



Ref: Agenda/F&GP- 05/07/2022

30th June 2022

Dear Sir/Madam

All Members of the Town Council are hereby summoned to the Finance and General Purposes Committee Meeting of Biggleswade Town Council that will take place on **Tuesday 5th July 2022** at the **Offices of Biggleswade Town Council, The Old Court House, Saffron Road, Biggleswade** commencing at **7:00pm**, for the purpose of considering and recommending the business to be transacted as specified below.

Yours faithfully

Peter Tarrant

Town Clerk & Chief Executive

Distribution: All Town Councillors

Notice Boards The Press

Committee Members:

Cllr. R. Pullinger (Chair)

Cllr. M. Foster (Vice Chair)

Cllr. M North

Cllr. D. Albone

Cllr. I. Bond

Cllr. G. Fage

Cllr. M. Knight

Cllr. H. Ramsay

Cllr. M. Russell

Cllr. D. Strachan

AGENDA

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

2. <u>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</u>

To receive Statutory Declarations of Interests from Members in relation to:

- a. Disclosable Pecuniary interests in any agenda item.
- b. Non-Pecuniary interests in any agenda item

3. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

4. PUBLIC OPEN SESSION

To adjourn for a period of up to 15 minutes to allow members of the public to put questions or to address the Council, through the Chairman, pertaining to matters listed on the agenda.

Please register in advance for this webinar:

https://us06web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN jHYpOZmFSeeetHNLJPrcyg

Each Speaker will give their name to the Chairman, prior to speaking, which will be recorded in the minutes, unless that person requests otherwise. Each Speaker will be allowed **one three-minute slot**.

5. <u>INVITED SPEAKER</u>

None.

6. MEMBERS' QUESTIONS

7. MINUTES AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF MEETINGS

a. The Minutes of the Finance & General Purposes Committee Meeting held on **Tuesday 15th March 2022** at the Offices of Biggleswade Town Council, The Old Court House, Saffron Road, Biggleswade.

8. MATTERS ARISING

a. The Minutes of Finance & General Purposes Committee Meeting held on **Tuesday 15th March 2022** at the Office of Biggleswade Town Council, The Old Court House, Saffron Road, Biggleswade.

9. ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION

a. Payments Process Unity Trust Bank

For Members to receive and consider a written report from the Town Clerk and Chief Executive.

b. Christmas Tender Update

For Members to receive and consider a written report from the Place Shaping Manager.

c. Fire Risk Assessment

For Members to receive and consider a written report from the Head of Strategic Partnerships.

10. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

a. **CCTV Update on S106 Application**

For Members to receive an oral update from the Head of Governance & Strategic Partnerships.

b. **Apollo Gardens**

For Members to receive an oral update from the Head of Governance & Strategic Partnerships.

11. PUBLIC OPEN SESSION

To adjourn for a period of up to 15 minutes to allow members of the public to put questions or to address the Council, through the Chairman, in respect of any other business of the Town Council.

Please register in advance for this webinar:

https://us06web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN jHYpOZmFSeeetHNLJPrcyg

Each Speaker will give their name to the Chairman prior to speaking, which will be recorded in the minutes, unless that person requests otherwise. Each Speaker will be allowed **(one) three-minute slot.**

12. EXEMPT ITEMS

The following resolution will be **moved** that it is advisable in the public interest that the public and press are excluded whilst the following exempt items are discussed.

(13.a. Capital Assets Review)

Pursuant to section 1(2) of the public bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 Council **resolve** to exclude the public and press by reason of the confidential nature of the business about to be transacted.



