

STOTFOLD TOWN COUNCIL

Greenacre Centre, Valerian Way, Stotfold, SG5 4HG
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19th September 2023

Members of the Establishment Committee: Councillors Buck (Chairman), Mrs M Cooper, S Hayes, Mrs J Hyde, D Matthews, B Saunders, J Smith, J Talbot. Other councillors for information.

You are hereby summoned to attend the Establishment Committee meeting to be held in the Council Chamber, Greenacre Centre, Stotfold on **Wednesday 27th September 2023 at 7.00pm** for the purpose of transacting business detailed in the agenda.

Emma Payne
Town Clerk

Members of the public:

In addition to attendance in person, you are now able to observe our meetings by joining via MS Teams. Join on your computer or mobile app [Click here to join the meeting](#) Please note, our meetings may be recorded for minute taking purposes, and will be deleted after minutes are approved.

Members of the public are invited to observe the meeting and may participate at the 'public participation' agenda item. As per Standing Orders, if you wish to speak, you must notify the Town Clerk of your intention prior to the start of the meeting (contact in advance enquiries@stotfoldtowncouncil.gov.uk or 01462 730064 or you will be asked at the appropriate point in the agenda if unable to give prior indication).

AGENDA

1. Apologies for absence

2. Disclosures of Members Interests and Dispensations

- a) Members to declare interests in respect of any item on the agenda
- b) Proper Officer to consider written requests from members for dispensations
Members are reminded that if at any time during the meeting they feel they have an interest in an item being discussed, they should declare it at that point.

3. Public section (max. 15 minutes)

Members of the public may speak on matters of concern, ask questions or make statements (maximum of 3 minutes per speaker), after giving notice of their wish to do so to the Town Clerk prior to the meeting. Order of speakers will be in order of notification. [Public Participation Policy](#) applies.

4. Minutes of previous meeting

Members are asked **to resolve to adopt** the minutes of the Establishment Committee meeting held on 26th July 2023 as a true record of the meeting.

5. **Clerk's Report, correspondence received and matters arising for information**
Poppy Appeal donation
6. **Update Bank Mandate – Unity Trust**
To receive a report on updating the Unity Trust Bank Mandate.
7. **Investment Policy**
To receive a report on a proposed investment policy.
8. **Grant Applications**
To consider applications for grant assistance, as recommendations to C council.
9. **Work Programme**
To receive this committee's work programme
10. **Confidential Items**

To resolve to exclude the press and public for the consideration of the following items under the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960:
 - 10.1 Staff leave
11. **Date of Next Meeting**

25 October 2023

STOTFOLD TOWN COUNCIL

COMMITTEE: ESTABLISHMENT
DATE: 27 SEPTEMBER 2023
OFFICER RESPONSIBLE: EMMA PAYNE, CLERK
SUBJECT: BANK MANDATE

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report outlines the current situation regarding the Unity Trust bank mandate and makes a recommendation to update it with the Town Clerk as an authorised user and signatory.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 Members are asked to resolve to update the bank mandate, with any three signatories including the newly appointed Town Clerk.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Currently the following are bank signatories for both Barclays and Unity Trust:

Jane Hyde
Brian Saunders
Steve Buck
Steve Hayes
Caroline Jenkins

- 3.2 Following a recent issue with Unity Trust's online banking, several cheques were raised which required to be signed by three signatories. It transpires that Jane Hyde is the main signatory, supported by two of the other signatories. This was not known when the cheques were raised, which were duly signed by any three signatories. Unfortunately, some of the larger cheques, went through the security process and were bounced causing embarrassment to the Town Council when suppliers were not paid.

4. FINANCIAL

- 4.1 The process for payments being authorised is outlined in the Financial Regulations, item 6.4.

