PRESENT:
Chairman: Cllr A Hafiz
Councillors: M Heard, R Miller, S Nunn, J Stilts (Deputy Mayor, ex officio), S Savage
In Attendance: Mrs J Coleman Town Clerk
              Cllr M Harvey Maldon Town Council
              Val Juhasz Aquapol UK

No members of the public present.

91 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE
Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs I Kidman (away on business), M Pearlman (away) and T Shrimpton (away).

92 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST
Members were reminded that they are required to declare any Disclosable Pecuniary Interests, Other Pecuniary Interests or Non-Pecuniary Interests which they know they might have in items of business on the agenda. They were reminded that they would need to repeat their declarations at the appropriate point in the meeting and leave the room if required under the Code of Conduct. Unforeseen interests must be declared similarly at the appropriate time.

Cllr S Nunn declared a non-pecuniary interest in item 15. Cllr R Miller declared a non-pecuniary interest in item 8.1 as a member of the Friends of the Moot Hall.

93 MINUTES OF THE FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 27th FEBRUARY 2017
The Minutes of the Finance and General Purposes Committee meeting held on 27th February 2017 were received and agreed.

RESOLVED: that the Minutes of the Finance and General Purposes Committee meeting held on 27th February 2017 be confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

94 TOWN CLERK’S REPORT
The Town Clerk’s report on matters arising was received and noted.
Cllrs M Heard and S Savage gave their apologies for the Annual Town Meeting as an Overview and Scrutiny Committee Meeting has been re-arranged for that evening so that the Police & Crime Commissioner can attend.

In addition, the Town Clerk mentioned that copies of the Annual Report are now ready for delivery, and asked that councillors assist with deliveries.

RESOLVED: that the Town Clerk’s report on matters arising be received and noted.

95 FINANCIAL REPORT

95.1 Payments for approval 16th February – 31st March 2017
The lists of payments for approval were scrutinised and approved. It was noted that the formatting of the last column was mis-aligned, and the clerk was requested to check the formatting.

RESOLVED: that the list of payments for 16th February – 31st March 2017 be noted and approved.

95.2 Bank Reconciliation Summary to 31st March 2017
The Bank Reconciliation Summary to 31st March 2017 was scrutinised and approved.

RESOLVED: that the summary of the reconciliations of all accounts to 31st March 2017 be noted and approved.

95.3 Budget Comparison Report at 31st March 2017
The Budget Comparison Report as at 31st March 2017 was scrutinised and approved.

RESOLVED: that the Budget Comparison Report dated 31st March 2017 be received and approved.

96 Review of the Effectiveness of the System of Internal Control
A report was considered. Members proposed that it should incorporate a sentence describing the role of the Environment and Planning Committees, and that the Workplace and Fire Risk Assessments should be separate points, to give them equal importance. With these amendments, the report was approved.

RESOLVED:- that with the inclusion of the above amendments, the proposed System of Internal Control be approved.

97. Timetable for the Approval of Accounts 2016-17
The published timetable was noted. In addition, the Clerk advised that the Accounts must be submitted to the external auditor by 12th June, and that the Exercise of Electors’ Rights Inspection Period would take place between 3rd -14th July.

RESOLVED:- that the timetable for the approval of the Annual Accounts be received and noted.
98 PREMISES

98.1 MOOT HALL
A report on the condition of the Moot Hall, and proposing the installation of a damp proofing system on a trial basis was received and considered. Val Jhuasz, director of Aquapol UK, attended to answer councillor’s questions.

Councillors recalled that due to the lack of foundations and a damp course, rising damp had been a continuing problem in the Moot Hall for many years, leading to the gradual breakdown of the bricks, which constantly required repointing and repair. Mr Jhuasz described the testing he had carried out, and confirmed the results. He also outlined the proposed system which is not invasive, and the best option for a building of the calibre of the Moot Hall. Aquapol is the only licensed distributor of the technology in the UK. Listed Building Consent would not be required, as it is proposed to put the device in the Mayor’s Parlour, rather than the main hall. Aquapol will involve the Conservation Officer in the monitoring process which will involve extracting 2g samples. Mr Jhuasz advised that the Aquapol system is approved for use by English Heritage.