MINUTES OF THE FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE MEETING TUESDAY 15th MARCH 2022 AT THE OFFICES OF BIGGLESWADE TOWN COUNCIL, THE OLD COURT HOUSE, 4 SAFFRON ROAD, BIGGLESWADE COMMENCING AT 7:00PM



PRESENT:

Cllr R. Pullinger (Chair)

Cllr G. Fage

Cllr M. Knight

Cllr M. Russell

Cllr D. Strachan (virtually)

Mr P. Tarrant –Town Clerk & Chief Executive, Biggleswade Town Council (virtually)

Mr K. Hosseini – Head of Governance & Strategic Partnerships, Biggleswade Town Council

Mrs S. Solomon - Head of Finance & Planning, Biggleswade Town Council

Mr J. Nyamfukudza – Finance Manager, Biggleswade Town Council

Ms. H. Calvert – Administration & HR Manager (virtually)

Mr I. Lord - Place Shaping Manager, Biggleswade Town Council

Mrs S. van der Merwe – Professional Assistant, Biggleswade Town Council

Miss S. Jolly - Senior Administrator, Biggleswade Town Council

Members of the Public - 1

Meeting Formalities:

Following a reminder to meeting attendees, both panel and public, that this is a formal meeting, the Chairman advised that members of the public will be given an opportunity to speak during public open session but not at other times. The meeting is being filmed and by being present attendees are deemed to have agreed be filmed and to the use of those images and sound recordings. The Chairman advised that attendees should not disclose any personal information of individuals as this would infringe the Data Protection Rights of the individual. The Chairman asked everyone to mute their microphones when not speaking.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Cllr M. North Cllr D. Albone Cllr I. Bond Cllr H. Ramsey

ABSENT WITHOUT APOLOGIES

None.

2. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

a. Disclosable Pecuniary interests in any agenda item

None.

b. <u>Disclosable Non-pecuniary interests in any agenda item</u>

None.

3. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

None.

4. PUBLIC OPEN SESSION

No member of the public wished to speak.

5. <u>INVITED SPEAKER</u>

None.

6. <u>MEMBERS' QUESTIONS</u>

None.

7. MINUTES OF MEETINGS

Members received the minutes of the Finance & General Purposes meeting held on **Tuesday 18th January 2021**.

Item 6.c. – The Orchard Centre. The item which reads 'It was **RESOLVED** that Officers draft a clear policy relating to the "Standard" and "Community Activity" definitions' to be amended to read 'It was **RESOLVED** that Officers draft a clear policy for the Orchard Centre including definitions of the "Standard" and "Community Activity."

Subject to the above correction, the Minutes were **APPROVED** as a true and accurate reflection of discussions.

8. MATTERS ARISING

None.

9. ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION

a. Cost Reduction & Efficiency Review

Members received the report from the Head of Finance & Planning.

It was **RESOLVED** to consider the report under the Exempt section of this meeting.

b. **Review of Financial Regulations**

Members received and considered a report from the Head of Place Shaping & Town Centre Management, presented in his absence by Mr J. Nyamfukudza, Finance Manager.

Members requested that ambiguity be removed from the text by amending:

'Only the Town Clerk & Chief Executive will be permitted to be issued with a Debit Card'

to read:' Only the Town Clerk will be permitted to be issued with a Debit Card'.

Members asked that the text:

'6.18 A pre-paid debit card may be issued to employees with varying limits. These limits will be set by the Finance & General Purposes Committee. Transactions and purchases made will be reported to the Council. and authority for topping-up shall be at the discretion of the Council or relevant committee.'

be amended to read:

'6.18 A pre-paid debit card may be issued to employees with varying limits. These limits will be set by the Finance & General Purposes Committee. Transactions and purchases made will be reported to the Council.'

Subject to the above corrections, it was **RESOLVED** to adopt the procedures as outlined in this report.

c. Risk Assessment – 2021/22

Members received and considered a report from the Head of Place Shaping & Town Centre Management, presented in his absence by Mrs S. Solomon, Head of Finance & Planning.

Members raised the following points:

The importance of the risk management scheme was stressed when assessing projects taking place in the Town.

A request was made that a compare and contrast exercise be included at any future review to highlight changes.