STOTFOLD TOWN COUNCIL

COMMITTEE: ESTABLISHMENT
DATE: 27 SEPTEMBER 2023
OFFICER RESPONSIBLE: EMMA PAYNE, CLERK
SUBJECT: INVESTMENT POLICY

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 Statutory Guidance on Local Government Investments (3rd edition) is issued under section 15(1)(a) of the Local Government Act 2003. Under that section, local authorities are required to 'have regard' to such guidance as has been issued.
- .2 In summary, having an investment strategy is essential for a town council to ensure financial stability, meet long-term goals, and manage public funds responsibly. It provides a framework for sound financial decision-making and helps the council navigate economic fluctuations while serving the best interests of the community.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 Members are asked to:
- a) Recommend to Council that the Investments Policy is adopted.
 - b) Authorise the Clerk, along with a councillor, to investigate further investment opportunities, whilst retaining security of investments and report to a future meeting.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The statutory guidance on local government investments (3rd edition) issued in 2018, requires all parish and town councils to adhere to the guidance and they should prepare at least one investment strategy. The strategy should contain the disclosures and reporting requirements set out in the guidance. Full Council should approve this strategy.
- 3.2 An investment strategy helps the Town Council generate additional income or returns on its available funds. This can contribute to the financial stability of the town council, ensuring that it has the resources to meet its obligations, provide essential services, and respond to unexpected financial challenges.
- 3.3 By investing wisely, a town council can grow its capital over time. This growth can be used for funding important projects, infrastructure improvements, or other community initiatives without relying solely on the precept.
- 3.4 An investment strategy allows the town council to diversify its financial holdings. Diversification reduces risk by spreading investments across different asset classes, such as stocks, bonds, real estate, and cash equivalents. This can help protect the town's finances from market volatility.

- 3.5 A well-managed investment portfolio can provide a consistent source of income, helping to stabilize the town's budget. This can be particularly important during economic downturns or when unexpected expenses arise.
- 3.6 An investment strategy can be adjusted to respond to changing economic conditions. For example, during a recession, the town council may choose to allocate more funds to conservative, income-generating investments to ensure stability.
- 3.7 Developing and implementing promotes transparency and accountability in financial decision-making. Town councils have a fiduciary responsibility to manage public funds prudently and in the best interests of the community. An investment strategy demonstrates a commitment to fulfilling this responsibility by seeking optimal returns while managing risk.
- 3.8 When investments generate returns, these benefits can be used to enhance public services, improve infrastructure, reduce taxes, or support local initiatives, benefiting the community.
- 3.3 The investments currently held by the Town Council are listed below:
- Unity Trust Bank Account: This is the council's current bank account, with a current balance of £1,099,421.75 as of 20/09/2023.
 - Unity Trust Deposit Account: This serves as the council's savings account with instant access, featuring a gross interest rate of 2.75%. The current balance as of 20/09/2023 is £2,010,869.51.
 - Barclays Imprest Account: This account is used for paying staff salaries, pensions, and HMRC PAYE/NI. The balance at the end of August was £32,786.07.
 - Barclays Instant Access Saver Account: This is a savings account with a high-interest rate of 1.4%. When the Imprest Account is running low, we transfer money from the Unity Trust current account to this account. Then, whenever needed, we transfer from the Instant Access Saver to the Imprest Account. The balance as of August 31st is £15,089.17.
 - Barclays Legacy Account: This account has a gross interest rate of 1.2%, and the balance as of August 31st is £4,503.94. During the year, there are hardly any transactions.

4. FINANCIAL

- 4.1 The Town Council is budgeted to earn £2,500 in interest from its investments. To date STC has earned ££11,375.



STOTFOLD TOWN COUNCIL
INVESTMENT POLICY

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This policy has been created under guidance issued by the Secretary for Communities and Local Government in accordance with the Local Government Act 2003.
- 1.2 Stotfold Town Council acknowledges its responsibility to the community and the importance of prudently investing any reserves held by the Council.
- 1.3 The Guidance states:
- a) Where a Town or Parish Council expects its investments at any time during a financial year to exceed £100,000, the Guidance should apply in relation to that year.
 - b) Where a Town or Parish Council expects its investments at any time during a financial year to exceed £10,000 but not £100,000 it should decide on the extent, if any, to which it would be reasonable to have regard to the Guidance in relation to that that year.
 - c) Where a Town or Parish Council expects its investments at any time during a financial year not to exceed £10,000, no part of the Guidance need be treated as applying in relation to that year.
- 1.4 The Council expects its investments during 2023-24 to exceed £100,000 and therefore has agreed to apply the Guidance as set out below.

