



Ref: Agenda/F&GP – 21/03/2023

16<sup>th</sup> March 2023

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 21<sup>st</sup> March 2023** 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 (Chairman)  
Cllr. M. Foster (Vice Chairman)  
Cllr. D. Albone  
Cllr. I. Bond  
Cllr. G. Fage  
Cllr. M. Knight  
Cllr. M. North  
Cllr. H. Ramsay  
Cllr. M. Russell  
Cllr. D. Strachan

## AGENDA

1. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**
2. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

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\\_RajMQky2RqGNQ5180i-djq](https://us06web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_RajMQky2RqGNQ5180i-djq)**

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. **INVITED SPEAKER**

None.

#### 6. **MEMBERS' QUESTIONS**

#### 7. **MINUTES AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF MEETINGS**

- a. The Minutes of the Finance & General Purposes Committee Meeting held on **Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> January 2023** at the Offices of Biggleswade Town Council, The Old Court House, Saffron Road, Biggleswade.

#### 8. **MATTERS ARISING**

- a. Minutes of the Finance & General Purposes Committee Meeting held on **Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> January 2023**.

#### 9. **ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION**

- a. **New Grants Policy**

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

- b. **The Orchard Community Centre Hire Agreement**

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

- c. **Energy Broker Update Report**

For Members to receive and consider a written report from the Finance Manager, Head of Governance & Strategic Partnerships and Deputy Administration & HR.

#### 10. **ITEMS FOR INFORMATION**

- a. **Finance Review Update**

For Members to receive a written report from the Finance Manager.

- b. **Unity Trust Bank Update**

For Members to receive a written report from the Finance Manager.

c. **Virements Quarterly Report**

For Members to receive a written report from the Finance Manager.

d. **Finance Department Major Work Q1**

For Members to receive a written report from the Finance Manager.

e. **General Insurance Policy Renewal**

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.

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**[https://us06web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_RajMQky2RqGNQ5180i-djq](https://us06web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_RajMQky2RqGNQ5180i-djq)**

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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.

- a. (Fire Safety Compliance Update Report).
- b. (Risk Management Update Report).
- c. (Telephony Convergence Contracts Update Report).
- d. (Selection of New Auditor Report).

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 ON TUESDAY 17<sup>th</sup> JANUARY 2023 AT THE OFFICES OF  
BIGGLESWADE TOWN COUNCIL, THE OLD COURT HOUSE,4  
SAFFRON ROAD, BIGGLESWADE COMMENCING AT 7.00PM**



**PRESENT:**

Cllr R Pullinger (Chairman)  
Cllr M Foster (Deputy Chairman)  
Cllr I Bond  
Cllr G Fage  
Cllr M Knight  
Cllr M North  
Cllr H Ramsay  
Cllr M Russell  
Cllr D Strachan

Mr P Tarrant – Town Clerk & Chief Executive  
Mr K Hosseini – Head of Governance & Strategic Partnerships  
Mr R Young – Finance Manager  
Mr I Lord – Place Shaping Manager  
Ms S Van der Merwe – Deputy Administration & HR Manager  
Mr K Kareem – Assistant Accountant  
Ms F Gumush – Meetings Administrator

Members of the Public – 9

**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 D Albone.

**2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

**a. Disclosable Pecuniary interests in any agenda item:**

Cllr G Fage for Parking Fees under Item 9c.

**b. Non-Pecuniary interests in any agenda item:**

None.

3. **CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

a. **Korede Kareem**

The Chairman welcomed Korede Kareem, Assistant Account, who is a recently appointed member of staff to the Town Council.

The Chairman also announced that he would be making a slight change in the order of the agenda by bringing Item 9C, Annual Fees Review, to the top of the agenda as it will have an impact on the item concerning the general precept for next year.

4. **PUBLIC OPEN SESSION**

There were two members of the public who wished to speak at the meeting.

**Gavin Day, Biggleswade**

Mr Day commented on Item 9a, the Precept Determination 2023/2024, and noted that the precept was to increase by 9.95% and believed that over the four years of the Council, the increase was close to 46%.

Mr Day went on to add that in the current climate, he believed an increase of 35p a week was unaffordable and suggested that the Council review the numbers again.

**Dave Hindle, Biggleswade**

Mr Hindle, who was attending as one of the grant applicants, Bigg Welcome, thanked the Council, and shared that he would be more than happy to provide further information on the work that Bigg Welcome completes.

5. **INVITED SPEAKER**

No guest speaker was invited.

6. **MEMBERS' QUESTIONS**

None.

7. **MINUTES AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF MEETINGS**

Members indicated that Item 10d, Credit Control Policy, the minutes should read 'It was RESOLVED to recommend this report to Council'.

Subject to these amendments the Minutes were **APPROVED** as an accurate record of the Town Council Meeting held on 29<sup>th</sup> November 2022.

8. **MATTERS ARISING**

None.

## 9. **ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION**

### a. **Annual Fee Review**

The Finance Manager updated Members that a change was made on page 24 of the Agenda Pack to remove the discount for pensioners, students, benefits claimants as this was consistent with the resolution of the Town Council on 26<sup>th</sup> July 2022.

The Committee reviewed each fee individually.

### i. **Scale of Charges for Market Stall Rents Etc**

Members noted that the rates of market stalls had remained the same since pre-Covid times despite the growth in demand. It was suggested that a change in policy could be implemented to allow new traders time to grow their business before being charged full rates.

Members **RESOLVED** to adopt the charges for Market stall rents as set out, with the exception of the rate for charitable/voluntary organisations that support Biggleswade, which should be aligned with other stalls at £17.

The Chair clarified that charitable voluntary organisations, which support Biggleswade, are charged a returnable deposit and not a fee.

### ii. **Scale of Charges for Allotment Holders**

The fees for 2022/2023 and 2023/2024 are for information purposes as they have already been agreed. Fees for 2024/25 will be reviewed future in November consistent with previous practice.

Members **NOTED** the report.

### iii. **Drove Road and Stratton Way Burial Grounds Fees**

Members commented on the fees for burials and pointed out that taking into account the budget there was potential for burial fees to be slightly higher. Members comparing fees to other Council's noted that a bigger increase in fees would be more beneficial.

Members asked if a variance of 5% was made what impact would this have to the revenue. The Finance Manager responded that the impact would be a £3000 increase per 5%.

It was **RESOLVED** to implement an increase of 15% on all burial fees.

### iv. **Scale of Charges for Orchard Community Centre**

Members commented on the use of the Orchard Community Centre and noted that the Centre was not yet at full capacity and increasing fees could result in a loss of custom.

Members suggested further marketing of the facilities could help to increase usage.

Members **RESOLVED** to adopt the charges as laid out.

### v. **Scale of Charges for Hiring of Sports Facilities**

The Town Clerk & Chief Executive pointed out that there was now an online booking system for ease of use for the football pitches.

Members asked whether there was a policy for teams outside of Biggleswade to be charged slightly higher fees than compared to local teams and it was confirmed that this was not the case but that it would be looked at when putting together the next budget.

Members **RESOLVED** to adopt the charges as laid out.

vi. **Scale of Charges for Parking Permits**

Members **RESOLVED** to adopt the charges as laid out.

b. **Original Estimate & Precept 2023/2024**

The Town Clerk & Chief Executive summarised some changes made to the report and noted that this paper supplemented the paper submitted to the Finance and General Purposes Committee on 29<sup>th</sup> November 2022.

The new paper included the additional information requested by Members, namely the 22/23 indicative projected outturn and the main drivers impacting upon any increased precept.

Members commented on the report and noted that the rates for the Council depot had increased from £16,000 to £28,000 and asked if this could be clarified at the next Council meeting.

Members noted that a considerable proportion of the budget relates to staff pay which is driven by the NJC national pay settlement.

Members **RESOLVED** to ask Officers to update the precept calculations based on their observations for the Town Council Meeting scheduled for Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> January 2023.

Members also **RESOLVED** to recommend to Council Option 2 budget with the following amendments:

- Remove upgrades to the white fleet, removing £24,000.
- Reduce ICT budget by at least £3,000 and then go to tender.
- Reflect any changes made to fees and charges made during the F&GP Committee meeting.
- This should be presented to council in a form that shows this year's budget, projected outturn and next year's budget and explain any variances.

c. **Grants Process 2022/2023**

Members asked for clarification regarding the policy of grants whereby if an applicant has applied in the first tranche of the process, whether they are not eligible to apply in the second tranche.

The Chairman clarified that currently there is nothing in the Council policy to this effect.

The table below shows the amounts awarded to grant applicants.

<b>APPLICANT</b>	<b>AMOUNT REQUESTED</b>	<b>AMOUNT AWARDED</b>
Biggleswade Community Carnival	£1,189	£500
Biggleswade Good Neighbours	£500	£250
Biggleswade Sea Cadets	£1,500	£1,000
Carers in Beds	£600	£600
Biggles FM	£1,850	£1,850
For Men To Talk Community Interest Group*	£500	£500
East Beds Community Bus Ltd (Ivel Sprinter)	£750	£250
Keech Hospice	£1,000	£1,000
Royal British Legion – Biggleswade Branch	£750	£750
Biggleswade Community Group	£2,000	£1,500
Hear2Listen	£1,000	£1,000
Bigg Welcome	£2,000	£1,500
Biggleswade Community Garden	£1,500	£500

\* As no accounts had been presented with the application from For Men to Talk, the grant was awarded on the condition of receipt and review of these accounts by Officers.

Cllr Bond raised a concern that there was no application from Biggleswade History Society listed for consideration, as he was assured this was delivered by hand before the deadline. The Clerk and Chairman advise Cllr Bond that this would be investigated, and if necessary, the application will be brought to the next F&GP meeting for consideration on its merits (regardless of budget remaining).

d. **Orchard Centre Policy and Terms & Conditions**

Members **RESOLVED** to approve the policy and the terms & conditions subject to changing the word standard to commercial under charging policy and remove the Annex A which includes the charges.

10. **ITEMS FOR INFORMATION**

a. **Risk Assessment**

The Head of Governance and Strategic Partnerships provided an oral update to Council. A report and recommendations will be provided by the Finance and General Purposes Committee on 21<sup>st</sup> March 2023.

Members **NOTED** the report.

b. **Unity Trust Bank**

The Finance Manager indicated that the Town Council should be receiving the credit card for Unity Trust Bank in the next 7-10 days.

Members **NOTED** the written report.

11. **PUBLIC OPEN SESSION**

a. **Dave Hindle, Biggleswade**

On behalf of Biggs Welcome, Mr Hindle wanted to thank the Council for the grant.



## 12. **EXEMPT**

### a. **Financial Assurance**

External Audit identified significant weaknesses in internal control during 2021/22 in respect of financial regulations regarding the reporting and authorisation of regular payments not being fully complied with. However, the Council answered yes to assertion 2 of the annual governance statement.

Whilst the Council undertook sufficient budget monitoring to comply with Proper Practice in the Practitioner's Guide, they identified significant expenditure on overtime, which they understand would have been challenged if had been separately identified in budget monitoring reports.

The Council complied with the statutory requirements regarding publication of external audits and the information was shared with Members via email on 28th September 2022, although had not been formally reported to Council or this committee.

Recommendations made in the audit report were:

1. The Council should ensure that financial regulations are fully complied with in future and consider answering no to assertion 2 of the 2022/23 annual governance statement if these weaknesses remained for a significant part of the 2022/23 financial year.
2. When setting the 2023/24 budget we recommend that the Council approves a separate overtime budget and monitors expenditure against it through the year.

The Clerk & Chief Executive reported that a robust process for the authorisation, reporting and monitoring of overtime was now in place using the CITRUS HR system and that overtime would be itemised separately in the 2023/24 budget.

Members **RESOLVED** to note the report and to observe that future discussions on financial assurance should be held in open session and be within one month of receipt of any external reports.

### b. **Utility Contract**

Members **RESOLVED** to follow the advice of the legal team and write to the Utility Company as well as to invite the Energy Broker to a future Council meeting.

Members also **AGREED** to the recommendations made by the Town Clerk & RFO regarding lessons learned with any changes to be reported to either Town Council or the Finance and General Purposes Committee.

### c. **Capital Assets Review – Working Group Update**

Members **NOTED** the progress of the project and agreed the recommendation of the report which was to instruct the chartered surveyor to complete an exercise to provide commercial valuations of assets.

Members **NOTED** that the Capital Assets Working Group will meet to focus on several aspects including a way forward and improvement costs.

The Chairman closed the meeting at **9.22pm**



**BIGGLESWADE TOWN COUNCIL**  
**Report to Finance and General Purposes Committee**  
**21<sup>st</sup> March 2023**  
**Grant Policy Refinements**

**Implications of Recommendations**

**Corporate Strategy:** FINANCIALS: Ensure that the Town Council continues to operate within legislation, regulation, ethical guidelines and best practice.

**Finance:** Ensure that only one application can be made for Grants support per financial year per organisation. Application window time reduction.

**Equality:** Not applicable.

**Environment:** Not applicable.

**Community Safety:** Not applicable.

**Background:**

The current grants policy (Appendix A) was created in September 2021 and we are nearing the end of the first full financial year in place, 2022/23. The policy states that:

“Further review of critical dates for future years should be programmed for consideration by the Finance & General Purposes Committee at the appropriate time.”

In addition to the above review of timelines, there are a further two refinements for consideration.

**Refinements:**

**1) Critical dates:**

There are several dates which may work better with slight adjustments.

- 1) The second tranche submission of applications window is four months long (September through to the end of December) rather than the three months given for the first tranche (June to the end of August). In addition to this anomaly, this also means that applications for the second tranche are invited before the first tranche have been considered, at the end of September. In reality, three months is plenty of time for applications to be made and we received no applications during September.
- 2) Some of the dates may be a better guide if they are more specific, namely:

**First cycle**

June – Applications invited in the local press, the council’s website and other appropriate media (e.g. Facebook). Previous recipients of a grant will also be contacted directly.

**Change date to “From the 1<sup>st</sup> June” to ensure applications are invited from the beginning of the application window.**

June to August - Submission of grant applications to be made to the Town Council.  
The deadline for receipt of applications is 31 August.

**Change dates to “1<sup>st</sup> June to 31<sup>st</sup> August”. Adjust the last sentence to read “The deadline of midnight on the 31<sup>st</sup> August will be strictly adhered to.”**

Second cycle

September – Applications invited in the local press, the council’s website and other appropriate media (e.g. Facebook). Previous recipients of a grant will also be contacted directly.

**Change date to “From the 1<sup>st</sup> October” to ensure applications are invited from the beginning of the application window.**

September to December - Submission of grant applications to be made to the Town Council. The deadline for receipt of applications is 31 December.

**Change dates to “1<sup>st</sup> October to 31<sup>st</sup> December”. Adjust the last sentence to read “The deadline of midnight on the 31<sup>st</sup> December will be strictly adhered to.”**

April - Grants are then paid to the successful applicants.

**Change date to “On the first working day of April.”**

## **2) Change the word “municipal” to “financial”.**

The sentence, “Community groups and organisations that applied for grants during the previous municipal year will also be notified by email that the grant application period is open”, would benefit from replacing “municipal” with “financial”, for accuracy.

## **3) Consideration of number of applications per organisation per financial year.**

The current policy does not prevent more than one application per organisation during a financial year. During 2022/23 we have received applications from a few organisations for both Tranche 1 and Tranche 2. Obviously, this did not happen under the previous grants process where there was just one tranche per financial year. To prevent more than application per organisation, per financial year, necessitates an additional clause to the Grants policy.

Officers suggest adding the following paragraph to the first section of the policy (“Grants to Local Charities, Community Groups and Organisations”):

**“All Charities, Community Groups and Organisations” will be restricted to one application per financial year. The financial year runs from the 1<sup>st</sup> of April to the 31<sup>st</sup> of March.”**

### **Recommendation:**

The above changes have been made to the current grants policy, thus generating the new recommended new grants policy (Appendix B). Officers recommend that Members sanction the new grants policy, in full.

Rob Youngs  
Finance Manager

**Appendix A:** Current Grants Policy

**Appendix B:** New Grants Policy



## Biggleswade Town Council

### GRANTS POLICY

#### **Grants to Local Charities, Community Groups and Organisations**

Biggleswade Town Council (BTC) acknowledges the significant contribution that community clubs, charities and other organisations make to enrich and improve the quality of life of so many residents in Biggleswade. BTC has funds available to support the operation and development of these highly valued services.

Grant applications will be invited twice yearly via the Council Website and Social Media Channels. Community groups and organisations that applied for grants during the previous municipal year will also be notified by email that the grant application period is open.

Powers to award grants are given under General Powers of Competence or by virtue of section 137 of the Local Government Act 1972 or specifically authorised under other legislation (e.g. for community transport schemes).

#### **Application Process**

Applicants need to be aware that the Council receives a high volume of requests. and will not award grants in excess of the annual budget for this purpose.

Grants will only be made to cover activities that benefit all or some residents of Biggleswade. The Council will not normally award grants;

- for costs that could reasonably be expected to be funded from other sources, including from membership subscriptions.
- to contribute towards the costs of advertising charities or national charity appeals or activities. Local branches of national charities may apply for support for specific projects which benefit the residents of Biggleswade.
- to political parties
- to commercial organisations.

Particular consideration will be given to applications for extraordinary expenditure such as a capital project.

Previous successful applicants will be contacted and be invited to apply again at the beginning of each grant cycle.

To apply, an application form is to be completed and submitted by the deadline specifies in 'Important Dates' below. Applicants will be required to explain, and provide evidence if available, as follows:

- the number of Biggleswade residents who would benefit from the grant.
- a copy of the group or organisation's most recent set of accounts and
- to undertake to keep an accurate record of the way in which the grant is spent.

The Town Council will inform each applicant of the outcome of their application as soon as practical. Payment of grants will be made by bank transfer to an account in the organisation's name. Payment to personal bank accounts will not be permitted.

## **Important dates**

Applications are to be considered on a twice yearly basis by the Finance & General Purposes Committee. each January, in accord with the following calendar:

### **First cycle**

June – Applications invited in the local press, the council's website and other appropriate media (e.g. Facebook). Previous recipients of a grant will also be contacted directly.

June to August - Submission of grant applications to be made to the Town Council. The deadline for receipt of applications is 31<sup>st</sup> August.

September – Consideration of Grant Applications by the Finance & General Purposes Committee. The Committee can approve grants to a maximum of £2,000 and recommend to Council for grants above £2,000.

October - Applicants informed of the outcomes and grants are then paid to the successful applicants.

### **Second cycle**

September – Applications invited in the local press, the council's website and other appropriate media (e.g. Facebook). Previous recipients of a grant will also be contacted directly.

September to December - Submission of grant applications to be made to the Town Council.

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January – Consideration of Grant Applications by the Finance & General Purposes Committee. The Committee can approve grants to a maximum of £2,000 and recommend to Council for grants above £2,000.

February - Applicants informed of the outcomes.

April - Grants are then paid to the successful applicants.

### **Interim applications**

Any out of cycle applications will be considered in the next cycle and be referred to as interim applications.

The forgoing cycle is proposed initially for the financial year 2022/23. Further review of critical dates for future years should be programmed for consideration by the Finance & General Purposes Committee at the appropriate time.

Finance & General Purposes Committee

September 2021



## Biggleswade Town Council

### GRANTS POLICY

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Powers to award grants are given under General Powers of Competence or by virtue of section 137 of the Local Government Act 1972 or specifically authorised under other legislation (e.g. for community transport schemes).

All Charities, Community Groups and Organisations" will be restricted to one application per financial year. The financial year runs from the 1<sup>st</sup> of April to the 31<sup>st</sup> of March.

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On the first working day of April - Grants are then paid to the successful applicants.

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Finance & General Purposes Committee

March 2023



**BIGGLESWADE TOWN COUNCIL**  
**Finance & General Purposes**  
**21<sup>st</sup> March 2023**  
**The Orchard Community Centre Hire Agreement**

**Implications of Recommendations:**

**Corporate Strategy: ASPIRATIONS: FINANCIALS:** Ensures value for money for the community by delivering a more efficient operating model.

**Finance:** Impact on reimbursement if hirers do not follow hire agreement.

**Equality:** Not applicable.

**Environment:** Not applicable.

**Community Safety:** Not applicable.

**Background**

Members resolved to approve the policy and hire agreement relating to the Orchard Community Centre at the Finance & General Purposes (F&GP) meeting of 17<sup>th</sup> January 2023.

**Summary**

Since the 1<sup>st</sup> March 2023, when the revised operating model and booking system launched, Officers have been working closely with colleagues at the Orchard Community Centre to understand how the changes are landing.

In response to some minor issues, Officers are recommending that the hire agreement is updated. This is attached in Appendix A whilst a tracked version of the document is available on SharePoint. Clause 8 has been updated and clause 25 has been added.

An update report providing feedback from hirers and colleagues on the recent changes will go to the next F&GP meeting.

**Recommendations**

For Members to approve the revised hire agreement.

