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Paul Hodson, Town Clerk and Chief Executive

Date: 16 June 2023

Dear Councillor,

You are hereby summoned to attend a Meeting of **Dunstable Town Council** which will be held on **Monday 26 June 2023 at Grove House in the Council Chamber commencing at 7.00 pm**. Members of the public and press are welcome to attend in person or online via MS Teams. Those who wish to attend online are asked to request an invite by emailing [democratic@dunstable.gov.uk](mailto:democratic@dunstable.gov.uk) by 4pm on Friday 23 June 2023.

## **AGENDA**

*This meeting will be filmed by the Council and broadcast live on the Internet and will be capable of repeated viewing. If you are seated in the Council Chamber it is likely that the cameras will capture your image. By your presence you are deemed to consent to be filmed, and to the use of those images and sound recordings for webcasting or training purposes.*

*If you address the committee in person or via Teams, your contribution will be recorded and broadcast, unless this is during a private session, as permitted by the Access to Information provisions.*

1. Apologies for Absence.
2. To agree as a correct record the Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 17 April 2023 (Minutes enclosed - page 3)
3. Specific Declarations of Interest
4. Chairman's Remarks including Civic Events and Mayoral Activities - attached is a summary of events the Mayor and Deputy Mayor attended from May to June 2023 (page 6)
5. Public Question Time
6. To answer questions under Standing Order 16

*Members are reminded when making decisions that the Public Sector Equality Duty 2010 requires Members to have due regard to the need to: Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Act, advance equality of opportunity between people who share a characteristic and those who don't, and to foster good relations between people who share a characteristic and those who don't.*

7. To receive reports of the following Committees:

<u>Committee</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Page</u>
Community Services	22 May 2023	7
Grounds and Environmental Services	5 June 2023	11
Finance and General Purposes	12 June 2023	14

8. Referral Reports – to consider any referral reports from other Committees

8.1. Environment and Green Spaces Committee – new pedestrian cleaner (Minute 133/23) (see page 18) (Appendix 1 at page 20)

8.2. Finance and General Purposes Committee – Public Question Time – Report (see page 23)

9. Annual Governance Statement and Internal Audit Report – Report (see page 25)

9.1. To receive the final internal audit report for 2022/23 (Appendix 1) (page 28)

9.2. To approve the Annual Governance Statement (Appendix 2) (page 41)

9.3. To approve the Accounting Statements in the Annual Governance Return (Appendix 2 page 42)

10. Free Uses of Grove Theatre - Report (see page 46)

11. Heritage At Risk Grant – Priory House Report (see page 48)

12. Reports/updates by Members of Central Bedfordshire Council on matters of interest to the Town Council

Yours faithfully



Paul Hodson  
Town Clerk and Chief Executive

13. RECOMMENDED In terms of Schedule 12A, Local Government Act 1972, the following items will be likely to disclose exempt information relating to establishment and contractual matters and it is, therefore, RECOMMENDED that pursuant to the provisions of the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960 the public and press be excluded.

14. Future Management of Creasey Park Community Football Centre – Report to follow

To: All Members of Dunstable Town Council

Copies to: Central Bedfordshire Councillors for Dunstable for information

## DUNSTABLE TOWN COUNCIL

### MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COUNCIL

#### HELD ON MONDAY 17 MARCH 2023 COMMENCING AT 7.00 P.M.

Present: Councillors Liz Jones (Town Mayor), Lisa Bird (Deputy Town Mayor), Sid Abbott, Wendy Bater, Matt Brennan, Philip Crawley, Alan Corkhill, Greg George, Pamela Ghent, John Gurney, Kenson Gurney, Peter Hollick, Gloria Martin, Gladys Sanders and Johnson Tamara, with Paul Hodson (Town Clerk and Chief Executive), Lisa Scheder (Head of Finance and Responsible Finance Officer) and Becky Wisbey (Head of Community Services – via Teams).

Apologies: Councillors Mark Cant and Cameron Restall

Public Attendance: None

#### **93/23 MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 6 February 2023 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Town Mayor.

#### **94/23 DECLARATIONS**

There were no specific declarations of interest.

#### **95/23 CHAIRMAN'S REMARKS**

The Town Mayor spoke in support of a report relating to her activities up to the beginning of April 2023. The Mayor had hosted her final fundraising events and extended her thanks to officers for their support, particularly in the absence of the Democratic Services Manager in recent months. 25 events remained, many related to the Coronation of King Charles III. The Mayor will announce how much has been raised for the Mayor's charities and other local groups during the Mayoral year, and share photos of gifts made, after the election. The Mayor noted that Councillors had achieved many items set in the Corporate Plan during the four year term of this council.

The Mayor thanked all those Councillors for their service who were not seeking re-election. The Mayor particularly paid thanks to Councillor Sid Abbott, who is a past Mayor, and to the current Deputy Mayor, Councillor Lisa Bird for all her support. The Mayor wished all candidates seeking election her best wishes.

#### **96/23 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

There were no questions put to the meeting.

#### **97/23 TO ANSWER QUESTIONS UNDER STANDING ORDER 16**

There were no questions put to the meeting.

#### **98/23 COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE**

**RESOLVED:** that the minutes of the meeting of the Community Services Committee

held on 6 March 2023 be received.

#### **99/23 GROUNDS AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES COMMITTEE**

**RESOLVED:** that the minutes of the meeting of the Grounds and Environmental Services Committee held on 13 March 2023 be received.

Councillor Bird updated members that consultants were working on the noise assessment for the new MUGA at the Kingsbury Recreation Ground, which would enable planning to be applied for. Councillor Bird thanked officers for all their support and commitment in their role of making the town the wonderful place that it is. Councillor Bird thanked Members for all their support.

#### **100/23 FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE**

**RESOLVED:** that the minutes of the meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held on 20 March 2023 be received.

#### **101/23 REFERRAL REPORT FROM THE FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE: NEW STANDING ORDERS**

It was proposed, seconded and

**RESOLVED:** That the Council adopt the new Standing Orders provided.

#### **102/23 ANNUAL TOWN MEETING**

**RESOLVED:** that the Minutes of the meeting of the Dunstable Annual Town Meeting held on 27 March 2023 be received.

#### **103/23 DUNSTABLE JOINT COMMITTEE**

**RESOLVED:** that the Minutes of the meeting of the Dunstable Joint Committee held on 1 December 2022 be received.

#### **104/23 FINANCIAL UPDATE AND RESERVES ALLOCATION**

It was proposed, seconded and

**RESOLVED:**

- I. To approve the release of up to £26,000 from the Meadway Capital Fund for Priory House furniture.
- II. To approve the release of up to £170,000 from the Meadway Capital Fund for the Kingsbury Recreation Ground sports pavilion refurbishment works.
- III. To approve the ear-marked reserves as listed in Appendix 1.
- IV. To agree that any further underspend identified at the end of 2022/23 be added to the ear-marked reserve for the repair of the Downside Community Centre roof.
- V. To approve the use of £18,000 from the Meadway Capital Fund towards Bennett's Splash shade canopies and seating.

**105/23 REPORTS/UPDATES BY MEMBERS OF CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCIL ON MATTERS OF INTEREST TO THE TOWN COUNCIL**

Councillor Tamara thanked all of the Council's officers for their efforts on behalf of the town, and the Mayor for her leadership of the Council.

**The meeting closed at 19:25pm**

## Town Mayor – Summary of key events attended 21 May to 10 June 2023

Date	Event	Comments
21/05/2023	Creasey Park Dunstable Town & Luton and Dunstable Hospital Fun Day	A fantastic day for both DTFC and the L&D Charity coming together to raise over £4000 for charity the weather wasn't the kindest but the event was greatly supported
30/05/2023	CHUMS Mtg	An opportunity to meet with my charity and outline my plans for the year and agree how they can help and support me through it.
30/05/2023	COM Church Soft Play event	An impromptu visit to the week long activity sessions that the COM church hosted for all families from the local area - an amazing turn out and great to see so many local organisations supporting it too
01/06/2023	CBC Community Action Day	An opportunity to spend some time with the CBC Safer Central team on the first of their 2 days in town undertaking door knocking campaigns to raise awareness of the services available, health and well-being services and security measures. Supported by colleagues from Bedfordshire Police, BRCC and other agencies.
01/06/2023	Long Service Award	Recognising the 15 year service of our Catering Manager at Priory House
06/06/2023	Friends of Dunstable Cemetery	Opportunity to thank the volunteer group for their help and support during volunteers week
06/06/2023	Big Lunch GH	A fantastic event with over 80 people enjoying the entertainment. The support from across the council teams to make this event happen and run so smoothly was fantastic and I was proud to have spent several hours there helping.
06/06/2023	Hospice at Home Charity meal	A lovely event that raised around £360 for HHV organised by their trustees. As mayor it was an opportunity to give back to them for their help last year as one of my charities.
09/06/2023	Caddington Grove evening	Cllr Adams accompanied me to Caddington Grove to be part of their evening of celebrations recognising the work of their homemaker volunteers
10/06/2023	Motor Rally	A fabulous event for the town with thousands of residents visiting Priory Gardens, over 190 vehicles on show and spectacular entertainment throughout.
10/06/2023	Truck Convoy	A brilliant opportunity to represent the turn in this years truck convoy travelling from junction 9 to the Town Centre

## **DUNSTABLE TOWN COUNCIL**

### **MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE**

**HELD ON MONDAY 22 MAY 2023 FROM 19:00**

Present: Councillors Liz Jones (Town Mayor), Louise O’Riordan (Deputy Town Mayor), John Gurney (Chair), Robert Blennerhassett (Vice-Chair), Wendy Bater, Nicholas Kotarski, Kenson Gurney, Gregory Alderman, Matthew Neall, Trevor Adams and Peter Hollick.

In Attendance: Councillor Richard Atwell, Paul Hodson (Town Clerk and Chief Executive), Becky Wisbey (Head of Community Services), Gill Peck (Youth and Community Manager), Michelle Collings (HSHAZ Manager), Gina Thank Thanky (Events Officer) and Lisa Stephens (Cultural Services Manager).

In Attendance: Annette Clynes (Town Centre Manager),  
(Remotely)

Apologies: Councillor Alex Butler

Public: Nil

#### **118/23 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None received.

#### **119/23 MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting of the Community Services Committee held on 6 March 2023 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

#### **120/23 TOWN CENTRE SERVICES**

The Town Centre Manager updated that on 13 May there were 24 stalls, an increase from 21 last year. On 10 June last year there were 18 stalls, with 20 already booked this year. There were 10 – 15 on each market when they began four years ago. Regarding the sanitary dispenser at Ashton Square toilets; the contractor attends monthly to maintain the machine, as per the contractor’s recommendations. They forecast that misuse will quickly slow down with time. The Town Centre Manager does have a spare box if refills are required.

Street Food Heroes took place on Thursday a14 May. The weather was poor to begin but the event picked up after 19:00. The Middle Row Market took place on Saturday 20 May. This included a 3D artwork being produced by the Cultural Consortium with Urban Canvas. The Town Centre Manager confirmed that the barriers will stay in place for a week or two.

The numbers involved with Shopwatch haven’t increased. However, a new Facebook page has been set up, and a new QR code introduced, which it is hoped will increase take up.

The Town Centre Manager attended Pubwatch and hopes to increase engagement with

pubs in the coming months.

