



UTTOXETER TOWN COUNCIL

RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE ARISING FROM ITS MEETING HELD IN THE ALAN DEAN SUITE, UTTOXETER TOWN HALL ON TUESDAY, 26 MAY 2026 AT 5.30 PM

Chair – Councillor R Hawkins

Councillors: T Ashby, D Boot, J Glandfield, B Houlihan, Z Krupski (ex-officio), A Johnstone (Observer)
Officers in attendance: Town Clerk, Office Manager and Fulltime Admin Assistant

It was noted that Representatives from MINT Cocktail were in attendance for Item No. 9

1. CHAIR'S WELCOME

The Chair provided a brief on the fire procedure in the event of a fire, the provisions of the Recording and Filming of Meetings as in accordance with "The Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014", a reminder that the Council has Signed up to the Civility and Respect Pledge and regarding the use of mobile phones during the meeting.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

(a) The Clerk reported that approved apologies had been received from Councillors D Holland (Vice-Chair), C Sylvester and A Mansfield (ex-officio).

RECOMMENDED that the same be accepted and approved.

(b) The Clerk reported that all other Members were in attendance.

RECOMMENDED that the same be noted.

3. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

In accordance with Standing Order 3(e-h), the meeting be adjourned for up to 15 minutes to allow for public participation where members of the public may make representations, answer questions and give evidence at a meeting which they were entitled to attend in respect of the business on the Agenda. The period of time designated for public participation at a meeting as in accordance with standing order 3(e) shall not exceed (3) minutes unless directed by the Chair of the meeting. It was noted that members of the public may not take part in the Council meeting itself.

It was noted that the Representatives from MINT Cocktail would be in attendance along with Council's Office Manager and Fulltime Admin Assistant to provide Committee with a Presentation under Item No. 9 – Modernisation of the Adam Peaty Suite.

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Declaration of any disclosable pecuniary interest in a matter to be discussed at the meeting, and which was not included in the register of interests. Members were reminded that they were required to leave the room during the discussion and voting on matters in which they had a disclosable pecuniary interest, whether or not the interest was entered in the register of members' interests maintained by the Monitoring Officer.

None received.

5. WIDGIT SYMBOLS FOR INCLUSION AND ACCESSIBILITY WITHIN UTTOXETER TOWN HALL

Committee gave consideration to the following:

(a) Councillor Johnstone reported that St Mary's First School used their own version of a similar product given the Widgit was too expensive for them to purchase.

RECOMMENDED that the same be noted.

- (i) The Clerk reported receipt of an email from Widgit on 29 April 2026 following their presentation to Committee on 28 April 2026, advising Committee that 'under a postcode search beginning ST14, Widgit data shows active subscriptions for the following within the Uttoxeter area:

- 5 schools
- 1 Healthcare provider
- 1 activity centre
- 1 sports provider
- Multiple home (parent) accounts'.

RECOMMENDED that the same be noted.

- (b) Committee was advised that the Clerk was liaising with Widgit and the Events Team regarding a tailored proposal from Widgit for the Town Hall and potential requirements for the Town Hall. Committee instruction was sought.

RECOMMENDED that upon receipt of the proposal from Widgit, this matter be included for further consideration by Committee at a future meeting.

6. **NALC MODEL FINANCIAL REGAULATIONS (INCLUDING PETTY CASH)**

As in accordance with Standing Order No. 5j(ix), Committee was asked to review NALC's latest Model Financial Regulations, as deferred for consideration by Committee by Council on 12 May 2026. Council's instruction was sought.

It was noted that Committee perused the Draft Financial Regulations page by page.

Councillor Johnstone sought clarification on petty cash as included within the Draft Financial Regulations. The Clerk reported that the current process for petty cash was carried out as in accordance with current Financial Regulations, which had been agreed with Council's Internal Auditor, SPCA, ALCC and was as reviewed and adopted by Council on 9 September 2025.

It was noted that no further comments were made on the Draft Financial Regulations.

RECOMMENDED that the NALC Model Financial Regulations be accepted and approved, and included for adoption by Council on 9 June 2026.

7. **TOWN HALL REPAIRS AND MAINTENANCE**

Committee was advised that:

- Greenheart Construction anticipated commencing the works to the side alley mid-June.
- Council's Architect attended a meeting on 18 May 2026 following an update from Council's Tenant regarding the deterioration in the stone above the side alley gate which he would discuss with Greenheart Construction and ESBC's Conservation Officer regarding these additional works being undertaken during the works to the side alley/roof, funded by the Town Hall Repairs and Maintenance budget allocation.

RECOMMENDED that the same be accepted and approved.