A Member requested the inclusion of risk management in case of war.

It was **RESOLVED** to adopt the risk management scheme as outlined in this report.

10. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

a. Capital Income Optimisation

The report was noted.

b. Finance Review Update

The Head of Finance & Planning delivered an oral update on progress connected to the implementation of the Finance Review.

In summary:

The adopted recommendations had been broken down into six quarterly deliverables timelines. Work has commenced on those with a deadline of 31st March 2022.

Finance staffing had increased to enable efficient structures and reporting and to enable the implementation of revised financial processes.

Negotiations are in progress with the current finance software provider to adopt additional software modules to manage and report income received from bookings and other income streams. Costs to be presented and reviewed by the Town Council with the aim of implementation by 1st April 2022.

A review of payroll structure and reporting processes had been undertaken. The Administration & HR Manager had documented the reporting process and the staff payroll

system had been reviewed to ensure efficient recording. A new HR system will be implemented from 1st April 2022 to encompass improvements.

The process for the collection of fees was under review, including the possibility of cashless payments. Communications with the public and marketing would make any changes smoother. Contributions by Members towards communications and marketing were welcomed. A detailed report would be presented to the Committee at the next meeting.

Members asked that timelines be circulated for visibility.

Members and Officers requested a detailed report to include the sequencing of recommendations, timelines, risk, cost, and implementation of recommendations.

Members recalled a Town Council decision not to rule out cash transactions because of their significance. A cash option needed to be available.

The report was **NOTED**.

c. **Asset Register**

Members received an oral update from Mr K Hosseini regarding work on the Town Council's Asset Register project.

Initial scoping of the regional market had taken place prior to engaging chartered surveying services.

Historical records had been shared by a local firm and engagement was underway to link this information with the Asset Register.

Documentation had been requested from H M Land Registry, payment had been made, and a full response was awaited.

Research into the local market had identified six RICS chartered surveyors who had been approached with an expression of interest. Two responses had been received from interested firms.

A meeting had been arranged with a potential supplier to discuss available services, costs, etc.

Members discussed the delivery to the Town Council of a full report, identifying all work, timelines, priorities, and manpower involved.

It was **RESOLVED** that a full report would be delivered to this committee on 21st June 2022.

d. **BTC Website**

Members received and considered a written report from the Administration & HR Manager providing an update on the completion of work on the Biggleswade Town Council website.

The report detailed work completed to date and scheduled.

Members expressed their thanks for work completed to date. Members suggested that analytics would identify traffic and popular pages, enabling a focus on areas attracting the most attention. Analytics might affect types of information published, elements of structure, and search engine optimisation and should be considered prior to further investment.

In response to a Member's enquiry, the Administration & HR Manager confirmed that the cost of remaining work would be included in the current contract, with an ongoing monthly charge thereafter for support.

Members stressed the importance of accuracy of data on the website.

The report stated that a new layout was required for the top of each page. Members hoped this would be small in size and would not detract from page content.

A calendar for rooms at the Orchard Centre should not show details of commercial bookings.

Members asked that the development of online booking for market stalls be paused whilst the long-term process for market stall bookings is established.

It was thought that the website content needed to be simplified and made more attractive, and that some content needed to be brought up to date.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Administration & HR Manager would liaise with the provider to produce a further report addressing the above items.

The report was **NOTED**.

11. PUBLIC OPEN SESSION

No members of the public wished to speak.

