

FINANCE, ASSET & RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting of the Finance, Asset & Resources Committee held on
Tuesday 11th January 2022 at 7pm.

PRESENT: Councillors: Cllr G Hutchinson (Chair), G Elner, P Goulbourne, P Jones, M Hancock, D Lunn, T Hunter.

Town Clerk and RFO: Jo Butterworth – Town Clerk
Deputy Clerk & Deputy RFO Jean Hynes

FAR-01/22/01 To Receive Apologies and Reason for Absence

RESOLVED – that the apologies received from Cllr A Wignall due to ill health be approved.

FAR-01/22/02 Disclosure of Personal and Prejudicial Interests in Items on the Agenda

Cllr T Hunter declared an interest as chair to Ellesmere in Bloom who had applied for grant funding and agreed to leave the room when discussed in item 6d on the agenda. Cllr G Hutchinson confirmed that he was no longer treasurer of Friends of Our Space as it has now disbanded.

FAR-01/22/03 Grant Dispositions

None requested.

FAR -01/22/04 Minutes

It was moved by Cllr P Goulbourne, seconded by Cllr T Hunter and

RESOLVED – that the minutes of the meeting held on 21st October 2021 be approved and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

FAR -01/22/05 Town Council Accounts

(a) To Consider Budget Report

Members approved the detailed income and expenditure for the end of the 3rd Quarter.

FAR-01/22/06 Budget Deliberations 2022/23

(a) First Draft Expenditure Budget 2022/23

The Clerk reported that Shropshire Council had circulated the draft 2022/23 Parish and Town Council, Council Tax base figures early which had enabled her and the Deputy Clerk/Deputy RFO to work through the draft budget based on a 0% Band D Council Tax increase.

The draft council tax base for a Band D property will be 1484.09 for 2022/23 compared with 1482.04 for 2021/22, an increase of 0.14% which equates financially

to £2.05 more than last year. This means that to show a 0% increase in the Band D Council tax charge the 2022/23 precept request would need to be £233,002.

The Clerk shared her screen so that all councillors could see the RBS draft budget and went through each item in turn with the Clerk explaining the projections and reasons figures had been entered into the draft budget which are all explained in the budget notes. The Clerk confirmed that the following salary recommendations had been entered into the budget. The Clerk stated that the figures had been worked on with a 0% precept increase and in doing so left a current deficit amount of £3,603 before any grant funding or anything else had been agreed.

Salaries & Wages

Following the Staffing and Governance Sub-committee meeting held prior to this meeting the following recommendations for the setting of salaries was considered.

RECOMMEND - An additional 2% be allowed for salaries, pensions and NI following advice from SALC, as well as annual increment rises for the Clerk & Deputy Clerk in line with the Town Council's Annual Increment Policy.

Budget for the Deputy Clerks SCP to increase from 18 to SCP 19 as of 1st April.

Budget for the Town Clerk's salary to increase from SCP34 to SCP35 which will be applied once CILCA has been achieved in 2022/23. Budget for the Clerk's contracted 30 hours plus 5 hours overtime a week instead of 7 hours overtime a week.

Admin Assistant Role, budget for a salary increase from SCP 6 to SC7 for 25 hours a week and the costs will be split between the Town Hall and Town Council costs.

NLW will increase as of 1st April 2022 for Cleaners, they will continue to receive NLW plus 4%, budget to increase Cleaner/ Caretaking Assistant's hours by 5 hours from 15 to 20 hours per week as of 1st April.

Budget to increase Caretakers salary from SCP7 to SCP8 as of 1st April 2022

Increase weekly hours for the role of Admin Assistant from 20 to 25 as well as increasing salary from SCP6 to SCP7.

The Cemetery Co-ordinator's will remain SCP 15 for 2022/2023.

It was moved by Cllr T Hunter, seconded by Cllr P Jones.

RESOLVED: to approve the recommendations received from the Staffing and Governance Sub-Committee.

Staff Training

The budget has been decreased from £1,150 for 2021/22 to £700 for 2022/23.

Stationery

This has increased as projected costs are higher for 2021/22 than anticipated.

Computer Expenses

This budget has decreased from £1,500 to £1,100 though it allows for calendar on

council website, Town Hall diary and accounts package. The Clerk reported that she had just received correspondence from RBS offering a 3-year loyalty scheme for year-end closedown plus a preferential end date. Their annual charge for this is £600, they are offering a 7% discount on the fee which would mean a saving of £126 over 3 years.

It was moved by Cllr P Goulbourne, seconded by Cllr G Hutchinson and

RESOLVED – to commit to a three-year term with RBS.

Website Expenses

An additional £50 has been allocated to this budget to allow for increase in hosting costs.

Telephones

The Clerk reported that a contract for 3 of the Town Council phone lines are now in place however the budget for 2021/22 was slightly over budget due to the old provider submitting outstanding invoices and the cost of purchasing new phones.

Licences

£1400 has been allocated to this budget to cover increasing costs.

Councillors Training Expenses

This budget has reduced by £150.

Street Lighting Electricity

The budget has only been increased by £595 to £2,000 due to the current rise in electricity costs, but also due to the savings made in 2021/2022 following the streetlights being converted to LED.

Street Lighting Maintenance

This budget remains the same, which is due to the current contract of 1,570 and allows for 20 adhoc repairs.

