

**Minutes of Finance & Staffing Meeting  
held on Monday 20<sup>th</sup> January 2025 at 6.30pm**

**Present at the meeting:** Cllrs: Campbell, Irven, Murphy (Chair), Stevens and Whetlor

**In attendance:** Jo Grellier – Town Clerk, Rachel Irven – Words in Watchet representative

**24/65C To Receive Apologies for Absence:** (LGA 1972, section 85 (1))  
None given

**24/66C To receive any Declaration of Interests** under Watchet Town Council's Code of Conduct (adopted on 9 July 2012) issued in accordance with the Localism Act 2011 and the Relevant Authorities (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests) Regulations 2012 SI No: 1464

Name	Minute no	Description of Interest	Pecuniary or Other	Action
Cllr Irven	24/68(i)	Spouse of WIW rep	Prejudicial and pecuniary	Cllr Irven advised by the Clerk that no decision was to be made on the item at the meeting but he requested to leave the meeting and not take part in the discussion.

**24/67C To confirm and sign the Minutes of the meeting held on 9<sup>th</sup> December 2024** - circulated to members prior to the meeting via **Appendix 1**- (LGA 1972, Sch 12 Para 41  
Cllr Murphy proposed that **'the minutes of the Finance & Staffing meeting on 9<sup>th</sup> December 2024 are a correct and true representation'**. Seconded by Cllr Campbell. Carried.


Cllr Irven left the meeting at 6.33pm

**24/68C Application for a Financial Grant presentation:**

- (i) Words in Watchet presentation for financial grant of £450 – paperwork circulated prior to the meeting via **Appendix 2**

Rachel Irven attended as a representative of Words in Watchet to present the details of the financial grant application for £450 to provide the authors and contributors who give their time and services freely, with a commemorative Words in Watchet mug in lieu of payment as a token of appreciation, the mugs will also provide publicity for the event.

**Questions from the floor:** Cllr Whetlor asked for further details regarding £750 Spice Merchant expenses on the accounts. Rachel advised that the costs are for hosting 'an evening with' event. The restaurant charge a fixed rate for 50 meals. Ticket prices are higher to cover these costs and to create further funds to support the event costs. Rachel also advised that the total profits detailed on the accounts is misleading as this included the money in the bank from the previous year. The actual profit is approx. £600.



Cllr Murphy thanked Rachel for her attendance and advised that the Committee will decide at the next Finance & Staffing meeting scheduled for 17<sup>th</sup> February 2025 and the organisation will be updated shortly after a decision has been made.  
Rachel Irven left the meeting at 6.42pm. Cllr Irven returned to the meeting at 6.43pm.

#### 24/69C **Financial Matters:**

- (i) Once per quarter, the Chair of this Committee shall be appointed to verify bank reconciliations for all accounts produced by the RFO, the contents to be noted by this Committee, *as per regulation 2.2*

Cllr Murphy informed members that the December 2024 Bank reconciliations were provided to the Chair of Finance at the meeting. The Clerk advised that the VAT return for Q3 had been submitted. Members noted.

- (ii) All payments above £500 and below £5,000 are itemised and reported to this Committee, *as per regulation 4.1 and displayed on the website. – tabled at the meeting*  
Members were provided with a copy of the £500+ payments from 10<sup>th</sup> December 2024 to 20<sup>th</sup> January 2025. Cllr Murphy proposed that **“the £500+ payments from 10th December 2024 to 20th January 2025 are noted”**. Seconded by Cllr Whetlor. Carried.

#### 24/70C **Council Pay Policy:**

- (i) To review and adopt a new Council Pay Policy - circulated to members prior to the meeting - circulated to members prior to the meeting via **Appendix 3**  
The Committee addressed the circulated Council pay policy which required adopting. The document was discussed in detail. During the discussion, due to the nature of the discussion the Clerk left the meeting from 7.03pm-7.05pm.  
Cllr Murphy proposed that **“the policy is approved subject to the proposed amendments”**. Seconded by Cllr Whetlor. Carried.