2. OBJECTIVES

- 2.1 The general policy objective of the Council is prudent investment of its balances. The Council's investment priorities are:
- a) Security of reserves
 - b) Liquidity of investments
 - c) To give consideration for ethical principles
- 2.2 The Council will aim to achieve the optimum return on its investments commensurate with the proper levels of security and liquidity.

3. INVESTMENT POLICY

- 3.1 The Town Council shall diversify its reserves between multiple relatively highly rated UK banks and building societies. The Council shall only use specified investments as defined by DCLG guidance.
- 3.2 A significant percentage of the Council's reserves shall be placed on interest bearing term/notice deposits.
- 3.3 To retain liquidity these shall be placed with phased end dates i.e., there will always be some maturing sooner than others.
- 3.4 No investment shall be held with the council's current bankers.
- 3.5 The Town Council shall only invest with banks/building societies which it defines as "High Credit Quality". This being those with a credit rating of A with Moody's Investors Service or BBB with Standard and Poor's or Fitch Ratings Ltd.
- 3.6 Investments shall be decided and placed by the Responsible Financial Officer having used due diligence including as a minimum finance search engines and ratings agencies.
 - a) This shall be under the oversight two members of the Finance & General Purposes Committee
 - b) The actual movement of money shall be by the usual authorised signatories
- 3.7 The procedure for undertaking investments, considering the need for timely and speedy placing of deals) shall be documented by the Responsible Financial Officer and approved by the Finance Committee before any investments are placed.
- 3.8 The Responsible Financial Officer shall review credit ratings of organisations in which the Council holds investments on a bi-annual basis. Should the credit rating of an organisation fall below that specified under 3.5, the Responsible Financial Officer shall consult the Banking and Investments working group and take the appropriate action.

4. REVISION

- 4.1 Any revisions to this policy shall be approved by the Full Council.
- 4.2 The Finance Committee shall review this policy annually and recommend any proposed changes to Full Council prior to the commencement of the new financial year. Where no changes are proposed, Full Council shall note the policy.
- 4.3 Notwithstanding 4.2 this policy shall be reviewed in the event the Bank of England increases its base rate above 3% or the Financial Services Compensation Scheme is extended to cover the Town Council.

STOTFOLD TOWN COUNCIL

COMMITTEE: ESTABLISHMENT
DATE: 27 SEPTEMBER 2023
OFFICER RESPONSIBLE: EMMA PAYNE, CLERK
SUBJECT: GRANT APPLICATIONS

1. SUMMARY

1.1 The Town Council has a budget for grant funds which are considered twice a year (September and March).

2. RECOMMENDATION

2.1 Members are asked to consider the grant application outlined in the report, along with the supporting documentation and advise the Clerk if they wish to award a grant.

3. LARKSFIELD AND ARLESEY MEDICAL PARTNERSHIP

3.1 The Patient Participation Group has applied for a grant of £750.00 for the set and printing costs of a new newsletter. The grant would be used to set up a printed newsletter which would be collected from key points. The aim is to establish a mailing list for an email newsletter, with a smaller print run for patient who do not have access to a computer.

3.2 Funding has been obtained from Fairfield PC (£500). Based on population, they are seeking £750 each from Stotfold and Arlesey TCs.

3.2 This organisation has not made a previous application. There was an application in 2021/22 from the Medical Practice.

4. FINANCIAL

4.1 Grants awarded to date £7,017 from total budget of £15,000>

ESTABLISHMENT COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME 2023-24

Meeting Date	Agenda Item	Description	Necessity
25/10/2023	Review of Financial Regulations	Review of Financial Regulations in light of decision of this committee to review procurement thresholds	Internal Control/Action from previous meeting
	Review of Standing Orders	To review the Council's adopted Standing Orders in line with NALC Model Standing Orders	Internal Control
		Investments	Action from previous meeting
	Budget 2024-25	To review this Committee's budget	Internal Control
	Strategic Plan	To review the progress to date on the Council's adopted Strategic Plan	Internal Control
	Review of Q2	To review the Council's expenditure at Q2	Internal Control
20/12/2023	Budget 2024-25	To review the Council's budget 2024-25, precept and make recommendation to Council	Internal Control
27/03/2024			
17/04/2024			