Grounds Maintenance

The Town Council's current contract for its recreation grounds is due to end in March 2022 and the Cemetery Grounds Maintenance contract ends in April, additional funds have been added to the ground's maintenance budget as the last budgeted figures are 3 years old.

Christmas Lighting

£5,250 has been allocated for Christmas lighting as the contract is fixed until December 2023.

CCTV

£5,000 has been budgeted to allow for the maintenance contract and adhoc repairs. Council also has ear-marked reserves of £5,000 for CCTV for which £5,000 match funding could be obtained.

Health & Safety

£500 has been budgeted for defibrillator maintenance.

Gardening Additional Costs

This budget has remained the same as 2021/22 to allow for tree works and maintenance following the tree survey.

Play Area Expenses

£500 has been taken from the Football Club Costs budget and added to the play area expenses budget for 2022/2023. As the football club is privately run, there should be no expenditure to the club itself, just the recreation/ play area, so this budget has been increased to reflect that.

Queens Jubilee

£500 has been included in the budget, sponsorship will be sourced for a community event.

Licenses

The Clerk informed members that due to Covid and a reduced number of bookings at the Town Hall the PPL/PRS licence was reduced in 2021/22 meaning that the council will come in under budget, she recommended that the budget remain the same in 2022/23.

Town Hall - Electricity

£6,850 has been budgeted for in 2022/23 to allow for the increase in energy prices this is an increase of £1,450 from 2021/22.

Town Hall - Gas

£6,640 has been budgeted for in 2022/23 to allow for the increase in energy prices, this is an increase of £740 from 2021/2022.

Town Hall - Building Maintenance

£7,000 has been allocated to this budget the same as 2021/2022. There is money in earmarked reserves for the roof and future maintenance projects.

Town Hall - General Maintenance

£7,000 has been allocated to this budget the same as 2021/2022. There is money in earmarked reserves for the roof and future maintenance projects.

Skip Hire

£890 has been budgeted allowing for 52 collections, this is an increase of £552.00 on the 2021/22 projected figure due to less collections due to Covid and the Town Hall being closed and used less.

Town Hall Wages and ER's Pension Contributions

Included in this budget now is 50% of the Admin Assistant salary costs. An additional 2% has been allowed for wages, pensions following advice from SALC.

Cemetery Expenditure

This budget has been increased from £3,000 to £14,800 to allow for tarmacking work and running water up to the top of the cemetery that the CWG are considering. Also included is the permit fee of £800 for DEFRA.

All members were happy with the initial draft budget which had a deficit of £3,603.

(c) Other budget considerations

Ear Marked Reserves

The Clerk shared a spreadsheet on her screen detailing the amount currently in the council's reserves accounts and reported that 30% of the projected expenditure figure for 2021/22 will satisfy the Town Council General Reserve Policy.

<u>Reserves</u>	
Balances	
Account Name	Balance
Neighbourhood Fund	£29,839.05
Santander	£93,755.95
TSB No.3	£151,885.49
	<u>£245,641.44</u>
Earmarked Reserves	£176,338.46
General Reserves	£69,302.98
Projected Expenditure	245,832
30% of projected expenditure	73,749.60

£3,800 will be ear-marked for the Youth Café to be delivered from April 2022 as previously agreed in minute number 12/21/09(g), this is included in the earmarked reserve figure above.

The 2021/22 Neighbourhood fund monies received from Shropshire Council will also be earmarked as the previous years have been.

d) Grant Applications

Cllr T Hunter left the room during consideration to the Ellesmere In Bloom grant application and did not vote.

Councillors considered the grant applications and agreed to make the following recommendations.

Organisation	Project	Amount Requested	Amount Granted
Shropshire Wildlife Trust	Bird food Feed the Birds Project), PPE	£150	£130
Ellesmere In Bloom	Town Planting	£1,000	£500
Library at Our space	Library Services	£5,000	£3,000
Fizzgigs	Community Events	£300	£300
2nd Ellesmere Brownies	Supplement Uniform Costs, replenish craft stock, support low children	£500	£300
The New Saints FC Foundation	Ellesmere Holiday Activities and Food Programme	£1500-£1700	£1,200

The Mayor agreed to donate £400 from his Mayor’s allowance towards the TNS Holiday Activities Programme to help them achieve their funding goals because his cause is still the Youth of Ellesmere.

Where the Library at Our Space requested £5,000 for library services and £3,000 was agreed as the recommendation, it was agreed to ringfence the £3,000 until they approached the council for the funds to spend for a particular reason or until it can be proved to the council what the funds are going to be spent on at Ellesmere Library.

RESOLVED: to RECOMMEND to full council that £5,430 be included in the 2022/23 budget for community grants.

It was agreed that there were no other budget considerations to make at this time and a discussion took place to consider a percentage increase in the precept requested from Shropshire Council. It was agreed a 4% increase was required to cover the rapid rise in inflation and in order to achieve a balanced budget.

It was moved by Cllr D Lunn, seconded by Cllr T Hunter

RESOLVED: to RECOMMEND to full council a 4% increase in the Band D Council tax charge from £157.00 per year to £163.28 (equivalent to 3.14 pence per week) amounting to a precept of £242,322.08.

The meeting closed at 8:44pm

Chair:

Date: