

**Minutes of the Meeting of the Finance and Administration Committee
held in the Town Hall on Wednesday 30 October 2019**

Present Councillor S Moysey (Chair)
Councillors S Abbott, P Anstey, M Jackson and G Sanders

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

F&A 13/19 Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillors R Hopkinson and D Jones.

F&A 14/19 Public Question Time and Petitions

Representatives from Alzheimer's Support and Olive Branch Counselling asked the Committee to support their grant applications (*see Minute F&A 17/19*).

F&A 15/19 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.

There were none.

F&A 16/19 Matters Arising from the Minutes of the Finance and Administration Committee Meeting held on 28 August 2019.

There were no matters arising.

F&A 17/19 Grant Applications (Fourth Round)

Four grant applications were considered.

Resolved

- i) That Corsham Town Football Club be awarded £340 towards upgrading hand mower, spiker and strimmer for upkeep of the grounds.
- ii) That Alzheimer's Support be awarded £500 towards venue hire for the Music and Mind Group which is run in Corsham
- iii) That Corsham Bowls Club be awarded £500 towards Phase 3 of Renovation/Replacement of the Green – Removal of hedge, and replacement fence.

Section 137 Applications

Deferred from June 2019

- iv) That Olive Branch Counselling be awarded £500 towards funding an administrator to assist volunteer counsellors for the counselling service which covers North Wiltshire.

F&A 18/19 Detailed Income and Expenditure Accounts (including the Town Hall)

The Committee reviewed and noted the Income and Expenditure Accounts and Financial Report.

F&A 19/19 Internal Audit Report 2019/20 (First Interim)

The report from the interim visit and a draft response were discussed. The internal auditor had made two recommendations. Recommendation 1 related to the administration fee for the cemetery loan and Recommendation 2 related to unclaimed VAT on a grounds maintenance invoice. Both of these matters had been addressed.

Resolved

That the draft response to the Internal Audit Report 2019/20 (First Interim) be endorsed.

F&A 20/19 Appointment of Internal Auditors 2020/21

Formal note of an appointment of internal auditors was required. Auditing Solutions Ltd had provided a satisfactory service since being appointed several years ago and are familiar with the Town Councils processes and procedures.

Resolved

That Auditing Solutions Ltd be appointed as the Council's Internal Auditors for 2020/21.

F&A 21/19 Annual Insurance Review (*Minute F&A 24/18*)

The Chief Executive had completed the Annual Insurance Review and no issues or concerns had been identified. The insurance cover was re-tendered in 2016 and the cover is reviewed monthly to ensure that any significant new assets or risks are covered. As reported in the August Income and Expenditure Report, an insurance claim was settled in April regarding a Town Council vehicle which hit a parked vehicle in August 2018. This had not affected the current premium. It was reported that the insurer's file relating to a tree on Neston Recreation Ground had been closed as the claim had not been pursued.

Resolved

That the Annual Insurance Review be noted.

F&A 22/19 Draft Budget 2020/21 (Minute SP 05/19)

Further to the Strategic Planning Working Group meeting on 16 September, the income and expenditure report (*DRAFT for 2020/21 column*) showed the draft budget for the next year. Wiltshire Council was due to issue draft Council Tax Base figures on 4 November. This would enable the Chief Executive to calculate the percentage difference per Band D Equivalent property, which is different to the percentage increase in the Precept. The draft budget for 2020/21 currently indicated an increase in the precept of 19.36% but there was scope to refine the figures. The budget process was ongoing and would be presented in more detail at the December Committee meeting.

Resolved

That draft budget projections for increases on a Band D Equivalent property of 10% and 15%, along with the current projection, be prepared by the Chief Executive for consideration at the next meeting.

F&A 23/19 Local Government Finance Settlement 2020/21, Technical Consultation

The Government was consulting on proposals for the local government finance settlement for 2020-21. The Chief Executive had raised the following issues:

- Section 5.3 did not make any reference to the assets and services being transferred from principal councils, which was adding further pressure to town and parish council budgets.
- In response to paragraph 5.3.1, the use of reserves to reduce council tax increases was not financially sustainable.
- Regarding paragraph 5.3.2, the pressure on taxpayers was due to reductions in funding of principal councils, resulting in them transferring services and costs down the line, as opposed to town and parish councils not exercising constraint.

In addition, it was stated that town and parish councils increasingly needed to spend on infrastructure projects which were previously funded through local authorities e.g. cycle networks, road safety improvements and new cemeteries. Section 106 and Community Infrastructure Levy receipts alone were insufficient for major projects, meaning local councils must increase council tax or borrow money.

Resolved

That the Town Council responds to the consultation, highlighting the issues raised.

The meeting commenced at 7.30pm and closed at 8.16pm. There were two members of the public present at the start of the meeting and none at the end.

CHAIRMAN

DATE