Mr Jhuasz confirmed that progress in reducing the damp would be visible within 6 months, although given the current state of the walls, he anticipated it taking between 18-24 months to reach a satisfactory level. The system only addresses the rising damp, not the natural humidity in the atmosphere.

Councillors discussed the options proposed and unanimously approved Option 2 (lease option).

RESOLVED: that the Aquapol system be installed in the Moot Hall on the basis proposed in Option 2, with a review of the effectiveness of the system after a 12 month period.

Mr Jhuasz then left the meeting.

98.2 PLUME LIBRARY TRUST
A report was received advising that the Plume Library is proposing to adopt a new constitution, on which councillors’ comments are invited. Councillors could see no reason for the proposal that Maldon District Council are invited to become a trustee in the new constitution. They noted that the 1952 document referred to the “Borough Council”, which became the Town Council, but there was no reference to the Rural District Council (the forerunner of Maldon District Council) in the original document. Councillors were also concerned that there would be a potential conflict of interest as MDC are also the Planning Authority and were unable to see how the inclusion of MDC would be of benefit to the Trust. It was noted that Essex County Council were involved in the trust from the outset. Councillors were also concerned that the St Mary’s Rector was no longer represented, although this had been a recommendation from Dr Plume himself.

Councillors agreed that a schedule of property should be included in the document, and agreed to respond to the Plume Library Trust on the basis discussed.

RESOLVED: to respond to the Plume Library Trust on the basis agreed.

99 MALDON VINTAGE CHRISTMAS FAYRE & LIGHTS SWITCH-ON
99.1 The notes of the Working Group meeting held on 7th March were received and noted.

RESOLVED: that the notes of the Working Group meeting held on 7th March be received and noted.

99.2 Consideration was given to the following recommendations for expenditure:-
- Quotation from VIP security for stewarding the event
- Proposal for additional staffing resources to support this year’s event

It was noted that the Christmas Fayre could not be staged without the additional support outlined above.

RESOLVED: that the quotation from VIP security for stewarding the event be accepted, and that the proposal for additional staffing resources (additional 4 hours per week from August to the Fayre) be approved.

99.3 Christmas Lights Contract 2017-2020

The notes of the working group meeting held 23rd March were received and noted. A recommendation from the working party regarding the Christmas Lights contract was received and approved on the basis that it would provide an increased display at a reduced price. It was agreed that the recommended contractor has already demonstrated considerable reliability and flexibility in working with the council, which is valued by councillors.

RESOLVED: that the quotation from Lamps and Tubes Illuminations Ltd be accepted for a 3-year lease covering 2017, 2018 and 2019 based on Option 1.

100 GRANT FUNDING

A Grant application by the Maldon Drama Group for support in meeting hall hire fees was received and considered. It was noted that the council has provided similar support for many years, and that no attempt appears to have been made to secure funding from elsewhere. It was noted that their request only partially covers their annual hall hire fees, and that this year, they will be staging an additional production.

It was noted that this is a local group, providing entertainment for Maldon residents and that they provided entertainment for the 2016 Christmas Fayre to support the Shakespearean theme, and they have indicated that they will do this again in 2017. Councillors have also asked them to provide some entertainment at a WW1 commemorative event in November 2017.

RESOLVED: that the council provides support to the value of £1000 in lieu of hall hire fees to the Maldon Drama Group.

101 QUESTIONS FROM THE PRESS AND PUBLIC
There were no members of the press and public present, and no further reports were made.
102 EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED: That under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the press and public be excluded from the Meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest.

103 REVIEW OF BANKING ARRANGEMENTS
Minute 88 of the Finance & General Purposes Committee Meeting held 27th February was received and approved.

RESOLVED:- Minute 88 of the Finance & General Purposes Committee Meeting held 27th February be received and approved.

104 STAFF REPORT
The Town Mayor made a verbal report.

RESOLVED: that the report be received and approved.

Cllr S Nunn left the room at 8.40pm.

105 FREEDOM OF THE TOWN
A report was received and the way forward approved.

RESOLVED: that the report be received and approved.

106 PUBLIC DOMAIN
It was agreed that no item discussed in Private Session should be moved into the Public Domain

RESOLVED: That no item discussed in Private Session be moved into the Public Domain.

There being no further business, the Chairman closed the meeting at 8.47 pm.

Signed:.................................................. Date: ........................................
Cllr A Hafiz
Chairman