

5	<p><u>To approve the payment of bills</u></p> <p>Cllr Molyneux-Hetherington asked Cllr Lawson if he felt he should declare an interest in this agenda item, as the legal fees were referring to his actions. He felt that was a moral and ethical decision rather than a matter of process but would leave it to the individual Cllr's conscious. Cllr Lawson stated this it was not needed.</p> <p>Cllr Lawson stated that he did not agree with the payment of voucher numbers 356 and 357 as he did not believe that these had been approved appropriately by Council. The Town Clerk referred Cllr Lawson to the minutes of Full Council on 14 July 2020, item 6.2, where a vote was taken with regard to the expenditure. Cllr Lawson was recorded as being present at this meeting.</p> <p>Cllr Lawson stated that he did not agree with the payment of voucher 352 as he felt protocol had not been followed.</p> <p>Cllr Lawson points were that the matter had not been discussed at Full Council before the instructions were issued; that the advice could have been obtained from either Norfolk ALC or NP Law as the Council has arrangements with both of which entitle the Council to free legal advice.</p> <p>With regard to the first point the Chair mentioned that, as a standing committee, HR had the authority to incur expenditure that there was a budget. Furthermore, as Cllr Lightfoot pointed out; it was somewhat disingenuous of Cllr Lawson to complain as the need for the advice had been occasioned by his totally unacceptable behaviour towards the Clerk.</p> <p>With regard to the second point the Chair mentioned that he was surprised that Cllr Lawson was suggesting that we take legal advice from Norfolk ALC as he had previously written to the Clerk expressing concerns that advice given by Norfolk ALC was poor and could not be relied upon. However, the Chair mentioned that he had discussed the matter with Norfolk ALC at which point Cllr Lawson demanded proof to which the Chair replied that he had confirmed that contact had been made and that should be enough unless Cllr Lawson was calling him a liar – there was no response from Cllr Lawson.</p> <p>With regard to the third point the Chair confirmed that the Council does have an arrangement with NP Law, which relates to car-parking issues and was therefore not appropriate in these circumstances.</p> <p>Cllr Lawson said he was unable to detect any malpractice on the payments agreed, on the remainder of payments, when questioned he said he meant to say failure to follow correct process.</p> <p>The Senior Administrator questioned if he agreed to all the remainder including the Covid Rangers he replied that he didn't agree to those.</p>	
---	--	--

The Chair had agreed that, in view of the matters raised under Public Participation, the Committee would take separate votes on voucher No. 352 and the remainder of the vouchers. The following proposals were made.

Proposed – Cllr J Woodmin

Seconded – Cllr Molyneux-Hetherington

‘That the bills on the attached schedule, bar voucher number 352, be approved for payment’

Cllr Lawson asked for a named vote

In favour - Cllrs Hendry, Hepworth, Molyneux-Hetherington, Pickering & J Woodmin

Against – Cllr Lawson

Cllr Lawson verbally gave his vote as his camera was not functioning, so his identity was unable to be confirmed.

Proposed – Cllr Pickering

Seconded – Cllr Hendry

‘That the bill, namely voucher number 352, be approved for payment’

Cllr Lawson asked for a named vote

In favour – Cllrs. Hendry, Molyneux-Hetherington, Pickering & J Woodmin

Against – Cllr Lawson (Cllr Lawson verbally gave his vote as his camera was not functioning)

Abstention - Cllr Hepworth (See Declaration of Interest)

Cllr Hendry asked for some background to voucher number 330 as the items had not been sourced locally. The Senior Administrator advised that the extension leads were purchased following failed Portable Appliance Tests on those in use in the office and that as there was a significant financial difference between buying, they were ordered from Amazon. The Clerk was unaware of this purchase. The Clerk confirmed, in response to a question by Cllr Hendry, that Holly Landscapes bill referred to making sure the flagpole was in a state to fly the flag rather than raising it.

The Chair had received comments from other Cllrs, not present, about Voucher Numbers 373 and 378 and he advised these were on hold as we needed to complete the snagging list before payment.

The Senior Administrator then advised that the previous vote had included these vouchers and therefore a further vote would need to be taken to confirm they vouchers were not to be paid. Accordingly:

Proposed – Cllr J Woodmin

Seconded – Cllr B Molyneux-Hetherington

	<p>'That the bills on the attached schedules bar voucher numbers 352, 373 and 378 be approved for payment'</p> <p>Cllr Lawson asked for a named vote</p> <p>In favour - Cllrs Hendry, Hepworth, Molyneux-Hetherington, Pickering & J Woodmin</p> <p>Against – Cllr Lawson</p> <p>Cllr Lawson verbally gave his vote as his camera was not functioning, so his identity was unable to be confirmed.</p>	
6	<p><u>To discuss the budget process for 2021/2022</u></p> <p>Cllr Daymond asked if Downham In Bloom formed part of the 2021/2022 budget. Cllr Pickering confirmed it would be.</p> <p>Cllr Daymond asked whether he should submit a Solar Panel suggestion to Town Hall Strategy Group or Environment Strategy Group. He gave an overview of the costs and asked what the payback period needed to be. Cllr Pickering confirmed that Cllr Daymond should liaise with Cllr Lightfoot as Chair of Town Hall Strategy Group and that a realistic cost benefit analysis would be needed to support the request.</p> <p>Cllr Lightfoot asked whether the Town Hall should submit the same budget as 2020/2021 as most of the budget had been unused due to the impact of Coronavirus. Cllr Pickering advised that the budget should start from a zero base, that all requests would be considered and that the budget did not need to match the previous year.</p> <p>Cllr Pickering advised that all budget requests would need to be received by 30 November 2020. The Finance and General Purposes Committee would meet on Tuesday 08 December 2020 to review the requests.</p> <p>He advised that Full Council would vote on the proposed budget in January 2021.</p> <p>Cllr Pickering reminded Cllrs that the internal auditor had informed the Town Clerk that increasing reserves would need to be a priority.</p> <p>Cllr Pickering asked that the Town Clerk send an email to all Committee and Strategy Group Chairs giving them an outline of the budget process for 2021/2022 basing it on the correspondence sent in 2019.</p> <p>The Town Clerk asked for it to be recorded that in answer to Cllr Lawson's question on the legality of authorising legal and professional bills that it is covered under Section 11 of the Financial Regulations and that no breaches had occurred. Cllr Lawson did not reply.</p>	Town Clerk

7	<u>Date of next meeting</u> The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday 08 th December 2020 at 7pm.	
	Meeting closed: 19:49	
	SIGNED	DATE