The street dressing – with union flags and straw hats – has received some excellent social media coverage. It is hoped that the hats will last at least until the end of the year.

Quotes are being sought for additional tubes for Christmas lights along Court Drive.

### **121/23      OLDER PEOPLE'S SERVICES**

Members received the report provided which was summarised by the Youth and Community Manager. The Council are going to work with a Polish staff member to seek to increase the engagement of Polish residents with the lunch club.

### **122/23      GROVE CORNER AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

Members received the report provided.

The Youth and Community Manager explained that the attendance figures for Grove Corner were similar to those from last year. The Pokémon sessions had increased from 215 to 364 attendees.

The Youth and Community Manager responded to a query by explaining that the vaping discussion described had occurred spontaneously during a session, and so while no evaluation had taken place, the session had been well received.

It was confirmed that Play Streets was a CBC event. Town Council officers had provided support and suggestions and were awaiting an update from CBC on any future plans.

### **123/23      HIGH STREET HERITAGE ACTION ZONE (HSHAZ)**

Members received the report provided. The HSHAZ Manager updated Members that the works were currently forecast to last until December 2023. Councillor Hollick updated Members that he was one of eight authors collating a book about people who have come to Dunstable as part of the work of the Cultural Consortium.

The HSHAZ Manager informed Members that number 4 High Street South had changed owners following the beginning of the programme. Despite early engagement and several detailed surveys being carried out using programme funding, the current owners were not able to meet the repair costs identified following the surveys, particularly given the requirements of work on a listed building in a conservation area. Historic England had explored the option of the building being taken on by a local charity, with the support of Central Bedfordshire Council. As yet it has not been possible to progress this.

### **124/23      EVENTS**

Members received the report provided. The Events Manager summarised the report. Members were updated that a site meeting had been earlier in the day to review works to the performance area, and work would be completed early in June. Officers confirmed that



if there is a beacon lighting as part of the marking of the anniversary of D-Day the Council had pencilled in a suitable budget; officers will consider how D-Day might be marked within the Events report for the next meeting.

The Events Manager explained that in January bands are invited to apply for one of the slots available. Members suggested that officers consider whether other types of band are invited to take part in the future. It was noted that attendance has reduced since Covid, and efforts are currently focussed on increasing attendees at the core offer.

**RESOLVED:** To approve the events programme for 2024/25:

<b>Event and venue</b>	<b>Date 2024</b>
St George's Day (PG)	Saturday 20 April 11.00 am to 4.00 pm
Priory Picture (PG)	Saturday 25 May From 12 noon
Dunstable Classic Motor Rally (PG)	Saturday 8 June 10.00 am to 4.00 pm
Dunstable Live (GHG)	Saturday 22 June 3 pm to 8 pm
Sunday Band Concerts (GHG)	Sunday 30 June, 21 July & 18 August 12.00 noon & 2.30 pm
Party in the Park (GHG)	Saturday 13 July 12.00 noon to 8.00 pm
Around the World (PG)	Saturday 3 August 10.30 am 4.30 pm
Priory Pictures (PG)	Saturday 10 August From 12.00 noon
Priory Proms in the Park (PG)	Date and Times TBC from BBC
Christmas Carols and Torchlight Procession (TS)	Friday 29 November From 7.00 pm

**125/23      PRIORY HOUSE INFORMATION REPORT**

Members received the report provided. Members noted that Priory House Tearooms does offer takeaway afternoon teas, and these were to be promoted again. Members noted that the works to the Undercroft may mean reduced income during the year.

**126/23      SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENT**

The Head of Community Services presented the report. The Head of Community Services agreed to circulate the criteria for funding to Members.

**RESOLVED:** For the Council to end the Service Level Agreement for Sorted Counselling Services effective from 1 April 2023, rather than continue for the remaining three years of the SLA.

**127/23      REPORTS FROM OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS**

South Beds Dial-a-Ride Management Committee – Cllr John Gurney  
No update as yet

Dunstable Town Band – Cllr Robert Blennerhassett  
No update as yet

Men in Sheds – Cllr Richard Atwell

Councillor Atwell updated Members that he had visited the shed. The Shed was formally reopened by the Mayor, Councillor Jones on 12 May, supported Andrew Selous MP.

**The meeting closed at 20:21**

## DUNSTABLE TOWN COUNCIL

### MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE GROUNDS AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES COMMITTEE

ON MONDAY 5 JUNE 2023 FROM 19:00

Present: Councillors Liz Jones (Town Mayor), Louise O’Riordan (Deputy Town Mayor), Matthew Brennan (Chairman), Richard Attwell (Vice-Chairman), Trevor Adams, Philip Crawley, Mark Davis, Kenson Gurney, Michelle Henderson and Matthew Neall.

In Attendance: Councillors John Gurney, Robert Blennerhassett and Peter Hollick, Paul Hodson (Town Clerk and Chief Executive), John Crawley (Head of Grounds and Environmental Services), Mary Dobbs (Cemetery Manager), Hayley McKee (Creasey Park Community Football Centre Manager), Dimitrisz Sopisz (Grounds Operations Manager), James Slack (Sports and Leisure Facilities Manager) and Kathy Doyle (Parks and Green Space Development Officer).

Apologies: Councillors Alex Butler and Johnson Tamara.

Public: Nil.

#### **128/23 MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meeting of Grounds and Environmental Services Committee held on 13 March 2023 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

#### **129/23 SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no specific declarations of interest.

#### **130/23 PLANS-SUB COMMITTEE**

**RESOLVED:** That the Minutes of the meetings of the Plans Sub-Committee held on 7 March, 28 March, 18 April and 2 May 2023 be received.

#### **131/23 CREASEY PARK COMMUNITY FOOTBALL CENTRE AND SPLASH PARK**

The Sports and Leisure Facilities Manager summarised the report. Members recorded their congratulations to AFC Ladies on their achievement. The success of Luton Town in being promoted to the Premier League was celebrated. The Sports and Leisure Facilities Manager noted that this was likely to increase the popularity of Luton Town branded coaching and events held at Creasey Park.

Members requested that early notice and promotion was put in place before the beginning of the Pay and Play offer during the summer.

The Splash Park had been well used during good weather days and the café was increasing trade each week. Party bookings have proved popular. Some parking issues have arisen since the report was published. Officers were liaising with CBC's parking enforcement team as well as encouraging people to park at Ashton Square Car Park via social media. Members requested for details of the number of parties provided to be given for the next meeting and that some form of customer service feedback be provided.

Members discussed options for providing affordable or free suncream.

**RESOLVED** to delegate the Town Clerk and Chief Executive Officer to take any reasonable measures to provide free or low cost suncream for splash park users, in liaison with the Committee Chair.

### **132/23        GROUND – INFORMATION REPORT**

Members noted the report.

#### **Cemetery**

Members congratulated the Cemetery Manager and her team for retaining the cemetery's silver status for the ICCM Charter for the Bereaved.

#### **Allotments**

Councillor Henderson declared an interest as an allotment holder.

#### **Recreation Grounds – play areas**

The Deputy Town Mayor asked whether the skate park could have time set aside for younger users, and whether skating teachers who use the site might be willing to sponsor such signage. For example, on a Saturday morning from 9 to 12. Officers agreed to investigate what might be possible.

Members requested that information on works and timescales to install the kickabout MUGA and new play area at Kingsbury Recreation Ground is shared widely via the Council's social media and also on site.

#### **Town Rangers**

The Mayor thanked the Town Rangers for their quick work in responding to a request from residents to clean benches.

### **133/23        PURCHASE OF ELECTRIC PEDESTRIAN SWEEPER**

Members noted the report.

**RESOLVED** To defer the decision to Full Council pending investigation by officers into other options and sources of funding for a larger machine.

### **134/23        REPORTS FROM OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS**

No update

**135/23 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

**RESOLVED** In terms of Schedule 12A, Local Government Act 1972 to exclude the public and press in accordance with Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1961 S1.2 to allow discussion on establishment and contractual matters relating to the following item.

**136/23 LAWN CEMETERY POLICY**

Members received a confidential report. The Head of Grounds and Environmental Services summarised the report.

**RESOLVED** To amend the policy for the current lawn cemetery sections to allow for the placing of mementos and planting across the full area of the grave space but to retain the restriction on the placing of permanent kerb sets and benches.

**137/23 CREASEY PARK MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS**

The Town Clerk & Chief Executive updated Members on ongoing discussions regarding the management arrangements for the Creasey Park Community Football Centre.

**The meeting closed at 21:40**

## DUNSTABLE TOWN COUNCIL

### MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

ON MONDAY 12 JUNE 2023 FROM 19:00

Present: Councillors Liz Jones (Town Mayor), Louise O’Riordan (Deputy Town Mayor), Peter Hollick (Chair), Gregory Alderman (Vice-Chair), Nick Kotarski, Richard Attwell, Michelle Henderson, John Gurney, Matthew Brennan, Philip Crawley, Robert Blennerhassett.

In Attendance: Councillor Kenson Gurney, Paul Hodson (Town Clerk and Chief Executive) and Lisa Scheder (Head of Finance and Responsible Financial Officer)

Apologies: Councillors Wendy Bater, Mark Davis and Johnson Tamara.

Public: One

#### **138/23 MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held on 20 March 2023 were approved as a correct record following one minor amendment and were signed by the Chair.

#### **139/23 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no specific declarations of interest.

#### **140/23 FINANCIAL MONITORING REPORT**

Members noted the report. The Mayor highlighted the success by officers and previous Members in achieving a £50,000 underspend in the previous year.

Members received the Final 2022/23 Internal Audit Report and noted that it would be submitted to Full Council for approval.

#### **141/23 RESERVES REPORT**

##### **RESOLVED:**

- I. To approve the release of the reserves created from 2022/23 year-end underspends for the specific uses they were created for:

<b>Description</b>	<b>Amount</b>
Development of a new 4-year corporate plan in 2023/2024	£5,000
Additional IT contribution	£10,000
Priory House contingency	£29,864
Church Street phone box maintenance	£5,000
Members Training budget underspend for new members induction	£1,000

Events budget underspend for increased costs known for the 2023 events programme	£3,000
Cemetery burial section markers	£5,000
*Splash Park canopies and bench seating with parasols	£7,000
Street Dressing	£18,000
Downside roof repairs	£36,679
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£120,543</b>

\*in total £25,000 with £18,000 from Meadway Capital Fund

- II. To approve release of £17,090 from the Tree Reserve for the following priority work requirements during 2023/24:
  - Priority 1 trees to be completed by March 2024 = £6,150 (estimate) – (has to be completed within 1 year of survey)
  - Priority 2 trees to be completed by March 2024, but could be delayed subject to funds being available, should priority 1 trees exceed estimated cost = £5,460.
  - In addition, £2,500 on static load testing on mature trees in Grove House Gardens and £2,980 future inspection on completed works and to inform the 2024/25 programme.
- III. To approve the unallocated balance of £1,000 from the Meadway Capital Fund to be allocated to the new cemetery development reserve.
- IV. To approve the underspend of £8,792 from the Downside Roof works (first round) be allocated to the Downside Reserve for known future roof repairs.

#### **142/23 INVESTORS IN PEOPLE**

Members congratulated officers on retaining silver status for Investors In People.

#### **143/23 REFERRAL REPORT - PURCHASE OF ELECTRIC PEDESTRIAN SWEEPER**

Deferred to Full Council

#### **144/23 MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS REPORT**

Members received the report.