Isaac Lord  
Place Shaping Manager

**Appendix A:** Orchard Community Centre Revised Hire Agreement

## Appendix A

### STANDARD CONDITIONS OF HIRE ORCHARD COMMUNITY CENTRE

**For the purpose of these conditions, the term HIRER shall mean an individual hirer or, where the hirer is an organisation, the authorised representative. The term COUNCIL refers to Biggleswade Town Council.**

1. The **HIRER** must confirm they are 18 years of age or older via Squarespace Scheduling booking form.
2. The **HIRER** will receive a free 15-minute period free of charge as part of their session. Access to the building will not be granted sooner than 5 minutes before the session is due to commence. 10 minutes will be permitted after a session for cleaning and packing away. If further time is needed, this should be paid for either in the form of additional time or with Caretaker Assistance. Consistent misuse of these periods may result in cancellations and/or refusal of further bookings.
3. The **HIRER** will, during the period of hiring (including the free periods before and after the session), be responsible for the supervision of the premises, fabric and the contents, their care, safety from damage, and the behaviour of all persons using the premises, , including proper supervision of car parking arrangement so as to avoid obstruction or inconvenience to other persons. This includes unsupervised sessions that do not have Caretaker assistance.
4. The **HIRER** shall be aware that the parking spaces located immediately outside the Orchard Community Centre are not Council-owned and so parking is at the Hirer's risk.
5. The **HIRER** should be aware that any debit/credit card details securely stored on their Squarespace Scheduling account will only be charged for sessions and any damages incurred.
6. The **COUNCIL** reserves the right to charge payment to the debit/credit card on the **HIRER'S** Squarespace Scheduling account up to one month prior to the period of hire. Event/party hire will be charged immediately upon booking. Other payment options are permissible by emailing [orchardcc@biggleswadetowncouncil.gov.uk](mailto:orchardcc@biggleswadetowncouncil.gov.uk) and asking for support.
7. The **HIRER**, if running an event/party, will have to make a mandatory payment for Caretaker assistance. If this is not selected within the Squarespace Scheduling booking form, this will be added by Staff.
8. The **HIRER** cannot overstay their allocated session time, as this may directly impede on a following booked session. Any instances in which this occurs will be dealt with at the discretion of Council Officers. This may result in future sessions being cancelled or a charge equivalent to the cost of staffing future sessions to ensure compliance.
9. The **HIRER** is fully responsible for the supervision of the premises during the period of hire.
10. The **HIRER** shall indemnify the Council for the cost of repair of any damage done to any part of the property that may occur during the period of the hiring as a result of the hiring. For all commercial hires (i.e. not by private individuals for private events), the hirer must

hold appropriate insurance. The hirer will be responsible for indemnifying the Council for any loss or damage to the buildings or contents and for any public liability arising out of their event. Any cost of damage for private bookings shall be incurred by the Hirer up to a maximum of £125 to indemnify the Council for the cost of repair, which is the excess on the Council's insurance. Where damage is caused by a deliberate or negligent act by the **HIRER** or someone attending their session, the Council reserve the right to charge the **HIRER** for the full cost, rather than making a claim on the Council's insurance. This will be charged against the Hirer's debit/credit card held securely on their Squarespace Scheduling account, with an email sent to the Hirer prior to the charge being made.

11. If the **HIRER** wishes to cancel the period of hire before the date of the event, they may do so via Squarespace Scheduling with a minimum of 72 hours' notice and will be entitled to a refund of any monies taken. In the event of an emergency situation, BTC has the discretion to provide refunds if within 72 hours' notice.
12. The **COUNCIL** reserves the right to refuse a booking or to cancel a session booking or to cancel this hiring agreement at any time either before or during the term of the agreement upon giving 7 days-notice in writing to the **HIRER**. In exceptional cases, where the Council is unable to honour the booking due to unforeseen circumstances, the **COUNCIL** reserves the right to cancel a session booking without notice. The **HIRER** shall be entitled upon such notice to reimbursement of such monies including any down payments paid by the **HIRER** to the **COUNCIL**, but the **COUNCIL** shall not be liable to make any further payments to the **HIRER**.
13. The **HIRER** shall not sub-hire or use the premises for any other purpose other than that described in the booking form and shall not hire or use the premises for any unlawful purpose or in any unlawful way nor do anything or bring onto the premises anything which may endanger the same or any insurance policies in respect thereof nor allow the consumption of alcoholic liquor thereon without written permission.
14. The **HIRER** shall be responsible for obtaining any licenses that may be needed for the sale and consumption of alcoholic liquor, for music (PPL and/or PRS) and for the observance of the same and all other regulations appertaining to the premises stipulated by the Fire Authority and the Central Bedfordshire Council, or otherwise.
15. The **HIRER** shall be responsible for making arrangements to insure against any third-party claims if hiring a session on a commercial basis. This should be used for covering any claims made against them (or the organisation if acting as a representative) whilst using the premises, or for damage caused to the premises or contents by the hire. Proof of insurance documents should be submitted via the form link in Squarespace Scheduling.
16. The **HIRER** will, during the period of hiring, be responsible for ensuring no furniture, equipment or other items provided at the premises are taken from the interior of the premises for whatever purpose. This includes glassware, cans, or other receptacles.
17. The **HIRER** is responsible for ensuring that any electrical appliances or equipment brought into the premises is fully compliant with current Safety Regulations. A call-out charge may be levied by the Council in the event that the electrical supply has to be reset. Where a residual circuit breaker is provided the **HIRER** must make use of in the interest of public safety.
18. The **HIRER** must not use any cooking equipment outside the premises as this constitutes breach of health and safety regulations and environmental issues.

19. It is the responsibility of the **HIRER** to familiarise themselves with the location of fire exits and the fire extinguishers and how to use them. If the fire cannot be extinguished safely and immediately, the fire alarm must be activated and the building evacuated by the nearest, safest, exit. If time allows, all electrical supplies should be switched off and doors and windows shut. Telephone the emergency services.
20. Ball Games including the throwing of soft balls, frisbees, and other projectiles are strictly forbidden inside the premises. It is at BTC discretion whether to allow this under exceptional circumstances.
21. The use of Bouncy Castles and other inflatables is not permitted without prior, written, permission.
22. At the end of the hiring (all functions to have ceased by 11.55 pm with premises fully vacated by Midnight) the premises must be left in a clean and tidy condition, otherwise the Council will make an additional charge. Music must cease by 11:30 pm.
23. In the event that any part of the premises is rendered unfit by reasons beyond the control of the Council for the use for which it has been hired, the **COUNCIL** shall not be liable to the **HIRER** for any resulting loss or damage.
24. The **COUNCIL** shall not be liable to the **HIRER** for any loss or damage sustained by the **HIRER** as a result of any failure or delay on the part of the Council in the performance of any of its obligations under this agreement to the extent that such failure or delay is beyond the reasonable control of the Council, including but not limited to force majeure, labour disputes, transportation failure, riots or civil disturbance.
25. Although every effort will be made by the **COUNCIL** to ensure equipment available is in useable condition, it cannot be guaranteed to function correctly. The **COUNCIL** therefore shall not be liable to the **HIRER** for any malfunctioning equipment impacting on sessions.
26. The **COUNCIL** reserves the right to vary the Conditions of Hire applicable to this contract, including but not limited to variations in the premises, the period of hire, the rate of charge and the calculation of charges, on giving written notice to the **HIRER**.
27. If the **HIRER** opts not to pay for Caretaker Assistance within the Squarespace Scheduling booking system, they are required to have an induction with Staff. This will consist of fire safety, security and other instructions and will be coordinated via email.
28. The **HIRER**, if given a pin code to the building for their period of hire, is responsible for ensuring the code is not circulated outside of their customer base/session attendees. If this is suspected, it is the **HIRER's** responsibility to make staff aware so the code can be changed.
29. The **HIRER** shall ensure that nothing is done during the period of hire in contravention of the law relating to gaming, betting and lotteries.
30. The **HIRER** shall, if preparing, serving or selling food, observe all relevant food HEALTH AND HYGIENE legislation and regulations.
31. The **HIRER** must report all accidents involving injury to the public to the Council as soon as possible. Any failure of equipment belonging to the Council must also be reported as soon as possible. Certain types of accident or injury must be reported on a special form to the Central Bedfordshire Council. The **COUNCIL** will give assistance in completing

this form. This is in accordance with the Executive Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1995.

32. The **HIRER** shall ensure that any activities for children under eight years of age comply with the provisions of the Children Act 1989 and only fit and proper persons have access to and supervision of the children.
33. No responsibility is accepted for any loss, damage or injury to any property or persons using the premises (except for any deaths or personal injury caused but the negligence of the **COUNCIL**).
34. The **HIRER** agrees with the **COUNCIL** to observe and perform the provision and stipulations contained or referred to in the Council's Standard Conditions of Hire for the time being in force as described above (an understanding of which the hirer acknowledges, together with any special conditions set out in the schedule below):
  - Hiring fee will be based on the published scale of charges which are subject to an annual review.
  - Fees for commercial bookings may vary and be dealt with on an individual basis.
  - All fees and charges will be charged up to 1 month in advance of the period of hire, or immediately upon booking for party bookings.
  - Noise must be kept to a minimum on arrival and departure.
  - **HIRERS** cannot access the hall before the agreed time unless previously agreed with Staff.
  - **HIRERS** are responsible for removing and recycling cans, glass, cardboard and plastic bottles.
  - No more than 140 persons are allowed to attend anyone letting in the Hall.
  - No more than 34 persons are allowed to attend anyone letting in the Training Room.
  - A commercial **HIRER** must have its own public liability insurance as this is not covered under the **COUNCIL's** insurance policy.
23. This agreement is made between the **COUNCIL** and the **HIRER** whereby in consideration of the charges the **COUNCIL** agrees to permit the **HIRER** to use the premises for the purpose and period shown on the booking form.





**BIGGLESWADE TOWN COUNCIL**  
**Finance & General Purposes Committee Meeting 21<sup>st</sup> March 2023**  
**Energy Broker Update Report**

**Implications of Recommendations**

**Corporate strategy: Financials:** The Town Council will where appropriate, engage the services of professional support service providers to ensure best practice.

**Finance:** The broker's fee will be paid from the Town Council's budget energy allocation.

**Equality:** Not Applicable.

**Environment:** Not Applicable.

**Community Safety:** Not Applicable.

**Background**

Officers presented a report covering historical information relating to utilities accounts to the 29<sup>th</sup> November Finance & General Purposes (F&GP) Committee meeting and the 17<sup>th</sup> January 2023 F&GP Committee meeting.

Gas Supply

Please note that our gas contract ends on 30<sup>th</sup> April 2023. Osso Gas on 16 June 2022 wrote to the Town Council advising them that the 36-month contract originally signed would be replaced by a 12-month contract backdated and effective from 1<sup>st</sup> May 2022 and expiring on 30<sup>th</sup> April 2023 in part due to market price volatility.

Osso Gas confirmed verbally on 15<sup>th</sup> March 2023 that any and all correspondence would be handled by its legal department only and support departments will no longer speak with Town Council Officers.

Electricity:

The Town Council's current electricity contract is with Opus Energy and runs from 1<sup>st</sup> July 2021 to 30<sup>th</sup> June 2023. The contract has remained unchanged for the duration of its lifespan.

**Summary**

Previous Committee Resolutions:

The F&GP Committee recommended on 17<sup>th</sup> January 2023:

1. The Accounts email box has been monitored carefully by the Finance Manager and finance team, on a daily basis effective July 2022.
2. Any changes to either financial commitment or contracts should be raised immediately with the Town Clerk & RFO.
3. Any changes to either financial commitment or contracts should also be reported to Members by the Town Clerk & RFO at the next available opportunity either Town Council or Finance & General Purposes Committee.
4. It is the expectation that all contracts are monitored via the Contracts Database and that any review cycle begins no less than 3 months prior to end date.

5. The Council will continue to consult an Energy Broker connected to its use of utilities and any broker will be remunerated by the successful company after careful deliberation by the RFO and Members.

The UK energy market continues to be volatile with electricity charges currently trending downwards and the current economic climate is challenging with high inflation.

### **Energy Broker**

In line with the Town Council's procurement process, Officers have sourced quotes from brokers based on a fee only and/or commission basis. These have been added to Sharepoint. Brokers who have responded to Officers have agreed to scour the energy market for suitable quotes for both single and multi-year offers. Officers consider that a fees-only broker provides potentially greater impartiality and also supports the Town Council's need to provide transparency.

Officers will provide a further energy report with provisional gas and energy quotes (valid for 10 days) for selection of energy providers to 28<sup>th</sup> March 2023 Town Council meeting.

### **Recommendation:**

Members are asked to make a decision on selecting an appropriate broker and enabling officers to instruct the broker to obtain market-relevant rates.

**Rob Youngs**  
**Finance Manager**

**Sian van der Merwe**  
**Deputy Administration & HR**  
**Manager**

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



**BIGGLESWADE TOWN COUNCIL**  
**Finance and General Purposes Committee Meeting**  
**23<sup>rd</sup> March 2023**  
**Finance Review Update**

**Implications of Recommendations**

**Corporate Strategy:** FINANCIALS: Ensure that the Town Council continues to operate within legislation, regulation, ethical guidelines and best practice.

**Finance:** Progression of Finance Review.

**Equality:** Not applicable.

**Environment:** Not applicable.

**Community Safety:** Not applicable.

**Background:**

The following is an overview of the continued progression connected to the Finance Review. Please see Appendix A.

There are 33 recommendations. Of these, 85% are complete (28) and 15% are part-complete (5).

**Part complete recommendations:**

Here is the progress with the remaining five part-complete recommendations:

- 1) Internal audit arrangements – consideration of quotes and overall offer being considered this evening.
- 2) Chart of accounts – new, more simplified structure being implemented as soon as year-end is completed. Plan for this to happen is the 3<sup>rd</sup> April.
- 3) Formalise enforcement arrangements for car parks – being considered with new tender bids. New contract commences 1<sup>st</sup> August 2023.
- 4) Possible move to a virtual parking permit system with car parks – being considered with new tender bids. New contract commences 1<sup>st</sup> August 2023.
- 5) Management accounting arrangements – financial information continues to be shared with the Council on a monthly basis consistent with custom and practice. The Finance Manager has engaged with the Chair of the Finance & General Purposes Committee in an effort to seek clarity around future Member reporting requirements. The final specification will be agreed once a new Council has been elected.

**Recommendation:**

This information is for Members to note.

Rob Youngs  
Finance Manager

**Appendix A:** Action Plan

**APPENDIX A - ACTION PLAN**

**STAGE A – RECOMMENDATIONS TO BE IMPLEMENTED IN NEXT 3 MONTHS**

REFERENCE	RECOMMENDATION	ADDITIONAL COMMENT	PROGRESS (ANTICIPATED COMPLETION DATE)
	<b><u>Management Accounting Arrangements</u></b>		
R1	<p>The Council should proceed with recruiting staff to roles with finance responsibility. These officers will have a key role in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Implementing recommendations set out in this report;</li> <li>- Improving ownership of financial systems and reporting at BTC.</li> </ul>	<p>New Finance Manager in post and Assistant Accountant is being recruited. Accounts Administrator continues in post.</p>	<p>Complete.</p>
R2	<p>The Council needs to make the RBS accounting system more accessible to BTC staff. BTC have recently purchased additional licences for the accounting application. Training should be purchased for staff with finance duties to ensure they have the knowledge to use the accounting system.</p>	<p>Book a training programme for all staff using the RBS Omega Accounting system, ensuring they receive training appropriate for their role. Training mandatory before system access is granted.</p>	<p>Complete.</p>
	<b><u>Financial Accounting</u></b>		
R6	<p>The Council is permitted to produce simple income and expenditure accounts. BTC should therefore assess whether it wants to continue producing full Code of Practice accounts at the end of each financial year. This assessment should consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- What are these accounting statements used for?</li> <li>- Do Members and Officers understand these more complicated financial statements?</li> <li>- How much do these statements cost to produce?</li> </ul> <p>Accountancy support from DCK will be essential. A number of issues will need to be considered. These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Amendments to chart of accounts.</li> <li>- Write-off of capital and fixed asset balances from balance sheets.</li> <li>- Possible prior year amendments to AGAR financial statements. .</li> </ul> <p>The AGAR provides a basic set of accounts, but more information is needed to provide proper financial information to members and residents.</p>	<p>Decision needed in early part of 2021-22 financial year to allow Council to implement changes for start of 22-23. Request DCK to perform this in-depth task in plenty of time for the start of the financial year 23/24. Rob and Peter to discuss with Derek when here on 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> October. Wait until budget signed off late January, then DCK to work on in February.</p>	<p>Part complete, with expectation to go live from the beginning of FY 23/24. RY has created the structure. This is a reduced chart of accounts, with less cost centres and amalgamation of some cost codes. However, the structure is expansive enough to ensure that control of budget spend is efficiently possible. DCK will enter new structure in Rialtas on the 3<sup>rd</sup> April, as soon as year-end is completed.</p>

REFERENCE	RECOMMENDATION	ADDITIONAL COMMENT	PROGRESS (ANTICIPATED COMPLETION DATE)
	<b><u>Council Reserves and Loans</u></b>		
R9	<p>The Council must undertake an urgent review of all reserves balances in order to assess whether reserves are being held at an appropriate level. There are a number of steps:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Review current earmarked reserve balances and determine why these are being held. BTC will need the assistance of DCK Accounting for this work;</li> <li>- Carry out an assessment of what reserves the Council needs to meet known liabilities. This must include an assessment of monies required to maintain the Council's asset base;</li> <li>- Identify any monies that need to be set aside for regulatory or funding reasons (e.g. CIL or deferred grants);</li> <li>- Identify reserves required to fund projects identified in strategic planning;</li> <li>- Establish minimum level of general reserves to be held by the Council.</li> </ul>	This must be completed in good time to inform the 22-23 budget setting process.	Complete.
	<b><u>Debt and Income Policy</u></b>		
R12	The Council should develop an income and debt collection policy, which should be published on the Council website, and referenced in all booking forms issued by the Council.	Policy needs to be in place to underwrite other improvements to income and debt collection systems. Policy now written, to go to F&GP Nov.	Complete.
	<b><u>Car Park Income Pay and Display</u></b>		
R19	<p>BTC to consider purchasing the Facilities Booking Management Module from RBS, to be used for Orchard Centre / Market Stalls / Pitch Booking. The Council should examine the following functions before purchasing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Room booking;</li> <li>- Invoice integration with accounting system;</li> <li>- Exception reports available (e.g. cancelled bookings / unpaid invoices);</li> <li>- Performance reports;</li> <li>- Caretaker Instructions;</li> <li>- Email confirmations from system;</li> <li>- Potential for storage and issue of hire agreements to customers.</li> </ul> <p>Training programme for all system users will also need to be purchased.</p>	RBS replaced by Squarespace Scheduling. System in place and training with the Orchard Centre team happening in w/c 10 <sup>th</sup> October. System can perform all functions except invoice integration. Issues with setting up payment via Stripe, officers awaiting an email/call from Stripe.	Complete.

REFERENCE	RECOMMENDATION	ADDITIONAL COMMENT	PROGRESS (ANTICIPATED COMPLETION DATE)
	<b><u>Purchase Orders</u></b>		
R29	BTC should consider purchasing and implementing the purchase order module of the Omega accounting system from RBS. Should the decision be taken to take up this option, the Council should ensure: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- All staff who raised and manage purchase orders are given proper training in the new process;</li> <li>- Staff with accounting and financial duties are trained in running reports available on the purchase order system.</li> </ul>	Potential for saving of staff time and improvement in accounting information if implementation can be brought forward.	Complete.
R30	Purchase orders should be issued to all suppliers. These should be issued following a standard template stored in the Council's purchase order system. This should include the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Payment terms and condition;</li> <li>- Requirement to email invoices to accounts payable email address;</li> <li>- Hyperlink to council terms of trade on website.</li> </ul> Signatures should not be included.	Communication of terms and conditions to suppliers.	Complete.
	<b><u>Payment of Suppliers</u></b>		
R31	The Council should move to making payments to suppliers by BACS. This decision should be considered, and approval sought from Full Council prior to implementation.	To start when move to new bank.	Complete.
	<b><u>Payroll</u></b>		
R34	The monthly payroll process is not documented. The monthly payroll routine should be documented, and additional staff trained in what needs to be done each month. Documentation should include supervisory checks (e.g. Town Clerk's review of payroll file before submission to George Hay) and records that should be kept on the monthly payroll file.	Council needs to ensure adequate back up in knowledge of payroll process.	Complete.
R35	The Council should assess whether it needs non office staff to continue to complete and submit weekly hard copy timesheets. Consideration should be given to moving to an overtime claim system. Claim forms should be submitted for all preauthorised overtime worked by staff. These should be authorised for payment by the Town Clerk & Chief Executive.	Relatively simple administrative change. Now achieved on the Citrus HR system.	Complete.

