

Minutes of the meeting of the Finance, Asset & Resources Committee held on
Monday 18th December 2023 at 7pm.

PRESENT: Councillors: Cllr G Hutchinson (Chair), G Elner, P Goulbourne, M Hancock, A Wignall, J Howard, P Jones, and A Weeks.

Town Clerk and RFO:	Jo Butterworth
Admin Assistant	Vicky Martin

FAR 12/23/01 **To Receive Apologies and Reason for Absence**

None received.

FAR 12/23/02 **Disclosure of Personal and Prejudicial Interests in Items on the Agenda**

None received.

FAR 12/23/03 **Grant Dispersations**

None requested.

FAR 12/23/04 **Minutes**

It was moved by Cllr A Wignall, seconded by Cllr G Hutchinson and,

RESOLVED – that the minutes of the meeting held on 19th September 2023 be approved and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

FAR 12/23/05 **Detailed Income & Expenditure Report as of 30th November 2023**

Noted.

FAR 12/23/06 **CWG Detailed Income & Expenditure report as of 30th November 2023**

Noted.

FAR 12/23/07 **Bi-Annual Tree Survey**

The Clerk reported that the tree survey recommended 5 trees need to be felled within the next 3 months. Locations are Town Hall, St. Mary's Church, Beech Grove and Berwyn View. 3 companies have been contacted for quotations. Still awaiting third quote. Will be able to provide quotes for consideration at January 2024 meeting. The Clerk will investigate the possibility of obtaining grant funding for Ash Dieback.

FAR 12/23/08 **Town Planters**

The Clerk reported 4 companies had been contacted for quotations. 1 company withdrew and 1 company failed to submit.

Company No	Amount (Excl VAT)
1	£1,766.35
2	£3,222.00

It was recommended that the council consider awarding the contract to company 1 as their quote is the most cost effective and they had provided a good service in the past and were cost effective.

It was moved by Cllr A Wignall, seconded by Cllr P Goulbourne and,

RESOLVED – to award the contract to Company No. 1, Northwood Nurseries.

FAR 12/23/09 **Payroll Contract**

The Clerk reported that tenders/quotes had been sourced from Contracts Finder for the outsourcing of Council's payroll services and had received the following:

3-year contact:

Company No	Amount (Excl VAT)
1	£5,122.50 annual cost £1,707.50
2	£3,600.00 annual cost £1,200.00

5-year contract:

Company No	Amount (Excl VAT)
1	£8,537.50 annual cost £1,707.50
2	£6,500.00 annual cost £1,300.00

It was moved by Cllr A Wignall, seconded by Cllr P Goulbourne and,

RESOLVED – to accept the quotation from Company 2 for 3 years. The Clerk revealed to members that the successful company was Shropshire Council Payroll Services.

FAR 12/23/10 **West Mercia Lease**

It was agreed to increase to the maximum level allowed as per lease conditions dependant on the current CPI.

It was moved by Cllr P Goulbourne, seconded by Cllr A Wignall and,

RESOLVED – to increase to the maximum level allowed.

FAR 12/23/11 **Salaries and Wages**

Salary recommendations from the Staffing and Governance Committee were considered.

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

RESOLVED – to approve the recommendations of the S & G Committee.

FAR 12/23/12 **Grant Applications**

No new applications. Not all the available grant awards have been allocated for 2023/2024. Recirculate information on the website and social media.

FAR 12/23/13 **Budget Deliberations 2024/2025**

The Clerk confirmed that she had just received the draft council tax base for a Band D property which will be £1524.77 for 2024/25 compared with £1524.77 for 2023/24. This means that to show a 0% increase in the Band D Council tax charge the 2024/25 precept request would be £263,596, which she had put in the initial draft budget to work through.

The Clerk shared copies of the initial draft budget so that all councillors could see, and they 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 salary recommendations had been entered into the budget.

Pension Costs - 4010/101

The Clerk reported that the increase to £15,337.00 is due to the pension deficit.

Staff Training – 4020/101

The budget has been increased from £1,300 for 2023/24 to £1,600 for 2024/25 to allow for training of existing and new staff.

Printing and Photocopying – 4100/101

Budget remains at £900.00. Overspend 2023/2024 due to printing for Jubilee and Coronation celebrations.