#### **145/23 CORPORATE PLAN DEVELOPMENT PROCESS**

Members noted the proposed process for developing the Corporate Plan.

#### **146/23 PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT**

##### **RESOLVED:**

- I. To begin to stream Council and Committee meetings live when suitable technology is in place and for officers to investigate options for enabling the public to engage via chat before or during meetings.

- II. The Communications Officer to provide social media messages alerting residents when items of particular interest are to be discussed in Council meetings.
- III. All Members to be supported to hold and attend monthly surgeries called open public meetings, to be circulated between the five wards and for an online option to be offered. Branding, agenda and feedback will be consistent. Members in each ward to be invited to provide a time and location for their first surgery, and all members to be invited to each surgery. All Dunstable residents to be welcome to attend each event.
- IV. To include a “public question time” section in the agenda for each committee meeting.
- V. To recommend to Full Council that the Council reviews Standing Orders in regard to public questions at meetings to identify whether members of the public should be able to ask questions about items not on the agenda, and to review the requirement for members of the public to submit questions three days in advance.

#### **147/23 REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS**

- Citizen’s Advice Management Committee – Councillor Richard Attwell  
No update
- Dunstable International Town Twinning Association – Councillors Liz Jones, Peter Hollick and Kenson Gurney  
A meeting had taken place to discuss a proposed meeting to a proposed visit to Porz am Rhein. This will not now take place due to various travel implications..
- Hospice at Home Management Committee - Councillor Liz Jones  
A successful charity evening had been held, and the Committee had a presence at the motor rally.
- Ashton Almshouses Charity – Councillors Louise O’Riordan and Gregory Alderman  
No update.
- Ashton Schools Foundation - Councillors Peter Hollick and Gregory Alderman  
No update.
- Chew’s Foundation - Councillors Matthew Brennan and Kenson Gurney  
Councillor John Gurney updated Members that grants had been allocated and a flat had been refurbished.
- Poor’s Land Charity - Councillors Hollick and Liz Jones  
Councillor Jones updated that the charity meets once a year to agree money to be allocated on Maundy Thursday.



- Lockington Charity and Marshe Charity - Councillors Kenson Gurney and Liz Jones  
Biannual inspections were taking place and measures to improve the buildings at Ladies' Lodge were being considered.
- Dunstable and District Scout Council Executive - Councillor Nick Kotarski  
Councillor Nick Kotarski updated Members that he had attended the recent Executive meeting at 1st Dunstable H.Q. A key issue is the lack of any scouting movement in Downside. The hurdles to overcome are finding experienced leaders to start a new Beavers group initially. The second hurdle would be finding appropriate premises. Networking and advertising will be used to find new leaders. For now the 9th Dunstable (St Augustine's) Scout Group will be formally closed and any monies ring fenced pending a new group being formed. The district Commissioner notified the committee he will be retiring this year.

**The meeting closed at 20.41**

**DUNSTABLE TOWN COUNCIL****FULL COUNCIL****MONDAY 26 JUNE 2023****REFERRAL FROM GROUNDS AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES COMMITTEE****PURCHASE OF A REPLACEMENT STREET SWEEPER**

**Purpose of Report:** To consider a report presented to the Grounds and Environmental Service Committee on 5 June 2023 and subsequently deferred to Full Council pending investigation of additional funding.

**1. ACTION RECOMMENDED**

- 1.1 It is recommended that, subject to there being no funding forthcoming from Central Bedfordshire Council, Members approve the release of up to £16,878 from the earmarked Vehicle and Equipment Reserve to purchase the Eco City Sweeper 2 as detailed in the original report provided at Appendix 1.

**2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 The report provided at Appendix 1 was presented to the Grounds and Environmental Service Committee on 5 June 2023 and discussed fully by Members. The Committee resolved to defer the decision to Full Council pending investigation by officers into other options and sources of funding for a larger machine.
- 2.2 Members were particularly keen that Officers approach Central Bedfordshire Council (CBC) to find out if they would consider funding, or making a contribution towards the cost of a providing, a like for like or similar replacement to the current equipment which is road legal and has cab provision.

**3. MAIN CONSIDERATIONS AND FINDINGS**

- 3.1 The Head of Grounds and Environmental Services has contacted CBC direct asking this question and noting the wider benefit to cleaning operations on the highway and pavements, which is a CBC function. At the time of writing this report no response has been received from CBC. Any response received prior to Full Council will be reported verbally to the meeting.
- 3.2 No other suitable funding has been identified to assist with purchasing a larger machine.
- 3.3 The need for a replacement sweeper remains unchanged. In order to avoid delaying the purchase of alternative replacement equipment and avoid running the risk of being without a suitable machine, it is proposed that Members consider and approve the original recommendation made to Committee to purchase the sweeper detailed in the report, subject to there being no funding forthcoming from Central Bedfordshire Council.

**4. IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 The implications of this report remain unchanged from those detailed in the original report to the Grounds and Environmental Services Committee.

**5. APPENDICES**

- 5.1 Original report to Grounds and Environmental Services Committee on 5 June 2023.

**6. AUTHOR**

- 6.1 John Crawley  
Head of Grounds and Environmental Services  
[john.crawley@dunstable.gov.uk](mailto:john.crawley@dunstable.gov.uk)

**DUNSTABLE TOWN COUNCIL****GROUNDS AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES COMMITTEE****MONDAY 5 JUNE 2023****PURCHASE OF ELECTRIC PEDESTRIAN SWEEPER**

<b>Purpose of Report:</b>	The purpose of this report is to request authorisation from this Committee to purchase an electric Eco City Sweeper using allocated reserves.
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**1. ACTION RECOMMENDED**

- 1.1 That the Committee recommends to Finance and General Purposes the release of up to £16,878 from the earmarked Vehicle and Equipment Reserve to purchase the Eco City Sweeper 2 as detailed in this report.

**2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 The Town Ranger team currently uses a Karcher MIC 34 road sweeper to sweep hard landscaping surfaces across Dunstable.
- 2.2 The Road Sweeper is nearly 8 years old, and the maintenance costs have significantly increased in the last 24 months. In addition, it has been proving difficulties to source replacement parts for the machine because it is now a discontinued model.

**3. MAIN CONSIDERATIONS**

- 3.1 The maintenance of the newly paved and landscaped town centre areas and many of the park and recreation ground footpaths form a significant part of the day-to-day activities of the Town Ranger team. The Karcher MIC 34 road sweeper was originally purchased using Market Town Regeneration Funding (MTRF) provided by CBC to support and supplement the cleaning works already undertaken by the CBC street cleaning contractor. It has proved invaluable for the cleansing of difficult to reach areas across the town.
- 3.2 The effectiveness of the existing road sweeper is now poor with the suction system regularly failing, the sweeping mechanism continually breaking down and the team are experiencing problems with hydraulic and oil leakage and electric systems blowing.
- 3.3 The Council has been independently advised that the optimum time to retain a machine of this type would be 4 years, if used daily, so it is not unexpected that at the 8-year mark consideration should be given to replacing the sweeper.
- 3.4 The Ground Operations Manager has therefore reviewed options for replacing the machine taking account of the current allocated reserves available to the Council.

- 3.5 The need to replace the equipment provides an opportunity to consider lower carbon electric alternatives to assist in reducing the Council's carbon footprint and carbon emissions. The Town Ranger team have therefore trialled a number of electric motorised pedestrian machines.
- 3.6 The preferred machine is the battery powered electric Eco City 2 pictured below. The compact size and manoeuvrability of this machine would be beneficial for accessing narrow spaces especially around street and park furniture. The proposed machine is better suited to working around the new street furniture on the high street than the current one.
- 3.7 Based on a usage of approximately 24 hours per week the lifespan of the sweeper would be in the region of 6 to 7 years. The maintenance costs for the sweeper will be considerably lower than the maintenance costs for the existing machine.
- 3.8 The Grounds Operations Manager has obtained two quotations for the Eco City 2 Sweeper and the lowest quotation, including the optional chariot seat and various spare parts, is £16,878.



#### **4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 The cost of purchasing the Eco City 2 Sweeper 2 is £16,878 based on the lowest of two quotations obtained. There are only two suppliers of this make and model in the UK and it has therefore not been possible to obtain a third quotation in line with the Council's financial regulations. However, a similar sweeper that was trialled was some £10,000 more than this model.
- 4.2 The Council's Vehicle and Equipment allocated available reserve currently stands at £36,295 which includes existing commitments. A commitment of £16,877 would reduce the balance of the reserve to £19,418.

4.3 Following the delivery of the new sweeper, the Ground Operations Manager will investigate the possibility of selling the existing Karcher MIC34 road sweeper and any monies received from the sale would be transferred back into Vehicle and Equipment reserve.

4.4 If Members are minded to approve the expenditure, the Ground Operations Manager will place an order, arrange the delivery, and organise appropriate training for the grounds staff.

**5. HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 The new Eco City Sweeper 2 comes with full highway kit including chevron bars and flashing beacons which will assist with safe operation of the machine in public spaces. Staff will be trained in the safe and competent use of the machine.

**6. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

6.1 Purchasing the Eco City Sweeper will contribute to reducing the Council's carbon emissions. The machine is powered by rechargeable batteries.

**7. POLICY AND CORPORATE PLAN, HUMAN RESOURCE, LEGAL AND EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

7.1 None

**8. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

8.1 Quotations obtained.

**9. AUTHOR**

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**DUNSTABLE TOWN COUNCIL**

**FULL COUNCIL**

**MONDAY 26 JUNE 2023**

**REFERRAL FROM FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE**

**PUBLIC QUESTIONS**

<b>Purpose of Report:</b> To consider the scope of Public Questions within Council meetings
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**1. ACTION RECOMMENDED**

1.1. It is recommended that the Council amends Standing Orders to say:

3.e *Members of the public may make representations, answer questions and give evidence at a meeting which they are entitled to attend in respect of the business on the agenda. Members of the public may, at the discretion of the Chair of the meeting, raise any issue relevant to the town at a meeting of the Full Council.*

f *Questions and representations from the public at all meetings of the Council or its Committees do not require notice, however members of the public are requested to give notice of questions to the Town Clerk and Chief Executive in writing a minimum of three working days prior to the date of the meeting to enable full responses to be prepared before the meeting.*

**2. BACKGROUND**

2.1. The recent meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee considered ways to help the Council increase public engagement. During those discussions, the Committee recommended that il that the Council “*reviews Standing Orders in regard to public questions at meetings to identify whether members of the public should be able to ask questions about items not on the agenda, and to review the requirement for members of the public to submit questions three days in advance.*”

**3. CURRENT WORDING**

2.2 Standing Orders currently specify that:

3.e *Members of the public may make representations, answer questions and give evidence at a meeting which they are entitled to attend in respect of the business on the agenda.*

f *Questions and representations from the public at all meetings of the Council or its Committees should be received by the Town Clerk and Chief Executive in writing a minimum of three working days prior to the date of the meeting.*

**4. CONSIDERATIONS**

4.1. Council meetings are not public meetings; they are meetings of the Council which are held in public. Meetings are for Councillors to debate issues and make decisions. The Council is required to be transparent wherever possible, and so meetings are open to the public.