REFERENCE	RECOMMENDATION	ADDITIONAL COMMENT	PROGRESS (ANTICIPATED COMPLETION DATE)
	<b>Bank Account</b>		
R37	The Council should continue with plans to allocate read access for relevant staff to the Council's main bank account. All requests for access to be signed off by the Town Clerk & Chief Executive & Chief Executive.	<b>Urgent</b> - staff need read access to check income from customers has cleared bank.	Complete.
R38	The Council to finalise arrangements for installation of a card payment machine at the main office. In due course, consideration should be given to installing a second portable machine to be used to collect payments for markets and events, as well as acting as a backup machine in busy times.	Unity Trust use Elavon who will install a card machine in the office and provide a portable one for the Market Square. They will also provide training.	Complete.
	<b>Internal Audit</b>		
R40	Internal Audit reports should be made publicly available on the Council website once they have been reviewed at a council meeting.	Compliance with NALC Practitioner Guide best practice.	Complete.



**STAGE B – RECOMMENDATIONS TO BE IMPLEMENTED IN MONTHS 3-6**

REFERENCE	RECOMMENDATION	ADDITIONAL COMMENT	PROGRESS (ANTICIPATED COMPLETION DATE)
	<b><u>Management Accounting Arrangements</u></b>		
R3	A consultation exercise should be carried out with Members, in order to ascertain what finance reports they wish to see and when they want to see them. Once this has been determined, The Town Clerk & Chief Executive should set up a budget monitoring timetable to be followed each month and quarter to ensure budget monitoring becomes part of Council routine. Financial regulations may need to be amended.	New management accounts reporting structure to be put in place before new financial year. RY has discussed with RP asking what he would like-he will consider and get back late Nov.	Part complete as new coding structure ready to be implemented. Management accounts will flow from this.
R4	The Town Clerk & Chief Executive should establish a budget virement process. Officers and Members can then seek Council approval for changes to the agreed budget as circumstances change in the year. Once approved, virements to be posted to the accounting system, cross-referenced to the relevant minute, using the virement function.	To be put in place before new financial year.	Complete.
R5	The Town Clerk & Chief Executive should ascertain whether the Council wishes to continue the process of recharging admin and staff costs to services. This assessment should consider how the information is used and is it worth the cost of production. The complexity the recharge process adds to the accounts should also be considered.	Recharging to happen at year-end only to avoid too much complexity at month-end but to ensure at year-end that the published accounts do not misrepresent costs.	Complete.
	<b><u>Council Reserves and Loans</u></b>		
R11	The Council should adopt a formal reserves policy and ensure that reserves are reviewed against this policy on at least an annual basis. This should form future budget and precept setting. Decisions on transfers to and from reserves should be reported to and approved by F&GP Committee as part of this review process.	Needs to be approved in good time for start of 21-22 financial year.	Complete.
	<b><u>Debt and Income Policy</u></b>		
R13	The Council must be systematic in the way it collects debt. Whilst recommendations above should reduce the number of transactions that are collected in arrears, some income will still be collected after an invoice is issued.	BTC needs to put process in place to ensure debts are pursued promptly.	Complete.

REFERENCE	RECOMMENDATION	ADDITIONAL COMMENT	PROGRESS (ANTICIPATED COMPLETION DATE)
	<p>The Council should work with the accountancy system provider RBS, to identify whether debt reminder letters can be produced automatically by the system 14 and 28 days after debts fall due.</p> <p>The sales ledgers should also be reviewed by the Town Clerk &amp; Chief Executive every month, with decisions about follow up action on debts determined as part of the review. The aim of this review should be to ensure that debts are collected or reasons for late payment understood and documented.</p>		
	<p><b><u>Payment of Suppliers</u></b></p>		
R32	<p>The Council should set up a documented payment run process. This should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Checks to be carried out before invoices are presented for payment. This includes matching to purchase orders, confirmation that services have been delivered and confirmation of correct charge by supplier. These checks should cross reference to financial regulations.</li> <li>- Documentation to be sent to authorised signatories to support the payment run. Ideally this should be made available electronically.</li> <li>- a clear timetable for closing date for receipt of invoices, and prebooked diary slots for DCK Accountant / FTC finance Staff / Town Clerk &amp; Chief Executive and Councillors.</li> </ul>	Documentation of existing process and preparation for move to BACS payments.	Complete.
R33	Supplier payment information will need to be obtained from all suppliers prior to making a payment. New supplier information, and any changes to supplier payment records must be checked by phone to a known contact number prior to input into the accounting system.	Essential anti-fraud control.	Complete.

REFERENCE	RECOMMENDATION	ADDITIONAL COMMENT	PROGRESS (ANTICIPATED COMPLETION DATE)
	<b><u>Internal Audit</u></b>		
R41	The Council should carry out an annual review of internal audit arrangements following guidance in the Practitioners' Guide. This review should be added as a standing task to be completed in January of each financial year by F&GP Committee.	NALC Practitioners' Guide requirement. RY progressing ready for F&GP early January.	Part complete. Quotes and offer from potential new internal auditor being considered at F&GP 23 <sup>rd</sup> March.

**STAGE C – RECOMMENDATIONS TO BE IMPLEMENTED BY 01.04.22**

REFERENCE	RECOMMENDATION	ADDITIONAL COMMENT	PROGRESS (ANTICIPATED COMPLETION DATE)
	<b><u>Council Reserves and Loans</u></b>		
R10	The Council should set up new reserve accounts on the accounting system. Separate reserve accounts should be set up for each earmarked reserve identified at recommendation 9 above, and accounting entries posted to the reserves as reserves are spent / replenished.	Reserves being managed adequately and signed off by Members.	Complete.
	<b><u>Car Park Income Pay and Display</u></b>		
R15	Work to add payment by phone as an option for car park users should continue. Care should be taken to select an option that works with systems used by the enforcement team. The Place Shaping Manager has commenced scoping work with the enforcement team at CBC.	Report going to Full Council on 13th Dec, outlining the tender specification. The tender will result in a new supplier by August 23. CBC happy to collaborate to allow payment by phone.	Complete.
	<b><u>Car Park Income – Permits</u></b>		
R17	The Council should work with the enforcement team to assess whether it would be possible to move to a virtual parking permit system.	Officers collaborating with CBC at present, meeting shortly.	Part complete, completion expected in August 23. Virtual permits may be possible through new tender. Awaiting bids.
R18	BTC should formalise enforcement arrangements, and a contract or service level agreement established with CBC.	Report going to TCM on 13th Dec, outlining the tender specification. The tender will result in a new supplier by August 23. Officers collaborating with CBC at present.	Part complete expected in August 23. Currently out to tender. CBC Officers provisionally agreed to an enforcement agreement. BTC Officers looking to finalise in August upon completion of the car park tender, which will likely impact enforcement.