12. EXEMPT ITEMS

- 13.a. Car Parking Tender
- 13.b. Cost Reduction & Efficiency Review

13. EXEMPT ITEMS

- a. Members discussed the car parking tender.
- b. Members discussed the Cost Reduction & Efficiency Review. The outcome of the Asset Register Review and Contracts review will be considered at the next committee meeting on 21st June 2022.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- 1. the £4,000 saving associated with a critique of non-payroll related vote headings be cashed.
- 2. the £3,054 saving associated with a review of VOIP be earmarked as a potential saving.
- 3. the old depot be rented out in the short term pending further development.
- 4. the Council actively draw down S106 monies where relevant and continue negotiations with Central Bedfordshire Council connected to broader place shaping opportunities.
- 5. the Council actively conclude negotiations around Linear Wood and Pocket Park prior to bringing a report to Council for consideration.
- 6. the Council actively conclude negotiations around Apollo Gardens and other playgrounds prior to bringing a report to Council for consideration.

The meeting was closed at 21:05 pm.

BIGGLESWADE TOWN COUNCIL Finance & General Purposes Committee 5th July 2022 Unity Bank BACS Payment Process - Multi Factor Authentication

Implications of Recommendations

Corporate Strategy: FINANCIALS: Implement the recommendations of the fundamental

review of the finance function.

Finance: The report seeks to define a robust process.

Equality: The Council pays due regard to all equality legislation.

Environment: The Council pays due regard to all environment legislation.

Community Safety: Not applicable.

Background

This item was debated at Council on 14th June. Members requested definition around a new payment process which could also then inform any decision around future signatories.

A recommended new payment process is attached. It seeks to incorporate aspects of the existing manual process so as to ensure good financial governance, independent Member critique and early Member input into the payment sign off process.

Members will continue to be invited to visit the Town Council Offices to inspect and sign off invoices and purchase orders prior to the instigation of the BACS online payment process.

Two Member signatories will continue to be required combined with that of the (RFO) Responsible Financial Officer and/or additional Officer signatory e.g. the Head of Governance & Sustainability. A Member can only release online if they have also witnessed hard copies in person.

Members are asked to satisfy themselves of the following:

- That the type of expenditure is consistent with our sector
- That a purchase order is quoted (the purchase order will be saved in Rialtas)
- That the RFO has signed to confirm that there is sufficient budget to source the expenditure
- The account code is consistent with the type of expenditure
- The invoice is being paid within a reasonable time period e.g. no longer than 30 days from receipt of services or product

Once Members have authorised the payment a schedule will uploaded onto Unity Banks online system by the Internet Banking Administrator (Finance Manager).

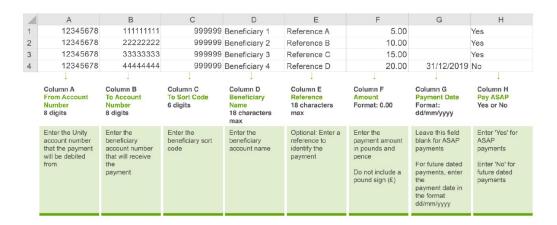


Fig 1: Payment Schedule example

Members will then follow the log on process defined to release the payment. Whilst process flow charts are not offered by Unity Bank they do offer detailed video tutorials that Members will wish to take advantage of. Example tutorial link - Registered User Guide:

https://www.unity.co.uk/content/uploads/Verify-Your-Identity-SCA.mp4

Task and individual additional validation can be prompted at anytime of the process via either an auto generated message to the registered phone or an in-person call.

As well as seeking to define process the appendices give information around the nature of the ICT/Software that Members will be required to maintain at home to satisfy security and enable online payments.

It is important to note that Invoices **can only be successfully paid** if hard copies are signed off by three signatories, a schedule is uploaded onto Unity Banks system and two independent Members authorise said payments through Unity Banks online system.

The process is managed and overseen by the Internet Banking Administrator (Finance Manager).

Recommendation

Members are asked to support the new proposals. A separate report will also go to full Council in an attempt to clarify future authorised signatories.

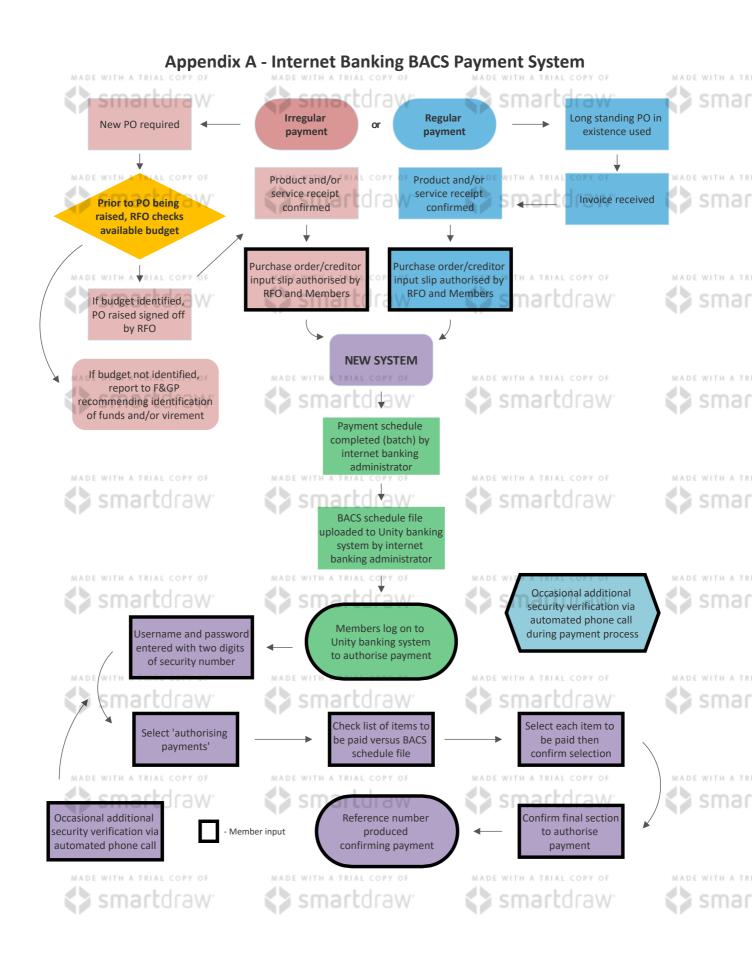
Once the authorised signatories have been agreed Council will open a new account with Unity Bank and close its Lloyds Bank accounts.

It is anticipated that the majority of payments will then be paid by BACS however the Council will continue to offer cheque payment if this is the preferred payment method for a given supplier.

Peter Tarrant
Town Clerk & Chief Executive - June 2022

Appendix A: Internet Banking BACS Payment System

Appendix B: Internet Banking Log in Process































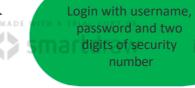






























smartdraw







BIGGLESWADE TOWN COUNCIL Finance & General Purposes Committee Meeting 5th July 2022 Christmas Tender Update

Implications of Recommendations:

Corporate Strategy: COMMUNITY: Develop a programme of events for the Town Centre.

Finance: Sourced from allocation set aside in Town Centre budget. **Equality:** The Council pays due regard to all equality legislation.

Environment: No change. **Community Safety:** No change.

Background

This report provides an update to Members on the tender process for Christmas 2022 events.

Summary

On 28th April 2022, an expression of interest email was sent out to existing and some new suppliers for all aspects relating to the Christmas events as per Annex A. Only a handful of suppliers have provided a quote despite Officers chasing, with several declining their services having full order books. Officers have been minded to maximise the number of suppliers sourced to achieve full compliance with financial regulations. Officers have thus posted an advert on the Central Government's Contract Finder website, with an invitation to tender and a deadline for expressions of 15th July. Officers are continuing to email and call possible suppliers to obtain quotes.

Procurement

The below figure provides a high-level view for quotes obtained across each category of the specifications.

Figure 1. Quoted Costs for Christmas 2022 Specification

	Christmas		Market Square	Stage, Sound	Light		Santa	
	Trees	Festoons	Tree Lights	& Lighting	Shows	Grotto	Hire	Ice Rink
	800.00	12023.73	4482.00	5272.46	1750.00	498.00	Free	5100.00
Quotes	3850.00	Awaiting	Awaiting	6590.57	2933.25	195.00	289.00	8000.00
	Awaiting	Awaiting	Awaiting	Awaiting	Awaiting	395.00	Awaiting	5750.00
Prices exclude VAT. Quotes mostly valid for 30 days when received.								

Whilst a grotto was procured previously, a large double-sided panel was broken as a result of wind damage. The cost to replace the broken panel has been quoted at £498 plus VAT. This does not include hiring a Santa, decorating and presents for children. Officers are currently exploring alternative solutions which include renting a vacant unit in close proximity to the Square and deploying staff or a business to decorate it, as well as hiring variations of grotto packages.

Prior to the Jubilee events attended by a qualified electrician, Officers were made aware that the Market Square has an unsafe electrical infrastructure and works should be carried out to achieve electrical compliance and ensure safety. Quotes are currently being obtained for this work to be completed ahead of Christmas from the general budget.

As part of future communications and technological solutions for the Market Square, a digital totem requirement has already been built into this financial year's growth budget, separate to Christmas. This will play a significant role in the marketing strategy for the Christmas events. An A-board with plug-in USB as opposed to cloud functionality is preferred by Officers. Despite this, the cheapest option quoted is £2,180, which is £180 above the allocated budget. The totem will be used to promote local businesses, upcoming

events, and Town Council messaging in a highly visible, mobile, and impactful medium.

An ice rink has been included in this year's specification to add something new. Whilst it's expensive, the rink can be ticketed to gain some cost back and/or it can be run at a reduced cost without a staffing provision by the provider.

Budget

An indicative budget of £18,000 which had been allocated for Christmas lights and £7,000 for Christmas activities is being used to determine affordability of the quotes being received. The below figure shows the recommended quotes received to date per category. For 2022, the Town Council will not be running 8 light shows, instead running two light shows (one for the switch on and the second for Friday 23rd December).

Figure 2. Projected Expenditure for Christmas 2022 Events

Category	2022	Budget	Variance
Festoons	12023.73	18000	5976.27
Christmas Trees	800		
Market Square Tree Lights	4482		
Stage, Sound & Lighting	5700		
Light Shows	1750		
Grotto	495	7000	-11327
Santa Hire	0		
Ice Rink	5100		
Electricity	TBC		
Other	TBC		
Total	30350.73	25000	-5350.73

Prices exclude VAT. 2022 figures based on the cheapest quote available from those obtained thus far. Market Square Tree Lights excludes installation.

Recommendations

That Committee Members consider and approve:

- I. The procurement route taken by Officers
- II. The Christmas Offer 2022 specification
- III. Officers to provide final supplier selection at Town Centre Management Committee 19th July
- IV. Completion of the electrical improvement work to the market square infrastructure.
- V. Purchase of the digital A-board at £2,180

Isaac LordPlace Shaping Manager

Karim Hosseini Head of Governance & Strategic Partnerships

Annex A – Specification sent to Vendors

Two Christmas trees:

Install, decorate 1 x 30 foot tree, with lighting removed by 6th Jan Install, decorate 1 x 20 foot tree, with lighting removed by 6th Jan

Festoons:

Christmas festoons to be installed across the lampposts on either side of the high street (422m, equivalent to roughly 472m with no swag and going across lampposts).

Market Square Tree Lights:

Retain existing lights in the Market Square trees, repairing those that are broken whilst adding additional sets where necessary for those that cannot be repaired.

Stage on a trailer:

Hire a 7 metres x 7 metres covered stage to be built the day before due to build time.

Sound Equipment:

To power the stage, for live band and performances, and ensure sufficient sound to cover the surrounding market square area.

Install a sound booth and DJ with equipment.

Lighting for the Stage:

Snow machines, strobe lighting, glitter and mirror balls etc.

Light Shows x2:

Friday 25th November – includes stage on a trailer

Friday 23rd December – excludes stage on a trailer and is only a sound system with playlist/DJ

Grotto:

To hire a new grotto with external supporting staff.

Ice Rink:

Hire a temporary, synthetic ice rink that is fully staffed for a three day period.

BIGGLESWADE TOWN COUNCIL Finance & General Purposes Committee 5th July 2022 Fire Safety Risk Assessment Report

Implications of Recommendations

Corporate strategy: This report provides a review of risk management procedures as per the wider aspirations for Biggleswade.

Finance: There will be financial consequences as expenditure exceeds the financial allocation.

Equality: The report is fully inclusive in its mitigation of risks.

Environment: The report covers all Town Council assets across the town.

Community Safety: The report covers all aspects of community safety related to fire risk.

Background

The Town Council was not fully compliant with existing fire regulations for a considerable time period, based on inspection of existing fire documentation. In order to achieve full fire safety compliance, Officers commissioned fire safety risk assessments across all 9 Town Council assets.

Summary

Officers recently received a full set of fire safety risk assessment reports along with fire safety improvement actions for the 9 inspected sites. The reports holistically included a combination of building work, wiring, fire equipment testing and maintenance, fire safety culture improvements to bring the Town Council full compliance with current fire regulations. Officers identified the need to swiftly address the red rated actions.

Officers sought quotes from three separate companies covering some of the fire safety compliance actions which will turn the red rated actions to green and achieve compliance, set out in the below table.

Fire Safety Compliance Maintenance

Quotes (30 days)	Amounts (£) Per Annum	Comments
Supplier A	3,010	Annual maintenance cost inc fire extinguishers, fixed wiring test and PAT test for 9 assets
Supplier B	5,452	Annual maintenance cost inc fire extinguishers, fixed wiring test and PAT test for 9 assets
Supplier C	3,039	Annual maintenance cost in fire extinguishers and emergency lighting only for 9 assets
Supplier D	3,447	Annual maintenance cost inc fire extinguishers and emergency lighting only for 9 assets

Due to the unknown number of electrical items across the entire Town Council estate, Officers consider that PAT testing will be conducted by trained members of staff. In addition to the annual costs set out above for fire safety compliance, the Town Council office building requires significant improvement work which is set out in the table below.

Town Council Office Building Fire Safety Compliance Works

Item	Quote (£)	Spent (£)
Ground floor storage cupboard ceiling, 1st floor 8 rebated	3,714	
fire doors, ground floor fire exit door bar		
New fire call points		600
New Fire panel		2,065
Total	6,379	

The old fire panel (which is included in the overall improvement actions list) required urgent replacement in February 2022 at a cost of £2,065. The 10 call points were also replaced at a cost of £600 on the same visit. To date £2,665 has been spent on fire safety improvements at the Town Council offices. The fire safety report notes that the building requires improvement work to be done to the storage cupboard ceiling and 1st floor area at a combined cost of £3,714.

2022-23 Budget Allocation

	Amount (£)
Total budget	8,000
Spend to date	2,665
Office building quote	3,714
(Safe I.S.) Annual maintenance 9 assets	3,010
Shortfall	-1,389

The Town Council 2022-23 budget has set aside £8,000 for fire safety improvements to all buildings. The above set of quotes and expenditure to date show that Officers expect the fire safety compliance work to come to circa £9,389, which means that an additional sum of circa £1,389 is required to complete the works.

Recommendations

That Committee Members consider and approve:

- Additional expenditure of £1,389 to complete all fire safety improvement works and thus achieve full fire safety compliance.
- Officers complete PAT testing accreditation and conducting PAT testing for all appliances.

Karim Hosseini **Head of Governance & Strategic Partnerships**

Karen Saunders **Administrator**