- 4.2. The requirement to insist questions are submitted in writing at least three days beforehand excludes those may not be confident in their writing ability, or who may learn of a meeting less than three days beforehand. Whilst receiving questions in advance makes it more likely that a considered answer can be provided, it is not a legal requirement.
- 4.3. It makes sense that the public be encouraged to focus any questions to the Council on matters on the agenda for the meeting in question; that way Councillors are likely to be familiar with the subject, and also able to debate and make and relevant decisions on the day. If questions not on the agenda are raised, Councillors will only be able to note the issues raised and discuss them at future meetings should they appear on a future agenda. The Chair of the meeting may direct that a written or oral response be given. (g) but this may not be possible at the time without notice.
- 4.4. However, issues of public concern or interest may arise at short notice, and it may be helpful for Councillors to hear from the public at the earliest opportunity, to enable Members to initiate discussions or actions as soon as possible.

## **5. PROPOSED WORDING**

- 5.1. It is proposed to amend Standing Orders to include:

*3.e Members of the public may make representations, answer questions and give evidence at a meeting which they are entitled to attend in respect of the business on the agenda. Members of the public may, at the discretion of the Chair of the meeting, raise any issue relevant to the town at a meeting of the Full Council.*

*f Questions and representations from the public at all meetings of the Council or its Committees do not require notice, however members of the public are requested to give notice of questions to the Town Clerk and Chief Executive in writing a minimum of three working days prior to the date of the meeting to enable full responses to be prepared before the meeting.*

## **6. AUTHOR**

- 6.1 Paul Hodson  
Town Clerk & Chief Executive  
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**DUNSTABLE TOWN COUNCIL****FULL COUNCIL****26 JUNE 2023****ANNUAL GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY RETURN 2022/23**

<b>Purpose of Report:</b>	To note the Internal Audit Report (Final) 2022/23, to approve the Annual Governance Statement and Accounting Statements and to authorise the Chairman to sign the Return on behalf of the Council.
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**1. ACTIONS RECOMMENDED**

- 1.1. That Members note the Internal Audit Report (Final) 2022/23 as at Appendix 1.
- 1.2. That the Council approves the Annual Governance Statement and the Accounting Statements as part of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return for the year ended 31 March 2023, for submission to the auditor, in compliance with the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 and the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 (S1 2015/234).
- 1.3. That the Chairman be authorised to sign the Annual Governance and Accountability Return for the year 2022/23 on behalf of the Council.

**2. ACCOUNTS AND AUDIT REGULATIONS 2015**

- 2.1. The Regulations mean that Dunstable Town Council qualifies as a “smaller relevant body” being that its gross income or gross expenditure was not more than £6.5 million and can therefore prepare an income and expenditure account and a statement of balances in accordance with, and in the form specified in any Annual Return required by proper practices in relation to accounts, rather than a full set of accounts, prepared under FRSSE (Financial Reporting Standards for Smaller Enterprises).
- 2.2. The Regulations state that “A smaller relevant body must no later than 30th June – to consider the accounting statements by the members meeting as a whole.”

**3. ANNUAL GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY RETURN FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023**

- 3.1. The Annual Return comprises:
  - Annual Internal Audit Report 2022/23
  - Annual Governance Statement 2022/23 (Section 1)
  - Accounting Statements 2022/23 (Section 2)
  - External Auditor Report and Certificate (Section 3)

- 3.2. The Annual Governance and Accountability Return is enclosed at Appendix 1 and will be submitted to the External Auditor with the requisite supporting information once approved by the Council.

**Annual Internal Audit Report**

- 3.3. The Council should receive and note the annual internal audit report prior to approving the annual governance statement and before approving the accounts.
- 3.4. The Council's Internal Auditor has duly completed the relevant part of the Annual Return, assigning positive assurances in all areas. Their full report is included.

**Annual Governance Statement**

- 3.5. The Council is required to consider and approve the Annual Governance Statement at Section 1 of the Annual Return, in which members acknowledge their responsibility for ensuring that there is a sound system of internal control.
- 3.6. The statement can be evidenced by the Internal Audit Reports throughout the year and the final Internal Audit Report, from which it will be noted that there are no issues arising which require Members' attention.
- 3.7. Evidence includes the quarterly Financial Monitoring reports submitted to Finance and General Purposes Committee.
- 3.8. The Town Clerk and Chief Executive produces a Corporate Risk Log each year with the Annual Report. The Risk Log attempts to identify the main strategic risks facing the Council and what interventions are currently in place in order to contain and minimise the risks.
- 3.9. The Council has adopted a Corporate Plan detailing the Council's objectives up until 2023 with a suite of performance indicators which are regularly monitored. The outcomes for 2022/23 are included in the Annual Report.
- 3.10. If approved, the Annual Governance Statement will be signed by the Chairman and Town Clerk and Chief Executive.

**External Auditor Report and Certificate**

- 3.11. Section 3 of the Annual Return is for completion by the External Auditor on completion of the audit.

**4. EXERCISE OF PUBLIC RIGHTS**

- 4.1. The Council is required to provide electors with the opportunity to inspect the accounts and other documents for a period of 30 working days which must include the first 10 working days of July.
- 4.2. The exercise of public rights commences on 29 June 2023 and will end on 9 August 2023.
- 4.3. All statements will be published from 29 June 2023 together with a summary of Electors' Rights.

- 4.4. All financial documents will be available for inspection on reasonable notice from that date.

**5. SUBMISSION OF ANNUAL RETURN**

- 5.1. The Annual Return is to be submitted to the External Auditor by 30 June 2023.

- 5.2. The Council's appointed auditors are Mazars of Durham.

**6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1. These are inherent in the nature of this report.

**7. APPENDICES**

- Appendix 1 - Internal Audit Report – Final 2022/23  
Appendix 2 - Annual Governance and Accountability Return  
Appendix 3 - Annual Return Worksheet  
Appendix 4 - Schedule of Loans and Long-Term Liability

**8. AUTHORS**

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## **Dunstable Town Council**

*Internal Audit 2022-23 (Final Update Report)*

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*Stephen Christopher*

*for Auditing Solutions Ltd*

## Background

All town and parish councils are required by statute to make arrangements for an independent internal audit examination of their accounting records and system of internal control, each year, with the conclusions to be reported in the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR). Auditing Solutions Ltd has been appointed to undertake this function on behalf of Dunstable Town Council for the 2022-23 financial year.

This report sets out the results of our final audit in relation to 2022-23, which was undertaken on 6<sup>th</sup> June 2023. It updates the report we issued in February 2023, following the completion of our second interim audit. We wish to thank Council staff for providing the information and explanations required for our audit.

## Internal Audit Approach

In carrying out our audit work for the year, we have had regard to the materiality of transactions and their susceptibility to potential mis-recording or misrepresentation in the year-end Statement of Accounts/AGAR. We have employed a combination of selective sampling techniques (where appropriate) and 100% detailed checks in a number of key areas, in order to gain sufficient assurance that the Council's financial and regulatory systems and controls are appropriate and fit for the purposes intended.

Our audit programme is designed to afford assurance that the Council's financial systems are robust and operate in a manner which ensures effective probity of transactions and a reasonable probability of identifying any material errors or possible abuse of the Council's own and the national statutory regulatory framework. The programme is also designed to facilitate our completion of the 'Annual Internal Audit Report' in the Council's AGAR, which requires independent assurance over a number of internal control objectives.

## Overall Conclusion

On the basis of the programme of audit work we have undertaken for the year, we have concluded that the Council continues to maintain an adequate and effective system of internal control. The records held in support of the accounting transactions continue to be of a high standard and provide an effective audit trail, with clear cross-referencing of all relevant documentation. We have completed and signed the 'Annual Internal Audit Report' on Page 3 of the 2022-23 AGAR, having concluded that the internal control objectives as set out in that report were being achieved throughout the financial year to a standard adequate to meet the needs of the Council.

In the sections below, we have explained the objectives of each area of our audit, summarising the work undertaken and our findings. We are pleased to report that, once again, there are no matters arising that require a formal recommendation for further action. We ask that Members consider the content of this report.

<p>This report has been prepared for the sole use of Dunstable Town Council. To the fullest extent permitted by law, no responsibility or liability is accepted by Auditing Solutions Ltd to any third party who purports to use or rely, for any reason whatsoever, on this report, its contents or conclusions.</p>
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# Detailed Report

## Accounting records and Banking arrangements

Our objective is to confirm that the accounting records are accurate and up to date, with no anomalous entries in the cashbooks or financial ledgers, and that appropriate banking arrangements are in place.

The Council maintains its accounting records using the RBS Omega software, which is generally acknowledged as a market leader for this tier of local government. The end of year closedown process is undertaken by DCK Accounting Solutions Ltd, who produce their own detailed accounting statements and also provide the information required for completion of the statutory accounts (Section 2 of the AGAR).

Day-to-day business banking services continue to be provided by NatWest Bank. The Council holds a Current Account and an instant access Business Reserve Account, with an automatic daily transfer between the accounts to retain a balance of £10,000 in the former. Other funds not required for immediate use are held in two Public Sector Deposit Fund accounts with CCLA Investment Management Ltd. We understand that the local branch of NatWest Bank closed on 5<sup>th</sup> May 2023 and the Post Office (Queensway and Westfield Road branches) is now being used for banking and change orders.

In our audit work for the year, we have:

- Checked and agreed the opening trial balance on Omega for 2022-23 to the closing balances on the 2021-22 AGAR and the detailed accounts;
- Verified that the financial ledgers remained “in balance” throughout the year;
- Confirmed that the accounting code structure remains appropriate for the Council’s budget reporting and control requirements;
- Checked and agreed the transactions in the Omega cashbooks for the Current and Business Reserve accounts to the relevant NatWest bank statements for a sample of four months (April and September 2022, plus January and March 2023);
- Checked the bank reconciliations for all four bank accounts, at our interim audits and at the year-end, confirming that there are no long-standing uncleared cheques or other anomalous entries;
- Confirmed that the bank reconciliations continue to be subject to regular independent review by councillors, as part of the quarterly ‘financial Councillor audit’ and reported to the Finance & General Purposes Committee (F&GP);
- Confirmed that the overall cash balance has been reported correctly in the draft AGAR (Section 2, Line 8);
- Noted that the External Auditors issued their ‘report and certificate’ on the 2021-22 AGAR on 16<sup>th</sup> August 2022, and that there were no significant matters arising, and
- Confirmed that the Council continues to ensure that its IT systems are regularly backed-up offsite.

### ***Conclusion***

***There are no matters arising that require a formal comment or recommendation.***

## **Corporate Governance**

Our objective is to confirm that the Council has robust corporate governance arrangements in place and that, as far as we may reasonably be expected to ascertain (as we do not attend Council or Committee meetings), all meetings are conducted in accordance with the adopted Standing Orders and no actions of a potentially unlawful nature have been, or are being, considered for implementation.

During the course of our audit work, we confirmed the following:

- Our review of the minutes of the meetings of the Full Council and its standing committees for the year has not identified any issues that we consider might have an adverse effect, through litigation or other causes, on the Council's future financial stability;
- The Council continues to keep its governance arrangements under regular review. Both the Standing Orders and Financial Regulations were updated and approved at the meeting on 25<sup>th</sup> April 2022. Further changes to the Financial Regulations were agreed by the F&GP Committee on 20<sup>th</sup> March 2023, with revisions to the Standing Orders approved by the Council shortly after the year-end, at its meeting on 17<sup>th</sup> April 2023;
- A range of other policies and procedures are in place and continue to be reviewed on a regular basis, and
- During 2022-23, the Council continued to exercise the General Power of Competence, which had been re-adopted after the Council elections in 2019.

### ***Conclusion***

***There are no matters arising that require a formal comment or recommendation.***

## **Expenditure**

Our objective is to confirm that:

- Council resources are released in accordance with approved procedures and budgets;
- Payments are supported by appropriate documentation, either in the form of an original trade invoice or other documentation that confirms the payment as due and/or an acknowledgement of receipt, where no invoice is available;
- Official orders have been raised for purchases, where appropriate;
- Any discounts due on goods and services supplied are identified and appropriate action taken to secure the discount;
- The correct expense codes have been applied to invoices when processed; and
- VAT has been identified and coded to the control account for periodic recovery.

At our final audit visit, we completed our review of the procedures in place in this area. To test compliance with the above criteria, we have examined a sample of non-pay related expenditure items across the year. Our sample included all payments in excess of £7,500, together with a more random selection of every 80<sup>th</sup> payment as recorded in the Omega cashbook. The overall value of expenditure in our sample totalled £1,042,503, equating to approximately 46% of the gross non-pay related expenditure in 2022-23.

The Council makes use of a NatWest Commercial Credit Card, with a monthly limit of £6,000, which is used mainly for items such as internet purchases and subscriptions. There are currently three users, each with a monthly expenditure limit of £2,000. The Card is settled monthly by direct debit. During our first interim audit we reviewed the Card statement for a sample period (month ending 10<sup>th</sup> June 2022), confirming that all purchases were appropriate to the Council's business and adequately supported by receipts and that, where relevant, VAT was accounted for correctly.

A Fuel Card is also in use, for the purchase of fuel for the Council's vehicle fleet. During our second interim audit, we reviewed the invoices paid in December 2022 and January 2023, and confirmed that these were supported by receipts and confirmation of the vehicle registration, and that VAT had been accounted for correctly.

We confirmed that VAT Returns continue to be submitted quarterly in electronic format, as required by extant legislation, with the detail being reconciled to the Omega financial ledger.

### **Conclusion**

*There are no matters arising that require a formal comment or recommendation.*

## **Assessment and Management of Risk**

Our objective is to confirm that the Council has put in place arrangements to identify all potential areas of risk of both a financial and health and safety nature, and also that appropriate arrangements exist to monitor and manage those risks, in order to minimise the opportunity for their coming to fruition.

There is a regulatory requirement for the Council to formally review and approve its risk management arrangements during each financial year. We confirmed that this requirement has been satisfied for the 2022-23 financial year; with the 'Corporate Risk Log', which provides an assessment of the Council's organisational strategic risks, being reviewed and re-affirmed at the Council meeting on 27<sup>th</sup> June 2022, as part of the annual review of corporate governance arrangements.

In 2022-23, the Council's primary insurance cover was provided by Zurich Municipal. We reviewed the policy schedule to confirm that an appropriate level of cover was in place. The policy included Employer's Liability and Public Liability of £10 million, and Fidelity Guarantee cover of £2.5 million, all of which appear to be adequate to meet the current needs of the Council.

As part of the wider health and safety arrangements, a regular programme of reviews of the Council's playgrounds and play equipment is undertaken. This includes daily and weekly inspections by the Council's own staff, with quarterly external inspections by Play Safety Ltd, to ensure compliance with regulatory requirements. From a brief review of the reports



for the external inspections completed in February 2023, we noted that no high-risk issues have been identified. We confirmed that, as for previous inspections, a schedule of the play inspection ‘findings’ provided with the reports was used by the Grounds Operations Manager to ensure that appropriate action was taken to address the various issues identified.

### **Conclusion**

*There are no matters arising that require a formal comment or recommendation.*

## **Budget Setting, Budgetary Control and Reserves**

Our objective is to confirm that the Council has robust procedures in place for identifying and approving its future budgetary requirements and the level of Precept to be drawn down from Central Bedfordshire Council, and that an effective reporting and monitoring process is in place. We also consider whether the Council retains appropriate funds in earmarked and general reserves to finance its ongoing spending plans, whilst retaining appropriate sums to cover any unplanned expenditure that might arise.

We confirmed that Members received regular updates on progress against the 2022-23 budget during the course of the year. Financial monitoring reports have been taken to each meeting of the F&GP Committee, with over/under-spends and the level of earmarked reserves the subject of regular review. These reports also provided Members with details of the movements in earmarked reserves during the year and an up-to-date summary of the overall funds held in the various accounts. We note that, following the F&GP Committee meeting on 20<sup>th</sup> March 2023, a report was taken to the Council indicating a projected underspend of approximately £123,000 for the year, due mainly to lower than budgeted staff costs, and setting out recommendations as to how this should be allocated. The final outturn report is due to be reported to the F&GP Committee on 12<sup>th</sup> June 2023.

We reviewed the approach taken by the Council to setting its budget and Precept for 2023-24. As in previous years, the budget process involved detailed consideration by the various committees, in particular F&GP, before the Precept was formally approved by the Full Council at its meeting on 6<sup>th</sup> February 2022. The Precept was set at £2,791,245 (£2,480,490 for 2022-23), which represents £209.49 (£187.66) per annum for a Band D property. We are satisfied that Members were provided with an appropriate level of information on which to base the budget decision, with comprehensive supporting documentation included in the budget pack produced by the Head of Finance & RFO and the Town Clerk & Chief Executive.

At 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023, the Council’s overall reserves stood at £2,860,550 (compared to £2,196,772 as at the previous year-end). Of the total reserves, Earmarked Reserves amount to £2,305,620 (£1,464,598) The main reasons for the increase, in addition to allocations from the 2022-23 budget underspend, are a capital receipt of £500,000 from the sale of land at Meadway and the receipt of a loan of £215,000 from the Public Works Loan Board (PWLB) towards the Priory House refurbishment project. The remaining funds are held in the Council’s General Reserve. At the year-end, the General Reserve stood at £553,930 (£638,214), which is in line with the aim set out in the Council’s Treasury Management Policy of maintaining a balance equivalent to 25% of the salary budget.

## *Conclusion*

*There are no matters arising that require a formal comment or recommendation.*

## **Income**

The Council receives income from a wide variety of sources including the Allotments, Cemetery, Creasey Park, Specialist Markets, Priory House, and bank and deposit interest. Our objective is to confirm that robust procedures are in place to ensure that all income due to the Council is identified and invoiced (where appropriate), with recovery effected within a reasonable time span, and also that it is banked promptly in accordance with the Financial Regulations. In the course of our 2022-23 interim audits, we have considered the following:

*Approval of fees and charges:* We have confirmed that the fees and charges for 2022-23 were formally approved by the Council at its meeting in February 2022, as part of the budget setting process, following detailed consideration by the F&GP Committee. We note that a similar approach has been followed in determining the fees and charges for 2023-24;

*Banking of income:* As noted earlier in this report, we have checked and agreed three sample month's receipts transactions from cashbooks to the relevant bank statements, confirming the timeliness and accuracy of transactions;

*Allotment income:* We reviewed the allotment records for the current year (commencing 1<sup>st</sup> January 2023), confirming that requests for rental payment were sent to all allotment holders in early January, by email or letter, encouraging payment via the Council website or by bank transfer. At the time of our second interim visit, the majority of income due had already been received and we confirmed that formal reminder letters have been drafted for tenants whose rents remain due to be sent out to those who had not paid. At our final audit, we confirmed that all payments due for the year had been received.

*Cemetery-related fees and charges:* We have reviewed the interment applications and other cemetery-related activities for a sample month (October 2022). We confirmed that, in all cases, the correct amounts had been charged and that income due was received and banked on a timely basis.

*Priory House:* During our second interim audit, we visited Priory House and discussed the procedures that are in place for the operation of tills and cash handling/banking of income in relation to the Tourist Information Centre, Shop and Tea Rooms. We noted that formal procedures documentation was being drafted for all key financial and operational areas and was to be incorporated within the formal training programme for all staff. We concur with this approach, which is particularly important, given the recent changes the operational arrangements at Priory House, with more flexible staff roles.

*Outstanding debts:* We reviewed the Sales Ledger during the year and as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023 and were pleased to note that the overall value of long-standing debts has remained relatively low – mainly relating to sports clubs who are billed on a periodic basis. We confirmed that effective control arrangements remain in place, with appropriate action being taken in relation to outstanding payments. We note that one bad debt required to be written off at the year-end.

### ***Conclusion***

***There are no matters arising that require a formal comment or recommendation.***

## **Petty Cash**

As part of the internal audit review and the reporting requirements for the AGAR, we are required to assess the effectiveness of controls over the operation of petty cash accounts at the Council, ensuring that payments are supported appropriately, that transactions are only made for items connected with the Council's functions and that any recoverable VAT is correctly identified.

Petty cash accounts are operated at several locations. At our second interim audit visit, we reviewed the procedures in place for the main petty cash account holding at Grove House, which is effectively operated on an Imprest basis, with a float of £150. We checked and agreed the cash balance held at the date of the audit to the petty cash ledger, and confirmed that there was appropriate supporting information for petty cash payments made since the date of the last reconciliation. At the time of our review, the Finance team were due to make a reimbursement to the Creasey Park petty cash for payments made during the past month. We reviewed the documentation submitted to support the payments made and confirmed that these were reasonable.

At our final audit, we confirmed that the correct petty cash balances have been included in the cash and bank figure in Section 2, Line 8 of the AGAR.

### ***Conclusion***

***There are no matters arising that require a formal comment or recommendation.***

## **Staff Salaries**

In examining the Council's payroll function, our objective is to confirm that extant employment legislation is being adhered to, that the requirements of HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) legislation are satisfied regarding the deduction and payment over of income tax and NI contributions and that the requirements of the local government pension scheme are met.

To meet this objective, we examined the payroll procedures in place and reviewed the computations undertaken for the payment of salaries in 2022-23 by reference to the September 2022 payroll documentation produced by the Council's bureau provider (Payroll Options Ltd, Milton Keynes). Our audit work involved the following:

- We confirmed that the Council has applied the approved employee pay rates for the financial year;
- From review of the contracts of employment for all full and part time staff and a sample of casual staff whose employment commenced in 2022-23, we confirmed that appropriate signed contracts of employment are held;
- We checked and agreed the detail of the salaries paid to all staff in September 2022 to the overall schedule of salaries and pay scales;

- We confirmed that tax and NI deductions have been made applying the appropriate tax code and NI Table, also ensuring that appropriate amounts are paid to HMRC;
- We confirmed that the appropriate employee and employer contributions to the pension scheme have been determined and paid over to the County's Pension Fund Administrators on a timely basis, and
- We verified the net payments due to staff from their copy payslips to the bank transfers for the same sample month.

The national Local Government Services pay agreement for 2022-23, applicable from 1st April 2022, was finally agreed by all parties in November 2022. At our second interim audit, we confirmed that the payment of arrears due to staff had been made correctly.

### **Conclusion**

*There are no matters arising that require a formal comment or recommendation.*

## **Asset Register**

In the AGAR, councils are required to report the value of each asset at purchase cost, or at a suitable proxy where that value is not known, and for community assets to be valued at a nominal £1. The value of individual assets should not change from one year to another, with the only changes being the inclusion of new assets purchased or removal of assets disposed of.

