attached at appendix B was the interim audit compiled by the Council's Internal Auditor. It was noted that the report was extremely positive with the auditor commenting that the processes and control documents that had been put in place were extremely thorough. The auditor had asked that page numbering be added to minutes and that an Internal control checklist be introduced, at present checks were reported and minuted. The Town Clerk advised that he had provided an example Internal Control Checklist to the Finance Officer for review and they would draft an appropriate Internal Control Check List for NTC and would present to Accts Sub committee for review.

It was noted that the continuation of reviewing NTC Internal Control processes should be extended to all NTC councillors. The FO agreed that she would extend the invitation and advised that Cllr Purser is next to review the Payroll process on the 21st February.

The Finance Officer advised that she would be on annual leave week commencing 14th February and would return on the 21st February.

The next meeting has been arranged for Tuesday 8th March, the FO will send out a calendar invitation.

The meeting ended at 12.18 pm.

Signed.....Chair