Stationery – 4101/101

The stationary budget remains the same at £1,000.00.

Postage – 4102/101

The budget remains the same at £75 as not all the stamps from the 2023/2024 budget have been used.

Computer Expenses – 4103/101

This budget has increased from £1,400 to £1,700 to allow for payment of support services and use of the accounts package.

Website Expenses – 4104/101

The hosting costs for the website are increasing with a corresponding increase to £180.

Telephones – 4105/101

The budget remains the same at £1,500.

Insurance – 4106/101

Following completion of the new roof quotes will be able to be obtained from a wider selection of insurance providers. Nationally insurance costs are rising, and members agreed to increase the allocation of budget to £6,000.00.

It was moved by Cllr G Elner and seconded by Cllr P Goulbourne

RESOLVED – to increase budget allocation to £6,000.00.

Licences – 4107/101

This budget has decreased slightly from £1,400.00 to £1,300.00 due to the cancellation of the Zoom subscription.

Membership Fees – 4109/101

Overspend in 2023/2024 as had withdrawn membership from NABMA but needed to take legal advice and had to be members to receive advice. Budget increased to £2,600.00.

Legal Expenses – 4110/101

Overspend in 2023/2024. Budget increased to £1,000.00 to allow for the review of the bar licence.

Professional Fees – 4111/101

Overspend in 2023/2024 due to payment of the Overrated consultancy fees when the Business Rates were reclaimed. Budget reduced to £5,000.00 from £5,735.00.

Audit/Accountancy Fees – 4112/101

Accountancy fees are known, £2,700.00.

Office Equipment – 4114/101

Budget remains the same £150. No equipment required for 2024/2025.

Bank Charges – 4115/101

Budget remain the same £72.

Refreshments & Catering – 4150/101

Budget remain the same £100.

Contingencies – 4700/101

Budget remain the same £500.

Civic Expenses – 4200/102

The Clerk asked Cllr A Wignall if this year's allowance of £800.00 had been adequate. Cllr A Wignall confirmed this amount had been sufficient to cover expenses.

It was moved by Cllr A Wignall, seconded by Cllr P Goulbourne and,

RESOLVED – to keep the Mayor's allowance at £800.00 for the 2024/2025 budget year.

Councillor's Training Expenses – 4202/102

Training expenses are expected to remain the same in 2024/2025. Budget amount remains the same at £700.00.

Election Costs – 4210/102.

No budget required as there are Ear Marked reserves to cover election costs.

Civic Costs – 4203/102

Civic Costs are expected to remain the same at £200.00.

Awards/Gifts – 4215/102

Councillors discussed the Christmas window competition award. Would like to increase the award to include a 1st, 2nd and 3rd prize money of £50, £30 and £20 respectively and to also award Highly Commended certificates.

It was moved by Cllr G Hutchinson and seconded by Cllr G Elner and

RESOLVED – to increase the prize allocation for the Christmas window competition to three awards totalling £100.00 and to award Highly Commended certificates.

Electricity – 4131/103

Provision of electricity to the Cross Street toilets and the Christmas festoons. Projected £150.00. Budget of £600.00 allowed due to additional electricity requirements to Cross Street.

Street Lighting Electricity – 4300/103

The budget for 2024/2025 has been increased from £1,500.00 to £2,500.00. Contract is due to end September 2024. Councillors discussed increasing the allocation to £3,000.00 due to the rising energy costs.

It was moved by Cllr P Goulbourne and seconded by Cllr M Hancock and,

RESOLVED – to increase the budget for the street lighting electricity costs to £3,000.00.

Street Lighting Maintenance – 4301/103

This budget has been increased from £1,000.00 to £2,000.00. Allows for the maintenance contract and ad hock repairs.

Bus Shelters – 4302/103

The allocation of £350.00 for 2023/2024 was not used and therefore this has been reduced to £175.00 for 2024/2025.

Christmas Lighting – 4303/103

This budget has decreased from £8,100.00 to £8,000.00 due to the original contractor going into administration.

Road Safety – 4304/103

Members confirmed agreement with keeping the allocation of £1,000.00 to allow for maintenance of the VAS signs.

Grounds Maintenance – 4310/103

This budget was reduced from £9,000.00 to £7,290.00.

