

**Minutes of the Meeting of the Finance and Administration Committee
held in the Town Hall on Wednesday 13 December 2023**

Present Councillor R Hopkinson (Chair)
Councillors S Abbott, H Belcher OBE, J Brook, T Ellis, M Jackson,
A Jones, G Ward and R Williams

In Attendance Mrs M Jones (Head of Finance and Administration)
D Martin (Chief Executive)

F&A 26/23 Apologies

There were no apologies.

F&A 27/23 Public Question Time and Petitions

Representatives of three organisations attended the meeting in person and asked the Committee to support their grant applications.

F&A 28/23 Declarations of Interest

To receive any Declaration(s) of Interest under Corsham Town Council's Code of Conduct issued in accordance with the Localism Act 2011.

Councillor S Abbott declared a non-pecuniary interest in Corsham Cricket Club under 18 Academy grant application (*Agenda Item 5 Grant Applications*) as a member of the Cricket Club. He stayed in the room during the discussion and decision on the item.

F&A 29/23 Matters Arising from the Minutes of the Finance and Administration Committee meeting held on 18 October 2023

There were no matters arising.

F&A 30/23 Grant Applications (Fifth Round)

Three grant applications were considered.

Resolved

- i) That Corsham Cricket Club under 18 Academy be awarded £750 towards cricket training equipment.

- ii) That Jacqueline Anderson be awarded £631.70 to run workshops for older adults using drawing and movement.
- iii) That Neston Memorial Hall be asked to provide details of the charity's balances for consultation with members of the Committee. Subject to satisfactory responses, the Chief Executive is authorised to award £750 towards lightweight folding chairs for older adults.

Section 137

There were none for this meeting.

Requested for 2024/25

Resolved

- iv) That Gastard Village Hall be awarded £2,000 towards the cost of replacing the windows in the village hall from the 2024/25 budget.

F&A 31/23 Detailed Income and Expenditure Accounts (including the Town Hall)

The Committee reviewed and noted the Income and Expenditure Accounts, Financial Report and the breakdown of Earmarked Reserves.

F&A 32/23 Draft Budget 2024/25

The Committee considered a report by the Chief Executive on the draft budget and precept proposals for 2024/25. Further to the most recent Committee meetings, the draft budget proposals for 2024/25 had been incorporated into the 'Annual Budget by Committee' report (*Agenda item 6*). The draft budget figures were listed in the 'DRAFT for 2024/25' column.

A few budget items had been reduced or removed as they were no longer required. There were some new/increased budgets, which were aimed towards delivery of the Strategic Plan 2022-2026. The main budget changes, service developments and projects included in the draft budget were as follows:

Committee/Item	Proposed 2024/25
Finance and Administration/General	
<i>Revenue</i>	
Grant – Methuen Hall	£69,200
Environmental Projects	£24,401
Strategic Plan Delivery	£10,000
Grants – General	£10,000
<i>Capital</i>	
Strategic Plan Delivery (Capital)	£10,000
Property and Amenities Committee Item	
<i>Revenue</i>	
Parking Initiatives	£76,667
Service Delegation and Asset Transfer	£6,087

<i>Capital</i>	
New Workshop	£36,448
Railway Station	£26,772
Play Area Improvements	£20,000
Building Contingency	£10,000

Methuen Hall

<i>Revenue</i>	
Repairs and Maintenance	£30,000
Town Hall Improvements	£10,000

Community Services Committee

<i>Revenue</i>	
Youth Activities	£24,000
Fete/Events	£12,020
Destination Marketing	£10,927
Corsham Youth Zone	£9,000
Health/Wellbeing Initiatives	£7,500
Health and Wellbeing Grants	£7,500
Christmas Lights	£7,000
StoryTown Events/Activities	£4,371
Music Therapy	£3,200

The allowance for income from Section 106 Agreements had been left at £0 in 2024/25. Projected income from the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) had been reduced from £40,000 to £20,000. There were earmarked reserves for several projects, the most significant of which were Service Delegation/Asset Transfer, Public Realm Improvements and Strategic Plan Delivery.

The draft budget for 2024/25 allows for £45,000 of funds to be drawn down from earmarked reserves towards neighbourhood planning and a building contingency.

The Town Council's overall draft budget showed an increase in spend of £132,501 (plus use of £45,000 of reserves) with a precept increase of £100,572 (8.93%). However, the decrease in the number of Band D Equivalent properties, due to Wiltshire Council's changes to the Council Tax Reduction Scheme, had increased the figure to 9.06% per property. The overall Band D Equivalent charge would increase from £226.67 to £247.22 (an increase of £20.55 per year or around 39.5p per week).

Should the Council approve the budget as detailed in the 'DRAFT for 2024/25' column in the 'Annual Budget by Committee' report, the overall Council budget would be £1,390,313, plus reserves. The precept for 2024/25 would be £1,227,300.

Resolved

That the draft budget proposals and precept for 2024/25 be approved for consideration by the Full Council, with a budget of £1,390,313, plus £45,000 reserves, and a precept of £1,227,300.

F&A 33/23 Internal Audit Report 2023/24 (First Interim)

A copy of the report from the interim visit was considered. There was one recommendation arising from the report, which related to allotment income: *'R1 - To ensure that a clear audit trail is in place between the allotment registers and Omega accounts, the site and plot reference numbers should be recorded when income is received and recorded in the Omega accounts.'*

The Chief Executive and Head of Finance and Administration had prepared the following response: *'This will be carried out from April 2024 when the next allotment rents are due.'*

Resolved

That the draft response to the Internal Audit Report 2023/34 (First Interim) be endorsed.

The meeting commenced at 7.30pm and closed at 8.25pm. There were six members of the public present at the start of the meeting and none at the end.

CHAIR

DATE