DOWNHAM MARKET FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE
MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD TUESDAY 15 DECEMBER 2020 AT 7:00PM

This meeting was held over zoom.

	Present Committee Chair - Cllr Pickering Deputy Mayor – Cllr Groom Committee Members - Cllrs Hepworth, Lawson (Joined at Item 4) & J Woodmin Non-Committee Members – Cllrs Daymond (Joined at Item 5), Pyatt & Westrop (Joined at Item 5) Town Clerk – Mrs E Oliver There were 0 members of public present.	**ACTION**
1	**To receive Members' Apologies for Absence** Apologies were given by Cllr Hayes (Holiday), Cllr Hendry (Personal) & Cllr Molyneux-Hetherington (Work Commitments) Cllr Sharman gave his apologies due to technological issues, however he is not a member of the Committee. These apologies were accepted.	
2	**To receive Members' Declarations of Interest** Cllr Hepworth declared an interest in Bills for Payment, Item 5, as one invoice relates to her employer.	
3	**To approve the Minutes of the Finance & General Purposes Committee meeting held on Wednesday 21st October 2020** **Proposed – Cllr Pickering** **Seconded –Cllr Woodmin** **'That the minutes for the meeting held on Wednesday 21 October 2020 be approved.'** **All in favour**	
4	**Public participation – 15 minutes allowed** There were no members of the public present and no Councillor wished to speak as a member of the public.	

	The Chair moved to the next item on the agenda.	
5	**<u>To approve the payment of bills</u>** **Proposed – Cllr Pickering Seconded – Cllr Woodmin** **'That the bills on the attached schedule be approved for payment'** **Cllr Pickering, Cllr Woodmin and Cllr Groom in favour** **Cllr Lawson abstained as he has been unable to access his emails and therefore had not seen the bills.** **Cllr Hepworth abstained – See item 2.**	
6	**<u>To consider the budget 2021/2022</u>** Cllr Pickering confirmed that all Councillors had been sent a copy of the budget by email. Cllr Pickering explained that the basis for the budget was on the assumption that from 01 April 2021 normal life will resume following the Covid-19 pandemic. The Town Hall was discussed in detail with Cllr Westrop giving an overview of possible Heritage Funding to assist with the refurbishment of the Town Hall along with the match funding available to employ an architect specialising in heritage buildings. It was explained that following the roof report in 2020 it had been shown that between £4-5K expenditure would extend the life of the Town Hall roof by approximately 10 years and therefore this was the preferred option to re-roofing in the currently financial climate. It was confirmed that the Town Clock had been budgeted for refurbishment in 2021/2022. It was acknowledged that this work had been delayed a year due to Covid-19. The proposed Town Square electrical work was discussed in detail and the Town Clerk confirmed this had been budgeted for and gave background information. **Proposed – Cllr Pickering Seconded –Cllr Pyatt** **'That the emergency electrical works to split the electric sockets on the Market Square be completed this financial year, 2020/2021.** **All in favour**	

	The Committee discuss the impact of Covid-19 on the Council finances. A full position is yet to be established however it is not as dire as expected. Cllr Groom advised the Committee that the Downham Market Twinning Club have their 45th anniversary coming up in Autumn 2021 which needs to be considered as it is a Civic Event. It was confirmed this had been considered as correspondence had been received by the Town Clerk from the Twinning Club Committee. Cllr Pickering explained that the budget was approximately £60,000 higher than 2020/2021 however it takes account of the Town Clock refurbishment, Town Hall refurbishment, likely increases in superannuation and salaries, establishment of reserves for the replacement of office computers, van replacement and drain cleaning. The Borough Council have not released the precept base figures and therefore a precept figure cannot be calculated at present. The auditor considers the General Reserves, which sit at approximately 50%, to be less than required and therefore this will need to be considered by Full Council on 12 January 2021. The Town Clerk asked for it to be noted that Mask Income had been £2,890 which showed fantastic support from the community and funds continue to be received. This was acknowledged. Cllr Pyatt asked that drainage surveys be considered within the Hollies Car Park. The Committee were reminded that land may need to be purchased for allotment space. **Proposed Cllr Pickering** **Seconder Cllr Woodmin** **'To approve the proposed budget for 2021/2022 as presented and for it to be submitted to Full Council for ratification on 12 January 2021.'** **All in favour**	
7	**<u>Date of next meeting</u>** The next meeting was not scheduled pending the outcome of the Full Council meeting.	
	Meeting closed: 19:43	
	SIGNED **DATE**	