8.

COMMITTEE IN PRIVATE – PUBLIC BODIES (ADMISSION TO MEETINGS) ACT 1960

Pursuant to Section 1(2) of the above Act it was requested that the public and press were not present due to the confidential nature of the business to be transacted and were asked to withdraw.

RECOMMENDED that the same be accepted and approved.

9. **MODERNISATION OF THE ADAM PEATY SUITE, UTTOXETER TOWN HALL**

The Chair welcomed the Events Team who were in attendance to provide Committee with a presentation on a Town Hall Proposal for the vision of the modernisation of the Adam Peaty Suite including décor, furnishings, flooring, glass washer, undercounter fridge, etc as part of the partnership for reinventing the Town Hall venue to increase usage and revenue, as circulated to Members with their Agenda pack. Council's Office Manager reported that MINT Cocktail would be joining the meeting shortly.

It was noted Committee perused the Town Hall Proposal page by page which included:

- Introduction:
 - By creating a more intentional and timeless space through refurbishment, couples could be encouraged to book both their ceremony and reception celebrations within the Town Hall.
- Proposal Objectives:
 - Increase in bookings and utilisation of the Town Hall.
 - Improve the overall guest experience.
 - Increase awareness and visibility.
- The Vision:
 - No bookings as couples are choosing alternative venues for their receptions.
 - Currently no bar and catering options.
 - The proposed design is inspired by a classic speakeasy aesthetic, using burgundy tones in keeping within the Town Hall's existing character.
 - The design is timeless and elegant, creating a warm and intimate atmosphere to enhance the guest experience.
- Concept Visions Budget summary Overview:
 - Our refurbishment approach priorities supporting local suppliers and sustainability, reusing existing furnishings where possible rather than replacing, the full refurbishment costings in the region of £15,000 covering fixtures, fittings, equipment, flooring and décor.
- Detailed Allocations (estimated, excluding vat) were as follows:
 - £3,000 for bar furnishings (bar woodwork, panelling, shelving, bar front, benches)
 - £2,400 for Glasswasher, underbar fridge and Icemaker
 - £1,650 for Repainting the ceilings and walls
 - £2,650 for Décor (fake plants, mirrors, table lamps, shelving, frames/prints, wallpaper)
 - £1,900 for tables and chairs (wrapping/reupholstery)
 - £3,400 for replacing the flooring within the bar area with flooring similar to the first and second foyers, a more practical and modern provision than the existing carpet.
- Marketing Promotion:
 - Following the refurbishment of the bar area, a plan to create a promotional video (estimated cost of £1,500) showcasing the new space for a targeted social media campaign including potential to 'win a wedding', subject to approval.
 - The Events Team and MINT Cocktail had suggestions on discount for attending the Wedding Fayre and booking the Town Hall.
- Market Insights:
 - A N Other Town Hall offered 'win a wedding' earlier this year which generated significant engagement, securing them 9 additional bookings.
 - A condition of entering the competition, couples would complete a feedback form providing Council with valuable insight from potential customers.
 - The current average income per wedding was £750 with the potential to increase to over £1,000 following the proposed refurbishment. Based on the increased income, additional bookings could quickly contribute towards the initial investment.
- Return on investment:
 - Increase in bookings, based on the average income of £1,000+ per wedding, which would enable Council to begin to see return on its investment, even with a low number of bookings.
 - Raised awareness of Town Hall Weddings – the marketing campaign will also increase awareness of the Town Hall as a wedding venue, attracting a wider audience of potential couples.
 - Opportunity to host more events – The refurbishment creates an opportunity to expand the range of events held within the Town Hall, supporting additional revenue streams.
- Timeline and Milestones:
 - (a) Included for consideration by Council at its meeting on 9 June 2026
 - (b) July-August – 8-week refurbishment programme
 - (c) September – Promotional video production
 - (c) October – Wedding Fayre on 11 October 2026 which would include guest walkthroughs of the refurbished venue.
- Why this matters:
 - Importance of creating a welcoming space within the Town Hall for the local community.
 - Utttoxeter has a growing population and an increasing demand for events, and this proposal

- aims to create an elegant, timeless bar within the Town Hall that the town can be proud of.
- The refurbishment of the bar area will bring new life to the space while creating long-term opportunities for the Town Hall.

The presentation was followed by a brief question and answer session by Members which included:

- contract management, accountability and rigorous budget management, which was carried out by Council Corporate,
- potential increase/profit for the Town Hall hire,
- subsidising the Town Hall and the Cemetery Grounds Maintenance costs to provide provisions for the community,
- antisocial behaviour within the town centre/outside the Town Hall,
- the name of the bar facility and the proposed décor within the space going forward, building on the partnership to enhance the community Grade II Listed Town Hall, etc.