CCTV – 4311/103

This budget remains the same at £5,000.00 and will include the cost of the repairs and the provision of a new camera, there is also an Ear Marked Reserve of £5,000 for CCTV.

Gardening Contract – 4312/103

This budget was reduced from £12,750.00 to £8,500.00 which is due to the newly awarded contract.

Health & Safety – 4313/103

Covers defib costs. This budget remains the same at £500.00.

Gardening Additional Costs – 4314/103

The budget remains the same at £5,000.00 which includes the land at St. Mary's churchyard.

Street Furniture – 4320/103

The budget reduced by 50% to £500.00. All benches have been safety checked and no work is required.

Library/Ellesmere in Bloom – 4322 & 4330/103

No budget allocation. Grant awards available if funding is required.

Planters – 4331/103

As agreed at Item FAR 12/23/08. Budget reduced to agreed cost of £1767.

Public Conveniences – 4333/103

Projected to spend £10,000.00 so budgeted at £10,500.00.

Tuesday Market Costs – 4404/103

The budget has been reduced from £1,850.00 to £1,000.00 as now only responsibly for the cleaning costs.

Cricket Club Rent – 1060/104

£70 as per lease.

Football Club Rent – 1061/104

Approximately £250.

Cadet Hut Income – 1063/104

£150 as per lease agreements.

Play Area Expenses – 4402/104

This budget remains the same at £4,000.00. The Clerk reported that the play areas on Kingfisher Walk and Beech Grove are awaiting their annual inspection report.

Youth Provision – 4403/104

The Councillors discussed maintaining a reserve of £1,200.00 for the provision of holiday club funding from HAF.

Kings Coronation Event – 4334/107

Overspend in 2023/2025. The Councillors proposed the allocation of £750.00 towards the celebration of the 80th Anniversary of D-Day.

Grants – 4550/107

Councillors proposed maintaining the £6,000.00 for Grants.

Remembrance – 4570/107

Councillors proposed to leave this item at £100.00.

Town Council Income – 1081/110

Council Tax rebate this year of £20,000.00. Recouping income from PAT testing and reimbursement from the bins at the SY12 Project.

Cross Street Toilet Income – 1805/110

Projected at £2,316.00.

Neighbourhood Fund – 1851/112

Received £28,856.00. Will not receive figure for 2024/2025 until January.

Loan Interest Payments/Loan Capital Repayment – 4900 & 4910/150

Schedule of payment agreed for next year. Budget figures are due to when the loans are collected even though both loans have been paid off.

Licences – 4107/201

Licences to slightly increase in budget from £600.00 to £1,000.00.

Rates – 4130/201

Budgeted at £4,500.00.

Electricity – 4131/201

Initially drafted at £8,000.00. Councillors discussed an increase to £10,000.00 to allow for the predicted energy price increase.

Gas – 4132/201

This budget has remained unchanged at £6,000.00. Councillors confirmed this amount should be adequate.

Water – 4133/201

Budget will increase to £3,555 due to projected figure.

Uniforms – 4607/201

To remain at £200.

Cleaning Materials – 4600/202

To remain at £800

Town Hall - General Maintenance – 4602 & 4603/202

£7,000 has been allocated to this budget the same as 2023/2024. There is money in for future maintenance projects.

Town Hall – Skip Hire – 4604/202

To increase from £900 to £1200.

Town Hall - Sanitary Disposal – 4605/202

Increased from £500 to £621 due to new contract.

Town Hall Equipment – 4606/202

The Clerk is to investigate the purchase of a new projector for Town Hall in the 2023/2024 budget. Budget of £500.00 allocated for 2024/2025.

Town Hall Wages - Salaries

As recommended by the Staffing and Governance Sub-Committee meeting 18/12/23.

Town Hall Income – 1000/210

Based on projected 2023/2024 and current 2024/2025 bookings of £28,000.

Bar Revenue Income – 1001/210

To remain at £50.

Cemetery Working Group

The committee and Clerk worked through the costs centres for the Cemetery as had been discussed with the Cemetery Co-ordinator and are detailed in the budget notes.

Members discussed increasing the Cemetery Lodge to the maximum level allowed as per lease conditions dependant on the current CPI. The Clerk will ask ERPC their thoughts on the matter.

The meeting closed at 20.15pm

Chair:

Date: