Minutes of the meeting of the Finance & Strategy Committee held on 17th January 2024 at 16.00hrs using www.zoom.us

Present: Cllrs Tony Dawson (Chair), Ken Pollard, Fred Wilson, Paul Mackin and Lisa Hayes.

Town Clerk: F Fitch and C Quinlan (Admin Assistant)

1. **Apologies:** received from Cllrs Jez Perkins and Mark Greenwood.

2. **Declarations of interest**: none declared.

3. **Minutes**
   The minutes of the meeting of the Committee on 20th December 2023 were agreed as a true record and signed digitally by the Chair. The Zoom recording was agreed to be deleted.

4. **Public Question Time:** no questions received.

5. **Bank Reconciliations**
   The bank reconciliations for October, November and December 2023 were reviewed by TD prior to the meeting and approved. The petty cash was also counted by TD prior to the meeting and approved.

6. **Shefford Town Memorial Association**
   The minutes of the meeting of the Shefford Town Memorial Association (STMA) Management Committee held on 20th December 2023 were received by the Committee and noted.

7. **Warm Spaces**
   It was reported that the 'Warm in Winter' gift bags and the 'Celebrate Christmas' gift boxes from the Small Acts of Kindness Charity were collected and distributed to Churches Together (to hand out to anyone in need) and the Shefford Good Neighbour Group (distributed to those of their clients who would most benefit from the gift) respectively. Central Bedfordshire Council have awarded the Town Council £200 as a contribution to the running costs of the weekly seated yoga classes being held at the Shefford Town Memorial Association Hall. This contribution will fund the cost of the hall hire. The classes will be promoted in the spring edition of Newsline. The use of the remaining monies for the Warm Spaces project was reviewed by the Committee.

   It was resolved by Delegated Powers to utilise the remaining Warm Spaces monies (carried forward from the last financial year) to fund the cost of installing a new central heating thermostat and additional radiator thermostatic valves in Shefford House. The building will be used as an emergency holding area, and heated accordingly, should any residents need to evacuate to a place of

safety (such as during the recent flood warnings in the town); the thermostat will allow the heating to be activated remotely at any time of the day or night.

8. CCTV

Following an unsuccessful application to Central Bedfordshire Council's Community Grant Fund for the installation of two CCTV camera systems in the town, it was reported that it is proposed to look at each of the two systems independently, prioritising the installation of the CCTV system located on the corner of Shefford Library (which will view Church Walk, the rear of St Michael's Church, St Michael's Close play area, Pamoli Square and the walkway to Morrisons.), as the instances of anti-social behaviour in this area of the town is increasing. The release of reserves to cover the shortfall from the Council's endeavours to source external funding for the project was reviewed by the Committee.

Recommendation by Delegated Powers to be made to Full Council to utilise up to a limit of £2.5k from the Council's surplus revenue budget for CCTV in this financial year and/or the Earmarked Reserve 'CCTV' Fund to cover any shortfall from the Council's fund raising endeavours to secure external grants/donations to install a new CCTV system located on the corner of Shefford Library.

9. Local Flood Damage

Correspondence received from Adam Zerny, the Leader of Central Bedfordshire Council, regarding the recent flooding in Central Bedfordshire, and the damage wrought across the region by the flood water, was reviewed by the Committee. Mr Zerny asked for help in identifying where the worst areas of local flood damage were, where and when the occurrences had taken place in recent years, what complaints had since been raised and with whom, and what actually has happened. The importance of also sending this information to the Environment Agency was noted.

It was resolved for the Town Clerk to provide Mr Zerny with the following details: the flood damage to a Memorial bench located in Waterside; how the flood plains adjacent to the rivers Flit and Hit in Shefford had worked effectively at containing the flood water when the water levels rose and the rivers burst their banks, thus preventing any flooding of properties and subsequent flood damage; and asking for Mr Zerny's support in the Town Council's objections to any development of the valuable flood plain in Shefford, including the current planning application CB/23/03933/FULL (land to the rear of 72 to 88 Ampthill Road, Shefford – erection of 9 dwellings with access road and all ancillary works).

10. Income and Expenditure for the nine months to 31st December 2023

The income and expenditure report for the nine months to 31st December 2023, together with an explanation of variances for actual against budget, were reviewed by

the Committee. It was noted that, apart from the unbudgeted expenditure for installing a fire alarm system in Shefford House (expenditure retrospectively

approved by Full Council as it was deemed essential for the health and safety of staff and tenants in the building) and bank and national savings bond interest that hadn't been included in the budget, all income and expenditure per cost centre would either come in on-budget, be slightly under budget, or the underspend would be transferred to the relevant Earmarked Reserve Fund at the end of the financial year.

Meeting close 16.53hrs