It was noted that Representatives from MINT Cocktail joined the meeting at this point. The Chair welcomed MINT Cocktail to the meeting and he Suspended Standing Orders to enable them and the Events Team to provide Committee with their comments on the Town Hall Proposal Vision.

MINT Cocktail reported that the bar provisions at this time, in their opinion, was not fit for purpose and reported that their Brewery, BBG would be incorporating £5,000 worth of investment (new lines, coolers, etc) under MINT Cocktails name for the entirety of his 3-year DPS Contract period. MINT Cocktail reiterated their commitment in progressing the partnership with the Council to enhance the facilities within the Town Hall and would hold Open Days, Tasters, etc to promote the venue and increase events within the community Town Hall which he would generate additional revenue to the Council.

MINT Cocktail and some Members sought clarification on income for the Town Hall. The Clerk/RFO reminded Committee that the Council reviewed its Accounts Income and Expenditure on a quarterly basis which included detail of the income received for the hire of the Ballroom and the Alan Dean Suite. The Clerk reported that previous Accounts were available from the Council's website.

The Clerk expressed her thanks to the Events Team and MINT Cocktail for the work that they had undertaken in providing the detailed Vision Proposal Presentation for the Adam Peaty Suite.

The Chair expressed his thanks to the Events Team and MINT Cocktail for attending the meeting and he Reinstated Standing Orders. It was noted that MINT Cocktail left the meeting at this point.

It was noted that there was unanimous support for the modernisation of the Adam Peaty Suite taking place, in its entirety, to enhance the Town Hall and its facilities for events within the community from the Town Hall which was located in the heart of the Town.

The Chair sought information from the Clerk/RFO regarding potential fund streams for these works. The Clerk/RFO reported that Council had no budget in place for this specific project given the Council were not aware of this requirement when considering/setting its Estimates/Precept meetings were held from September last year.

The Clerk reported that Council had increased its Town Hall Repairs and Maintenance budget from £22,000 to £35,000 for 2026-27 which included £16,849.60 plus vat for the works to the side alley/Town Hall roof which would commence mid-June which would be in addition to repairs to the stone above the side alley gate as reported to Committee earlier in the meeting.

The Clerk/RFO reported that Council had a Town Hall Advertising and Promotion budget of £1,000 which could be utilised accordingly.

The Mayor reiterated the importance of keeping the community Town Hall available for the community to use and he welcomed an increase of the usage of the Town Hall including the Council supporting local events and he supported a calendar of events for the venue. He stated that if the Council was looking at a 7-year programme of enhancements, this would equate to 2.1% annually.

The Clerk/RFO reported that included within the Town Hall Repairs and Maintenance budget was £500 for an under counter fridge and £500 for a glass washer, costs as agreed with Council's former DPS. She reported that also included was for the provision for a washing machine within the Ballroom kitchen however, the Events Team had advised that this was potentially not required and was subject to Council's Contractor confirming that this was feasible option with the space.

The Clerk/RFO reported that end of year accounts had been completed last week and that Council's Internal Auditor would be carrying out the annual Audit on 28 May 2026 which would include review of the end of year Reserves. She reported that she would like to progress discussion with Council's Internal Auditor and SPCA to seek advice regarding potential funding options for funding this significant enhancement project for the Adam Peaty Suite from various Town Hall budget allocations including a potential review of the Council's Earmarked Reserves.

Committee reiterated the importance of embracing this opportunity to enhance the community Town Hall facilities. Committee briefly considered grants from local businesses and community groups to support this project.

Following due debate, it was

RECOMMENDED that:

- (i) The Events Team be tasked forthwith with liaising with MINT Cocktail to review the costings included within the Town Hall Proposal Vision with a view of a reducing the costs below £12,500.
- (ii) The Clerk/RFO be tasked forthwith with liaising with Council's Internal Auditor and SPCA regarding funding provisions for up to £12,500 (including potential grants and review of the existing Earmarked Reserves) for the significant modernisation enhancements of the Adam Peaty Suite within 2026-27 and provide Council with an update at its meeting on 9 June 2026.
- (iii) The Events Team be tasked forthwith with approaching local community groups for possible grants towards the modernisation of the Adam Peaty Suite.
- (iv) The Events Team liaise with MINT Cocktail regarding accepting and approving the marketing promotional video for a targeted social media campaign, in the sum of up to £1,500, funded by the Town Hall Advertising and Promotion budget allocation.

The meeting closed at 6.27pm.