REFERENCE	RECOMMENDATION	ADDITIONAL COMMENT	PROGRESS (ANTICIPATED COMPLETION DATE)
	<b><u>Allotment and Sports Pitch Income</u></b>		
R21	The Council should aim to move as many allotment tenants as possible on to direct debit at next renewal date.	Not being pursued due to many allotment holders preferring to pay by credit card or BACS rather than set up a DD for an annual payment.	Complete.
R22	BTC to consider moving allotment records to the RBS Allotment Module and seeking to maximise integration with the Council's Finance system.	This is now on RBS and being utilised for invoicing.	Complete.
R23	The Council should move football pitch hire on to termly billing arrangements. Overall pitch requirements should be agreed with football clubs before the start of each football season, and a contract signed with the treasurer of each football club. Invoices should then be issued for three payment dates (for example 1 September /1 January / 1 March) and followed up by BTC staff. This ensures payments are made in advance of use. There should be no refunds for unused hires, although the Council may have discretion to award credit notes in periods of very poor weather.	We can do this and will aim to start this from 1 Jan.	Complete.
R25	The Council should ensure that it understands VAT rules in area of sports pitches– No VAT is chargeable when a club is a regular hirer (a series of more than 10 sessions).		Complete.
R26	The Council should aim to move sports club lease payments on to direct debit at next renewal date. The clubs will need to be informed in advance of next rental payment.	Can progress when Unity Trust is in place. Aim to have in place to receive first DDs in January.	Complete. Due to lease payments only being once annually, DD is considered inefficient.
	<b><u>Cemeteries</u></b>		
R27	Terms and Conditions on the fees and charges notice for cemeteries should be amended to require payment by bank transfer. This should be implemented immediately for all accounts managed by funeral directors.	Accounts no longer settled by cheque. Booking to be online and payment online.	Complete.
	<b><u>Internal Audit</u></b>		

REFERENCE	RECOMMENDATION	ADDITIONAL COMMENT	PROGRESS (ANTICIPATED COMPLETION DATE)
R39	The Council should change internal auditor for the 22-23 financial year. Competitive quotes should be sought from internal auditors operating in the Bedfordshire area.	Auditor has not been changed for many years. Rob is obtaining quotes, all three expected by 25 <sup>th</sup> November.	Complete, however the quotes are for 23-24 due to difficulties in switching during a financial year.



**BIGGLESWADE TOWN COUNCIL**  
**Report to Finance and General Purposes Committee**  
**21<sup>st</sup> March 2023**  
**Move to Unity Trust Bank Update**

**Implications of Recommendations**

**Corporate Strategy:** FINANCIALS: Implement the recommendations of the fundamental review of the finance function.

**Finance:** Improved banking efficiency.

**Equality:** Not applicable.

**Environment:** Not applicable.

**Community Safety:** Not applicable.

**Background:**

We switched our banking provision across from Lloyd's bank to Unity Trust bank in November 2022. This report provides an update on how the first four months have progressed consistent with the previous resolution.

**Tasks in progress:**

**Training**

Training has been provided to Members and Officers who are using Unity Trust online. At the time of writing there remains a couple of Member signatories who are not online as yet.

**Desktop provision at the Council**

Access to the desktop in the Member's room is by Member log-ins to the Biggleswade Town Council platform.

**Credit card**

The credit card was received back in January. This payment method is only used by exception.

**Market rent income**

The Market Superintendent has been given a credit card machine for his sole use to collect market rent income on Tuesdays and Saturdays. This income feeds directly into our main Unity Trust bank account. Some market stall holders are still keen to pay by cash and therefore this option remains open.

**Encashment facility**

As the St. Neots branch of NatWest is closing at the end of February, we have submitted a new encashment facility form requesting that we move our nominated branch to Huntingdon. The requirement for cash withdrawal is only about once every two months as we have significantly reduced the use of petty cash and replaced it with suppliers who we pay monthly by BACS transfer. We are not permitted to withdraw cash from the Post Office.

**Recommendation**

This report is for Members to note.

Rob Youngs  
Finance Manager





**BIGGLESWADE TOWN COUNCIL**  
**Report to Finance & General Purposes Committee**  
**21<sup>st</sup> March 2023**  
**Quarterly Virements Report**

**Implications of Recommendations**

**Corporate Strategy:** FINANCIALS: Ensure that the Town Council continues to operate within legislation, regulation, ethical guidelines and best practice.

**Finance:** Budgetary Control.

**Equality:** Not applicable.

**Environment:** Not applicable.

**Community Safety:** Not applicable.

**Background:**

A quarterly summary of processed virements is presented at meetings of the Finance & General Purposes Committee, consistent with good practice and the Council's Financial Regulations. All virements are sanctioned by resolution of Council prior to being enacted.

**Fig 1: Virements processed in quarter from 1<sup>st</sup> December 2022 to 28<sup>th</sup> February 2023**

CODE	DESCRIPTION	COST CENTRE	AMOUNT DECREASED	AMOUNT INCREASED
4261	Virement for additional grant	108 (Grants)		859
4042	Virement for transfer from repairs and maintenance	904 (Repairs and Maintenance)	859	
		<b>VIREMENT TOTALS</b>	<b>859</b>	<b>859</b>

**Recommendation:**

This report is for Members to note.

Rob Youngs  
 Finance Manager



**BIGGLESWADE TOWN COUNCIL**  
**Finance and General Purposes Committee Meeting**  
**21<sup>st</sup> March 2023**  
**Finance Department Major Work Quarter 1 2023/4**

**Implications of Recommendations**

**Corporate Strategy:** FINANCIALS: Ensure that the Town Council continues to operate within legislation, regulation, ethical guidelines and best practice.

**Finance:** Planning of imminent major finance department output.

**Equality:** Not applicable.

**Environment:** Not applicable.

**Community Safety:** Not applicable.

**Background:**

In the Finance Department, we are reaching a very busy time of year. There are several significant imminent finance jobs to be completed in addition to the usual day-to-day tasks.

**Imminent finance jobs:**

- 1) Closedown of accounts – we have DCK in attendance on the 3<sup>rd</sup> April to ensure a quick closedown of the accounts, following the financial year end on the 31<sup>st</sup> March. In preparation for this, the finance department will be ensuring that all purchase invoices are entered, all purchase orders reviewed, all bank reconciliations are completed, all sales invoices are raised, payroll journal entered, balance sheet codes reviewed and any accounting journals entered.
- 2) Chart of accounts – new, more simplified structure being implemented. Plan for this to happen is the 3<sup>rd</sup> April, after year-end is completed. This will require moving past transactions to the amalgamated codes along with the agreed budget. This is to be done to ensure that appropriate comparisons can be made in future financial years with previous years.
- 3) Completion of the AGAR – this will be achieved before the end of quarter one 2023/24.
- 4) New PWLB loan application – the initial stages have already begun of this long process.
- 5) Management accounting arrangements – the Finance Manager will continue to engage with the Chair of the Finance & General Purposes Committee in an effort to seek clarity around future Member reporting requirements. The final specification will be agreed once a new Council has been elected. After this, implementation will happen, hopefully quickly and seamlessly.
- 6) Smooth transition away from DCK – we have agreed with DCK for their support, on a decreasing level, until the end of July. Consideration is being given to any further hand-over work left to ensure that this process is a success. We have an agreement that any future ad hoc requirements after July, could still be provided for by DCK, within the limited budget.
- 7) Implementation of internal auditor arrangements – after it has been agreed which company will be providing our internal auditing arrangements for 2023/4, we will implement this. Consideration will be given to ensure that the Council benefits as much as possible from this arrangement.

**Recommendation:**

This information is for Members to note.

Rob Youngs  
Finance Manager