Cllr Whetlor left the meeting for a prior engagement at 7.16pm.

- (ii) To review amended staff handbook following adoption of new Pay Policy - circulated to members prior to the meeting via **Appendix 4**  
The Committee addressed the proposed amendments to the Staff handbook following the adoption of the new Pay Policy so that the information coincided with one another. A discussion ensued. Cllr Murphy proposed that **“the proposed amendments to the Staff handbook are approved and adopted”**. Seconded by Cllr Campbell. Carried.

#### 24/71C **Display Screen Equipment workstation checklist report:**

- (i) Report & recommendation from Health & Wellbeing Officer following staff annual DSE questionnaire completion. – report tabled at the meeting - circulated to members prior to the meeting via **Appendix 5**

Cllr Campbell informed members that the Clerk had collected staff responses to a recent DSE workstation questionnaire. Cllr Campbell, as WTC H&W officer reviewed the staff responses and reported the following:

- The Office desk rearrangement must be assessed to ensure correct workstation layout – H&W & EH&S Officers to assess.
- Lighting to be assessed – EH&S Officer and Clerk to gain costs
- All staff to take regular micro breaks, get up and move around, this is better office etiquette and the only way to prevent problems developing in arms/shoulders/neck and back once equipment is provided and correctly adjusted, eg supportive chairs, office desks at correct height.
- Consider a raised desk so that staff can take turns standing to work.
- Consider hybrid working – Hybrid workers to complete a home workstation assessment.
- 1 x footrest and document holders are required – to be purchased..



A discussion ensued. Cllr Murphy proposed that **'the Committee accept the report and approve the recommended workstation footrest and document holders are purchased to improve the Health & Wellbeing of the Office staff to a budget of £50.00.'** Seconded by Cllr Stevens. Carried.

**24/72C CCLA Investments:**

(i) To address the report & recommendation from the Clerk/RFO - circulated to members prior to the meeting via **Appendix 6**

The Clerk & RFO presented a CCLA investments report and recommendation detailing low risk easy access investment options which could create a much higher yield on the precept and general reserves to increase interest income. A discussion ensued. Cllr Murphy proposed that **'the committee approve the recommendation that the RFO is given authorisation to contact CCLA to discuss how the Public Sector Deposit can work for our Council to ensure that public funds gain a higher yield whilst maintaining a low-risk approach to investments. The Clerk to invite CCLA to present the details. Once finer bespoke details are obtained it is reported back to the F&S Committee before approval to recommend to Full Council.'** Seconded by Cllr Irven. Carried.

**24/73C Staff and Councillor Training:**

Before the next item was addressed the Clerk advised the Committee that the Deputy Clerk has completed her iLCA qualification and the Grounds Person has now completed his H&S Management level 3. Members noted and congratulated the staff.

(i) To approve proposed Staff & Councillor training plan concept for 2025-26 and recommendations within - circulated to members prior to the meeting via **Appendix 7**

Members noted the draft training plan and recommendations for staff and Cllr training required for the remaining 2024-25 year and 2025-26. A long discussion ensued. The EH&S Officer advised that Manual Handling, Working at height, and working with power equipment should take priority over COSHH course for the grounds person which can be deferred to a later date. It was noted that the 2024-25 Personnel Committee training should be deferred until the 2025 Personnel Committee has been appointed in May 2025. Cllr Murphy proposed that **'the recommendations for training in 2024-25 and 2025-26 and budget spends as amended are approved'**. Seconded by Cllr Campbell. Carried.

In addition, Cllr Murphy proposed that **'Cllr Irven is appointed to attend the Equalities Training course.'** Seconded by Cllr Campbell. Carried.

**24/74C Matters for the next meeting – no discussion or decisions made**

- Earmarked Reserves
- Liaise with Clerk

Meeting closed at 8.00pm

Signed.....  


Date.....  
7/2/25