A basic asset register is maintained by DCK Accounting Solutions Ltd which includes the original cost of all assets held, as required for the AGAR. We have confirmed that this asset register has been updated for assets acquired and disposed of during 2022-23 and that the updated total cost as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023, £7,901,976 has been reported in the draft AGAR (Section 2, Line 9).

### **Conclusion**

*The asset register provided by the accountants is sufficient to provide the information required for completion of the AGAR. However, in our discussions with the Head of Finance and RFO, we agreed that, going forward, it would be beneficial for the Council to develop its own asset register, rather than rely on an externally produced record. This should be used to hold information not required for the AGAR, such as asset valuations required for insurance purposes, or details of other assets with which the Council has an interest (such as any held under lease arrangements).*

## **Investments and Loans**

Our objective is to confirm that an appropriate investment/treasury management policy is in place, that any funds not required for immediate use, whether temporarily or on a longer-term basis are invested in line with that strategy and that interest earned is brought to account correctly and appropriately in the accounting records. We also confirm that any loan repayments due to, or payable by, the Council are transacted in accordance with the relevant loan agreements.

During the course of our audits, we confirmed the following:

- As required by the ‘Statutory Guidance on Local Government Investments’, a Treasury Management Policy is in place. This was last updated and approved at the F&GP Committee meeting on 20<sup>th</sup> June 2022;
- At present, the Council does not hold any long-term investments. As noted above, surplus funds are held in either the NatWest (instant access) Business Reserve Account or the two CCLA Public Sector Deposit Fund accounts. From our discussions with the Head of Finance & RFO, we understand that, whilst consideration is currently being given to other investment options, no decisions will be made until after the new Council is in place;
- We have checked and agreed the two half-yearly Public Works Loan Board (PWLB) loan instalment repayments of principal and interest made in 2022-23 (in April and October 2022) to the PWLB third party “notification / demand” notices;
- From our minutes review, we noted the Council’s decision on 27<sup>th</sup> June 2022 to apply to the Secretary of State for approval of a new PWLB loan of £215,000 to assist with the funding of the Priory House Restoration project. We have confirmed that the loan application was subsequently made and that the funds were drawn down in October 2022, with the first repayment of principal and interest due to be made during the 2023-24 financial year.
- We confirmed that there is appropriate disclosure of the PWLB loans in the AGAR, Section 2, Lines 5 and 10.

### **Conclusion**

*There are no matters arising that require a formal comment or recommendation.*

## **Statement of Accounts and AGAR**

We have reviewed the detailed financial statements produced by DCK Accounting Solutions Ltd from the RBS Omega software and also the draft of the statutory ‘Accounting Statements 2022-23’ (Section 2 of the AGAR) that the accountants have produced, and which the Council is required to formally approve. We have confirmed that the AGAR entries reconcile to the detailed financial statements and to other related documentation.

### **Conclusions**

*There are no matters arising from this area of our review that require any formal comment or recommendation. We look forward to receiving a copy of the finalised AGAR (Sections 1 and 2), once the document has been approved by the Council.*

*On the basis of the work undertaken during the course of our review for the year, we have completed and signed the ‘Annual Internal Audit Report’ on page 3 of the AGAR, assigning positive assurances in all areas of internal control.*

# Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2022/23 Form 3

To be completed by Local Councils, Internal Drainage Boards and other Smaller Authorities\*:

- where the higher of gross income or gross expenditure exceeded £25,000 but did not exceed £6.5 million; or
- where the higher of gross income or gross expenditure was £25,000 or less but that:
  - are unable to certify themselves as exempt (fee payable); or
  - have requested a limited assurance review (fee payable)

## Guidance notes on completing Form 3 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2022/23

1. Every smaller authority in England that either received gross income or incurred gross expenditure exceeding £25,000 **must** complete Form 3 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return at the end of each financial year in accordance with *Proper Practices*.
2. **The Annual Governance and Accountability Return is made up of three parts, pages 3 to 6:**
  - The **Annual Internal Audit Report must** be completed by the authority's internal auditor.
  - **Sections 1 and 2 must** be completed and approved by the authority.
  - **Section 3** is completed by the external auditor and will be returned to the authority.
3. The authority **must** approve Section 1, Annual Governance Statement, before approving Section 2, Accounting Statements, and both **must** be approved and published on the authority website/webpage **before 1 July 2023**.
4. An authority with either gross income or gross expenditure exceeding £25,000 or an authority with neither income nor expenditure exceeding £25,000, but which is unable to certify itself as exempt, or is requesting a limited assurance review, **must** return to the external auditor by email or post (not both) **no later than 30 June 2023**. Reminder letters will incur a charge of £40 +VAT:
  - the Annual Governance and Accountability Return Sections 1 and 2, together with
  - a bank reconciliation as at 31 March 2023
  - an explanation of any significant year on year variances in the accounting statements
  - notification of the commencement date of the period for the exercise of public rights
  - Annual Internal Audit Report 2022/23

Unless requested, do not send any additional documents to your external auditor. Your external auditor will ask for any additional documents needed.

Once the external auditor has completed the limited assurance review and is able to give an opinion, the Annual Governance and Accountability **Section 1, Section 2 and Section 3 – External Auditor Report and Certificate** will be returned to the authority by email or post.

## Publication Requirements

Under the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, authorities must publish the following information on the authority website/webpage:

Before 1 July 2023 authorities **must** publish:

- Notice of the period for the exercise of public rights and a declaration that the accounting statements are as yet unaudited;
- **Section 1 - Annual Governance Statement 2022/23**, approved and signed, page 4
- **Section 2 - Accounting Statements 2022/23**, approved and signed, page 5

Not later than 30 September 2023 authorities **must** publish:

- Notice of conclusion of audit
- **Section 3 - External Auditor Report and Certificate**
- **Sections 1 and 2 of AGAR** including any amendments as a result of the limited assurance review.

It is recommended as best practice, to avoid any potential confusion by local electors and interested parties, that you also publish the Annual Internal Audit Report, page 3.

The Annual Governance and Accountability Return constitutes the annual return referred to in the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015. Throughout, the words 'external auditor' have the same meaning as the words 'local auditor' in the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015.

\*for a complete list of bodies that may be smaller authorities refer to schedule 2 to the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014.

## Guidance notes on completing Form 3 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) 2022/23

- The authority **must** comply with *Proper Practices* in completing Sections 1 and 2 of this AGAR. *Proper Practices* are found in the *Practitioners' Guide\** which is updated from time to time and contains everything needed to prepare successfully for the financial year-end and the subsequent work by the external auditor.
- Make sure that the AGAR is complete (no highlighted boxes left empty) and is properly signed and dated. Any amendments must be approved by the authority and properly initialled.
- The authority **should** receive and note the Annual Internal Audit Report before approving the Annual Governance Statement and the accounts.
- Use the checklist provided below to review the AGAR for completeness before returning it to the external auditor by email or post (not both) no later than 30 June 2023.
- The Annual Governance Statement (Section 1) must be approved on the same day or before the Accounting Statements (Section 2) and evidenced by the agenda or minute references.
- The Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) must certify the accounts (Section 2) before they are presented to the authority for approval. The authority must in this order; consider, approve and sign the accounts.
- The RFO is required to commence the public rights period as soon as practical after the date of the AGAR approval.
- **You must inform your external auditor about any change of Clerk, Responsible Financial Officer or Chairman, and provide relevant authority owned generic email addresses and telephone numbers.**
- Make sure that the copy of the bank reconciliation to be sent to your external auditor with the AGAR covers all the bank accounts. If the authority holds any short-term investments, note their value on the bank reconciliation. The external auditor must be able to agree the bank reconciliation to Box 8 on the accounting statements (**Section 2, page 5**). An explanation **must** be provided of any difference between Box 7 and Box 8. More help on bank reconciliation is available in the *Practitioners' Guide\**.
- Explain fully significant variances in the accounting statements on **page 5**. Do not just send a copy of the detailed accounting records instead of this explanation. The external auditor wants to know that you understand the reasons for all variances. Include complete numerical and narrative analysis to support the full variance.
- If the bank reconciliation is incomplete or variances not **fully** explained then additional costs may be incurred.
- Make sure that the accounting statements add up and that the balance carried forward from the previous year (Box 7 of 2022) equals the balance brought forward in the current year (Box 1 of 2023).
- The Responsible Financial Officer (RFO), on behalf of the authority, **must** set the commencement date for the exercise of public rights of 30 consecutive working days which **must** include the first ten working days of July.
- The authority **must** publish on the authority website/webpage the information required by Regulation 15 (2), Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, including the period for the exercise of public rights and the name and address of the external auditor **before 1 July 2023**.

Completion checklist – 'No' answers mean you may not have met requirements		Yes	No
All sections	Have all highlighted boxes have been completed?		
	Has all additional information requested, including <b>the dates set for the period for the exercise of public rights</b> , been provided for the external auditor?		
Internal Audit Report	Have all highlighted boxes been completed by the internal auditor and explanations provided?		
Section 1	For any statement to which the response is 'no', has an explanation been published?		
Section 2	Has the Responsible Financial Officer signed the accounting statements before presentation to the authority for approval?		
	Has the authority's approval of the accounting statements been confirmed by the signature of the Chairman of the approval meeting?		
	Has an explanation of significant variations been published where required?		
	Has the bank reconciliation as at <b>31 March 2023</b> been reconciled to Box 8?		
	Has an explanation of any difference between Box 7 and Box 8 been provided?		
Sections 1 and 2	Trust funds – have all disclosures been made if the authority as a body corporate is a sole managing trustee? <b>NB:</b> do not send trust accounting statements unless requested.		

*\*Governance and Accountability for Smaller Authorities in England – a Practitioners' Guide to Proper Practices*, can be downloaded from [www.nalc.gov.uk](http://www.nalc.gov.uk) or from [www.ada.org.uk](http://www.ada.org.uk)

# Annual Internal Audit Report 2022/23

DUNSTABLE TOWN COUNCIL

ENTER PUBLICLY AVAILABLE WEBSITE/WEBPAGE ADDRESS [www.dunstable.gov.uk](http://www.dunstable.gov.uk)

During the financial year ended 31 March 2023, this authority's internal auditor acting independently and on the basis of an assessment of risk, carried out a selective assessment of compliance with the relevant procedures and controls in operation and obtained appropriate evidence from the authority.

The internal audit for 2022/23 has been carried out in accordance with this authority's needs and planned coverage. On the basis of the findings in the areas examined, the internal audit conclusions are summarised in this table. Set out below are the objectives of internal control and alongside are the internal audit conclusions on whether, in all significant respects, the control objectives were being achieved throughout the financial year to a standard adequate to meet the needs of this authority.

Internal control objective	Yes	No*	Not covered**
A. Appropriate accounting records have been properly kept throughout the financial year.	✓		
B. This authority complied with its financial regulations, payments were supported by invoices, all expenditure was approved and VAT was appropriately accounted for.	✓		
C. This authority assessed the significant risks to achieving its objectives and reviewed the adequacy of arrangements to manage these.	✓		
D. The precept or rates requirement resulted from an adequate budgetary process; progress against the budget was regularly monitored; and reserves were appropriate.	✓		
E. Expected income was fully received, based on correct prices, properly recorded and promptly banked; and VAT was appropriately accounted for.	✓		
F. Petty cash payments were properly supported by receipts, all petty cash expenditure was approved and VAT appropriately accounted for.	✓		
G. Salaries to employees and allowances to members were paid in accordance with this authority's approvals, and PAYE and NI requirements were properly applied.	✓		
H. Asset and investments registers were complete and accurate and properly maintained.	✓		
I. Periodic bank account reconciliations were properly carried out during the year.	✓		
J. Accounting statements prepared during the year were prepared on the correct accounting basis (receipts and payments or income and expenditure), agreed to the cash book, supported by an adequate audit trail from underlying records and where appropriate debtors and creditors were properly recorded.	✓		
K. If the authority certified itself as exempt from a limited assurance review in 2021/22, it met the exemption criteria and correctly declared itself exempt. <i>(If the authority had a limited assurance review of its 2021/22 AGAR tick "not covered")</i>			✓
L. The authority published the required information on a website/webpage up to date at the time of the internal audit in accordance with the relevant legislation.	✓		
M. In the year covered by this AGAR, the authority correctly provided for a period for the exercise of public rights as required by the Accounts and Audit Regulations <i>(during the 2022-23 AGAR period, were public rights in relation to the 2021-22 AGAR evidenced by a notice on the website and/or authority approved minutes confirming the dates set).</i>	✓		
N. The authority has complied with the publication requirements for 2021/22 AGAR <i>(see AGAR Page 1 Guidance Notes).</i>	✓		
<b>O. (For local councils only)</b> Trust funds (including charitable) – The council met its responsibilities as a trustee.			✓

For any other risk areas identified by this authority adequate controls existed (list any other risk areas on separate sheets if needed).

Date(s) internal audit undertaken

22/11/2022 28/02/2023 06/06/2023

Name of person who carried out the internal audit

SF Christopher for Auditing Solutions Ltd

Signature of person who carried out the internal audit

*SF Christopher*

Date

06/06/2023

**\*If the response is 'no' please state the implications and action being taken to address any weakness in control identified (add separate sheets if needed).**

**\*\*Note:** If the response is 'not covered' please state when the most recent internal audit work was done in this area and when it is next planned; or, if coverage is not required, the annual internal audit report must explain why not (add separate sheets if needed).



## Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement 2022/23

We acknowledge as the members of:

ENTER NAME OF AUTHORITY

our responsibility for ensuring that there is a sound system of internal control, including arrangements for the preparation of the Accounting Statements. We confirm, to the best of our knowledge and belief, with respect to the Accounting Statements for the year ended 31 March 2023, that:

	Agreed		'Yes' means that this authority:
	Yes	No*	
1. We have put in place arrangements for effective financial management during the year, and for the preparation of the accounting statements.			<i>prepared its accounting statements in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations.</i>
2. We maintained an adequate system of internal control including measures designed to prevent and detect fraud and corruption and reviewed its effectiveness.			<i>made proper arrangements and accepted responsibility for safeguarding the public money and resources in its charge.</i>
3. We took all reasonable steps to assure ourselves that there are no matters of actual or potential non-compliance with laws, regulations and Proper Practices that could have a significant financial effect on the ability of this authority to conduct its business or manage its finances.			<i>has only done what it has the legal power to do and has complied with Proper Practices in doing so.</i>
4. We provided proper opportunity during the year for the exercise of electors' rights in accordance with the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations.			<i>during the year gave all persons interested the opportunity to inspect and ask questions about this authority's accounts.</i>
5. We carried out an assessment of the risks facing this authority and took appropriate steps to manage those risks, including the introduction of internal controls and/or external insurance cover where required.			<i>considered and documented the financial and other risks it faces and dealt with them properly.</i>
6. We maintained throughout the year an adequate and effective system of internal audit of the accounting records and control systems.			<i>arranged for a competent person, independent of the financial controls and procedures, to give an objective view on whether internal controls meet the needs of this smaller authority.</i>
7. We took appropriate action on all matters raised in reports from internal and external audit.			<i>responded to matters brought to its attention by internal and external audit.</i>
8. We considered whether any litigation, liabilities or commitments, events or transactions, occurring either during or after the year-end, have a financial impact on this authority and, where appropriate, have included them in the accounting statements.			<i>disclosed everything it should have about its business activity during the year including events taking place after the year end if relevant.</i>
9. (For local councils only) Trust funds including charitable. In our capacity as the sole managing trustee we discharged our accountability responsibilities for the fund(s)/assets, including financial reporting and, if required, independent examination or audit.	Yes	No	N/A <i>has met all of its responsibilities where, as a body corporate, it is a sole managing trustee of a local trust or trusts.</i>

**\*Please provide explanations to the external auditor on a separate sheet for each 'No' response and describe how the authority will address the weaknesses identified. These sheets must be published with the Annual Governance Statement.**

This Annual Governance Statement was approved at a meeting of the authority on:

DD/MM/YYYY

and recorded as minute reference:

MINUTE REFERENCE

Signed by the Chairman and Clerk of the meeting where approval was given:

Chairman

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

Clerk

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

ENTER PUBLICLY AVAILABLE WEBSITE/WEBPAGE ADDRESS

## Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2022/23 for

ENTER NAME OF AUTHORITY

	Year ending		Notes and guidance
	31 March 2022 £	31 March 2023 £	
			<i>Please round all figures to nearest £1. Do not leave any boxes blank and report £0 or Nil balances. All figures must agree to underlying financial records.</i>
<b>1.</b> Balances brought forward			<i>Total balances and reserves at the beginning of the year as recorded in the financial records. Value must agree to Box 7 of previous year.</i>
<b>2.</b> (+) Precept or Rates and Levies			<i>Total amount of precept (or for IDBs rates and levies) received or receivable in the year. Exclude any grants received.</i>
<b>3.</b> (+) Total other receipts			<i>Total income or receipts as recorded in the cashbook less the precept or rates/levies received (line 2). Include any grants received.</i>
<b>4.</b> (-) Staff costs			<i>Total expenditure or payments made to and on behalf of all employees. Include gross salaries and wages, employers NI contributions, employers pension contributions, gratuities and severance payments.</i>
<b>5.</b> (-) Loan interest/capital repayments			<i>Total expenditure or payments of capital and interest made during the year on the authority's borrowings (if any).</i>
<b>6.</b> (-) All other payments			<i>Total expenditure or payments as recorded in the cashbook less staff costs (line 4) and loan interest/capital repayments (line 5).</i>
<b>7.</b> (=) Balances carried forward			<i>Total balances and reserves at the end of the year. Must equal (1+2+3) - (4+5+6).</i>
<b>8.</b> Total value of cash and short term investments			<i>The sum of all current and deposit bank accounts, cash holdings and short term investments held as at 31 March – <b>To agree with bank reconciliation.</b></i>
<b>9.</b> Total fixed assets plus long term investments and assets			<i>The value of all the property the authority owns – it is made up of all its fixed assets and long term investments as at 31 March.</i>
<b>10.</b> Total borrowings			<i>The outstanding capital balance as at 31 March of all loans from third parties (including PWLB).</i>

For Local Councils Only	Yes	No	N/A	
<b>11a.</b> Disclosure note re Trust funds (including charitable)				<i>The Council, as a body corporate, acts as sole trustee and is responsible for managing Trust funds or assets.</i>
<b>11b.</b> Disclosure note re Trust funds (including charitable)				<i>The figures in the accounting statements above do not include any Trust transactions.</i>

I certify that for the year ended 31 March 2023 the Accounting Statements in this Annual Governance and Accountability Return have been prepared on either a receipts and payments or income and expenditure basis following the guidance in Governance and Accountability for Smaller Authorities – a Practitioners' Guide to Proper Practices and present fairly the financial position of this authority.

**Signed by Responsible Financial Officer before being presented to the authority for approval**

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

Date

DD/MM/YYYY

I confirm that these Accounting Statements were approved by this authority on this date:

DD/MM/YYYY

as recorded in minute reference:

MINUTE REFERENCE

Signed by Chairman of the meeting where the Accounting Statements were approved

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

## Section 3 – External Auditor’s Report and Certificate 2022/23

In respect of

ENTER NAME OF AUTHORITY

### 1 Respective responsibilities of the auditor and the authority

Our responsibility as auditors to complete a **limited assurance review** is set out by the National Audit Office (NAO). A limited assurance review is **not a full statutory audit**, it does not constitute an audit carried out in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK & Ireland) and hence it **does not** provide the same level of assurance that such an audit would. The UK Government has determined that a lower level of assurance than that provided by a full statutory audit is appropriate for those local public bodies with the lowest levels of spending.

Under a limited assurance review, the auditor is responsible for reviewing Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return in accordance with NAO Auditor Guidance Note 02 (AGN 02) as issued by the NAO on behalf of the Comptroller and Auditor General. AGN 02 is available from the NAO website – <https://www.nao.org.uk/code-audit-practice/guidance-and-information-for-auditors/> .

This authority is responsible for ensuring that its financial management is adequate and effective and that it has a sound system of internal control. The authority prepares an Annual Governance and Accountability Return in accordance with *Proper Practices* which:

- summarises the accounting records for the year ended 31 March 2023; and
- confirms and provides assurance on those matters that are relevant to our duties and responsibilities as external auditors.

### 2 External auditor’s limited assurance opinion 2022/23

(Except for the matters reported below)\* on the basis of our review of Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return, in our opinion the information in Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return is in accordance with Proper Practices and no other matters have come to our attention giving cause for concern that relevant legislation and regulatory requirements have not been met. (\*delete as appropriate).

(continue on a separate sheet if required)

Other matters not affecting our opinion which we draw to the attention of the authority:

(continue on a separate sheet if required)

### 3 External auditor certificate 2022/23

We certify/do not certify\* that we have completed our review of Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return, and discharged our responsibilities under the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014, for the year ended 31 March 2023.

\*We do not certify completion because:

External Auditor Name

ENTER NAME OF EXTERNAL AUDITOR

External Auditor Signature

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

Date

DD/MM/YYYY

**Summary of Accounts**

	Net	Expenditure	Income
<b>Consolidated Revenue Account</b> Net Cost of Services	2435157	3938307	-1503150
Interest Payable	42316	42316	
Interest Receivable			
Asset Sale Proceeds	-46913		-46913
	0		
Movement in Reserves	41062		
Capital Expenditure (tfr to CFA) Loan	26104	26104	
Repayments (tfr to CFA) Depreciation	67048	67048	
Deferred Grants			
Precept	0		
Surplus Deficit for the Year	0		0
<b>Deduct</b> Loan Charges	-2480490		-2480490
Staff Costs (Note:)	84284	4073775	-4030553
Precept			
<b>Add</b> Capital Receipts/Expended		-109364	Box 5
		-1987336	Box 4
		2480490	Box 2
		0	-500000
Loan Receipts/Expended Def'd			-215000
Grants/Expended Rounding		11730	-3730
		1988805	-2268793
		Box 6	Box 3

**Balance Sheet**

Fixed Assets	4151291		4151291
Add back depreciation			3750685
			7901976
Intangible Assets			
Investments		0	
Current Assets	3152950		
Cash/Bank/Inv	2821081	2821081	
Other	331869		
Current Liabilities	-370553		
Loans	-78153	-78153	Unspent
Other	-292400		
Long Term Liabilities	-920242	-920242	215000
Deferred Grants	-1819446		128022
	4194000	2821081	-998395
	Box 8	Box 10	

Represented by:  
Council Investment in Fixed Assets

A R R			
C F R	1676472		
	1676472		
Expendable Reserves			
C R R	500000		
E M R	1463598		
Gen Fund	553930		
	2517528		2517528
	4194000		2860550
			Box 7

**Annual Return Statement of Accounts**

1 Balances brought forward 2 (+)  
Annual Precept  
3 (+) Total other receipts 4 (-) Staff costs  
  
(-) Loan interest/capital 5 repayments  
6 (-) Total other payments  
7 (=) Balances carried forward 8 Total Cash & Investments 9 Total Fixed assets  
10 Total Borrowings

Reconciliation Of Boxes 7 and 8 Total Cash & Investments Add: Debtors & Stock  
Less: Creditors etc  
Less: Grant Income in Advance  
Rounding

Last Year	This Year
£	£
1866332	2196772
2393969	2480490
1579975	2268793
-1832647	-1987336
-108426	-109364
-1702431	-1988805
2196772	2860550
2302961	2821081
7873739	7901976
850443	998395
2302961	2821081
132645	331869
-238834	-292400
0	
0	
2196772	2860550

**Variance**

3.61%  
43.60% Capital Receipt £500K, Loan £215K  
8.44%  
0.87%  
16.82%  
22.50% Capital Receipt £500K  
0.36%  
17.40% New Loan £215K

**APPENDIX 2**

APPENDIX 2

Ref	PWLB	Amount	Date of Loan	Term	Type	Annual	Annual	Total	Budget	Amount	Final Repayment
						Principal	Interest	payable	2022/23	Outstanding	
							2022/23	2022/23		at 31.03.2023	
462749	Luton Road	£85,000.00	1987 original	40 yrs	EIP	£1,062.50	£525.94	£1,588.44	£1,588.44	£4,781.25	Nov 2026
		£33,468.75	part repaid May 1996								
483971	Performance Area/ (63.55%)								£4,704.38		
483971	Cemetery Extension (36.45%)	£99,925.00	March 2000	25 years	annuity	£6,377.13	£1,025.51	£7,402.64	£2,698.26	£13,840.76	Nov 2024
									£7,402.64		
488657	Priory House Part 1	£500,000.00	March 2004	30 years	EIP	£16,666.68	£9,497.90	£26,164.58	£26,164.58	£183,333.08	Nov 2033
489085	Priory House Part 2	£131,237.00	Sept 2004	30 years	EIP	£4,374.58	£2,652.62	£7,027.20	£7,027.20	£50,307.27	May 2034
561470	Priory House Refurbishment	£215,000.00	October 2022	20 years	EIP					£215,000.00	Oct 2042
								£33,191.78	£33,191.78		
489782	Grove House Part 1	£207,000.00	March 2005	30years	EIP	£6,900.00	£4,354.76	£11,254.76	£11,254.76	£82,800.00	Nov 2034
490604	Grove House Part 2	£500,000.00	Sept 2005	30 years	EIP	£16,666.68	£9,827.07	£26,493.75	£26,493.75	£208,333.10	May 2035
								£37,748.52	£37,748.52		
495054	Cemetery Loan 2008	£450,000.00	21 November 20	30 years	EIP	£15,000.00	£12,009.75	£27,009.75	£27,009.75	£240,000.00	Nov 2038
	Totals					£67,047.57	£39,893.55	£106,941.12	£106,941.12	£998,395.46	

**DUNSTABLE TOWN COUNCIL****FULL COUNCIL****MONDAY 26 JUNE 2023****FREE USE OF GROVE THEATRE REQUEST**

<b>Purpose of Report:</b>	For Members to consider the request to use one of the free uses of Grove Theatre by the Dunstable Musical Theatre Company.
---------------------------	--

**1. ACTION RECOMMENDED**

- 1.1 For Members to consider the request to use one of the free uses of the Grove Theatre by the Dunstable Musical Theatre Company.

**2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 When the Queensway Hall went, and the Grove Theatre was built, an ongoing agreement was put in place whereby the Town Council would have two free uses of the theatre annually.
- 2.2 However, 'free' does come with costs such as front of house staffing, stage management, marketing and publicity and therefore the Town Council has found that making direct use of these free uses is costly to directly run a performance.
- 2.3 As a result of these costs a decision was made that the free uses would be offered out to the local Community and Voluntary Sector for them to put on their own performance and productions, and this has worked well to date.

**3. MAIN CONSIDERATIONS AND FINDINGS**

- 3.1 The Dunstable Musical Theatre Company (DMTC) are planning on performing Sunset Boulevard in October 2023 and are hoping to do so at Grove Theatre. The performance will involve 40 cast members, 10 backstage crew and an orchestra of 23.
- 3.2 By performing at the Grove Theatre, the group feel that they are able to provide the people of Dunstable the West End performances in their own town which are more affordable than London and still of a very high standard.
- 3.3 The DMTC would perform there more frequently, but the costs of the hire of the theatre, combined with the extra costs of sets and lighting to fill the size of the stage have meant they can now only perform there once every two years for three performances (Friday evening and two shows on Saturday) and will often make a loss when they do.
- 3.4 The free use of Grove Theatre would mean that the theatre company would make less of a loss on their performances which are costly and can be in the region of making a loss of £8-10,000 once all income and expenditure is taken into account. However, they feel it performing at the Grove Theatre is an important thing for them as the local amateur dramatic company.

**4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 None

**5. POLICY AND CORPORATE PLAN IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 None

**6. HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS**

6.1 None

**7. HUMAN RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

7.1 None

**8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

8.1 None

**9. ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

9.1 None

**10. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

10.1 None

**11. APPENDICES**

11.1 None

**12. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

12.1 None

**13. CONCLUSION**

13.1 The Dunstable Musical Theatre Company is well established in the town and with around 75 local people coming together to put on the performance of Sunset Boulevard for the local community, it is a real community use of the facility. Officers would therefore recommend the approval of this request.

**14. AUTHOR**

14.1 Becky Wisbey – Head of Community Services, [becky.wisbey@dunstable.gov.uk](mailto:becky.wisbey@dunstable.gov.uk)

**DUNSTABLE TOWN COUNCIL****FULL COUNCIL****MONDAY 26 JUNE 2023****HERITAGE AT RISK GRANT – PRIORY HOUSE**

**Purpose of Report:** To agree to accept a further Heritage At Risk grant from Historic England should the application be successful.

**1. ACTION RECOMMENDED**

- 1.1 To agree to apply for and accept a further Heritage At Risk grant from Historic England should the application be successful and to in turn undertake all the necessary structural repairs to the attic, floor and partitions.

**2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 The works at Priory House have been more complicated than originally planned with a far greater scope of works due to a number of unknown and unforeseen issues relating to previous works and repairs to the house. None of these could have been realised until the Undercroft repairs commenced and the vaults opened up.
- 2.2 The High Street Heritage Action Zone funding, together with the Town Council's match funding, which includes a loan of £200,000, should have covered all known repair costs but earlier in the year it became evident that unfortunately there were a number of wider issues that needed to be resolved. This led to DTC submitting a grant request (at the suggestion of Historic England) to the Heritage At Risk grant scheme in March of this year. This was successful and it was believed that this generous grant would have been enough to see the scheme through to completion.
- 2.3 The Undercroft consists of four bays. Work initially began in bay 1, at end North West end. However, upon moving on to the repairs to bay 2 and 3 it became apparent that the partitions on the 1<sup>st</sup> floor resting on the Undercroft were load bearing and were taking the full weight of the second floor and potentially the roof. Due to the need to repair the vaults from above these partitions need to be removed, but at present cannot be due to the structural reliance of them. Initial investigations show that the 2003/4 work sought to reinforce and strengthen joists in the attic space, but from the current structural engineers perspective it falls short of actually achieving this and in itself, the weight of the approach taken in the early 2000s is likely to be having a detrimental impact on the vaults below.
- 2.4 Investigations works are continuing, and at time of writing there is no final plan about how to rectify these structural issues. However, the professional team are focusing on this and meeting at the end of June with a view to be in a detailed position for DTC to submit an application to Historic England for an additional Heritage At Risk grant by 6 July 2023.



### **3. MAIN CONSIDERATIONS**

- 3.1 Priory House cannot be left in its current state, and to ensure that HSHAZ money isn't clawed back and that the building can be brought back into full use the Town Council is faced with no other option than to find a way to fund these necessary repairs.
- 3.2 There is strong support from Historic England who have once again encouraged DTC to apply for an additional Heritage At Risk grant. Currently, the Town Council has no other means of raising the necessary funds in a short time scale and therefore this option is very much the only viable option at present.
- 3.3 These structural repairs are substantial and will impact on operations due to staff welfare facilities being inaccessible. However, until the full details of the works, including timescales, have been agreed this is unknown, and therefore is not a reason for not undertaking the work, but merely a factor to be managed. This operational detail will be reported to members through the Community Services Committee, and will be communicated to the public via our usual means e.g. social media and website.

### **4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 There are no financial implications if the Council were to accept funding from Historic England. There are financial implications if the Council chose not to accept a grant, and these would be significant.
- 4.2 It should be noted that undertaking the works themselves will have a financial implication as it is likely to affect operations and result in lost income. Officers when completing the application form, will attempt to calculate the estimated loss of income and impact on the business financially and if possible make a claim for funding against this within the grant application.

### **5. POLICY AND CORPORATE PLAN IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 Continuing to repair and restore Priory House fits well within the Council's Corporate Priority *'to preserve and enhance the history and identity of the town, creating a sense of pride in Dunstable.'*

### **6. HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 To leave as is and not undertake the work poses a substantial health and safety issue. Without taking the weight of the attic off of the partitions the Undercroft cannot be repaired, and it has been advised by structural engineers that the current design also leaves doubt over the structural integrity of the whole building. Therefore these works are essential if Priory House is stay in use.
- 6.2 The works will be conducted under the full health and safety regulations as the existing project has been working within. However, in addition, these structural works mean that the first floor cannot be occupied during the works for health and safety reasons which brings with it implications to the Priory House operations.

**7. HUMAN RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 At the time of writing this is unknown. It is anticipated that the works will impact on the operations at Priory House which might see a partial closure. As this is only temporary staff hours will be managed with redeployment at other sites, taking of annual leave and weekend working. This will be managed by the Cultural Services Manager.

**8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1 Failure to carry out the works identified may result in the Council being unable to adhere to health and safety legislation.

**9. ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.1 None.

**10. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

- 10.1 None

**11. APPENDICES**

- 11.1 None

**12. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 12.1 High Street Heritage Action Zone – Community Services Committee, Monday 6 March 2023 (committee agreed to accept Heritage At Risk grant if application was successful).

**13. CONCLUSION**

- 13.1 These new additional works at Priory House are essential if Priory House is to remain open to the public. However, they were very much unforeseen, as it appears that works in 2003/4 were not conducted to the agreed plans and proposals. It was not until the current professional team attempted to repair bays 2 and 3 of the Undercroft that this issue became apparent and therefore could not have been factored into the earlier Heritage At Risk grant. In fact, at the time of writing the full extent of the work is still unknown, but what is known is that without applying for and, if successful, accepting the grant from Historic England, Dunstable Town Council will not have any other immediate means to repair Priory House nor keep it fully operational. Officers recommendation to accept, should the grant be awarded, as the only viable option.

**14. AUTHOR**

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