

LEDBURY TOWN COUNCIL

**MINUTES OF A FINANCE, POLICY & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE HELD
ON
26 JANUARY 2023**

PRESENT: Councillors Bradford, Eakin, Howells and Sinclair

ALSO PRESENT: Angela Price – Town Clerk
Charlotte Barltrop – Minute Taker

F542 RESOLVED:

That in the absence of both the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Committee, Members elected Councillor Eakin to act as Chair for the purpose of this meeting.

F543 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Harvey and Hughes.

F544 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were received.

F545 NOLAN PRINCIPLES

RESOLVED:

That the Nolan Principles be received and noted.

F546 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

No members of the public were present.

F547 TO APPROVE AND SIGN AS A CORRECT RECORD THE MINUTES OF A MEETING OF FINANCE, POLICY & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE HELD ON 24 NOVEMBER 2022

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of a meeting of the Finance, Policy and General-Purpose Committee held on 24 November 2022 be approved and signed as a correct record.

F548 TO REVIEW THE ACTION SHEET

That item F530(2) be marked as Completed.

RESOLVED:

That the Action Sheet be received and noted.

F549 TO APPROVE INVOICES FOR PAYMENT FOR OCTOBER, NOVEMBER, AND DECEMBER 2022

RESOLVED:

That the invoices for payment in the sum of £10,098.79 (incl. VAT) be approved.

F550 TO RECEIVE THE RECORD OF RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS FOR OCTOBER, NOVEMBER, AND DECEMBER 2022

RESOLVED:

That the receipts and payments for October, November and December 2022 be received and noted.

F551 TO RECEIVE THE BALANCE SHEET AND TRIAL BALANCE FOR MONTHS 7, 8 AND 9

RESOLVED:

That the balance sheet and trial balance for months 7, 8 and 9 be received and noted.

F552 2022/23 BUDGET MONITORING

Councillor Sinclair asked about the overspend on the Cemetery budget lines 4170, Maintenance, and 4250, Tree Works and Property Maintenance. It was established that this was in respect of the refurbishment works to the Chapel and works to remove the ivy from the perimeter wall adjacent to the football club, noting that it had been agreed that these overspends on these two items would be taken from the Council's General Reserve.

RESOLVED:

That the 2022/23 Budget Monitoring report be received and noted.

F553 TO CONFIRM VERIFICATION OF BANK STATEMENTS AND RECONCILIATIONS FOR OCTOBER, NOVEMBER, AND DECEMBER 2022

That this item was deferred to the next meeting of the Committee to allow the Chair to confirm that this had been completed.

F554 2023/24 FEES & CHARGES

Councillor Sinclair proposed that there be no increase in fees and charges for council services in the 2023/24 financial year. Councillor Howells asked whether not increasing the fees and charges would affect the 2023/24 draft budget outcome; the Clerk advised that any proposed increase in fees had not been taken into account in the 2023/24 draft budget to date.

RESOLVED:

That the fees and charges are not increased in the 2023/24 financial year.

F555 2023/24 DRAFT BUDGET

a. Draft Budget 2023/24

Councillor Sinclair proposed that the budget as presented and with a precept increase of 4.25% be recommended for approval at Full Council. Councillor Eakin seconded this.

Councillor Sinclair questioned whether page 3042 line 22, Great Places to Visit, should be included. It was agreed that this line should be included, to show the income and expenditure in the projected outturn of the Council, it was agreed that CGF be added to indicate that it was 2Central Government Funding”.

The Clerk asked Members to consider whether they felt £7,500 would be sufficient for the Events Budget taking into account the King’s Coronation. It was noted that the Coronation Task & Finish Group had recommended that local companies be approached to help fund this event and therefore it was agreed that there was no need to increase the budget for events.

Members were keen to reduce the percentage increase to between 3 & 4% and agreed that as the cost of the War Memorial repairs would be funded from the Earmarked Reserves, there did not appear to be any reason the £5,000 in line 8 on page 3044 “War Memorial Refurbishment” was needed. The Clerk advised that if the removed this £5,000 it would reduce the percentage increase to the precept to 3.44%.

Following discussion as outlined above, Councillor Sinclair withdrew his proposal, which Councillor Eakin was in agreement with, as the seconder to the motion, and proposed the following, seconded by Councillor Eakin.

“That the 2023/24 draft budget be recommended to Council for approval with an anticipated precept figure for the 2023/24 financial year of £640,671, which is an increase from £174.18 to £180.17. The increase equates to an annual increase of £5.99 which is an increase of 3.44% (£0.49 per month increase) per Band D equivalent properties.”

RESOLVED:

- 1. That line 8 on page 3044, War Memorial Refurbishment be removed from within the draft budget.**

2. That the 2023/24 draft budget be recommended to Council for approval with an anticipated precept figure for the 2023/24 financial year of £640,671, which is an increase from £174.18 to £180.17. The increase equates to an annual increase of £5.99 which is an increase of 3.44% (£0.49 per month increase) per Band D equivalent properties.”
3. That the Special Projects listed within the 2023/24 Draft Budget papers be funded from the Council’s General and Earmarked Reserves accordingly.

b. 2022/23 Movements from General and Earmarked Reserves

RESOLVED:

That the draft proposals for movements from the Council Reserves be noted and that they revisit any underspends/overspends on the 2022/23 budget following the 2022/23-year end closedown.

F556 BANKING CHARGE COMPARISON

Councillor Sinclair presented a report which showed the difference between the current monthly charges on the Lloyds Bank account in comparison to two accounts which are offered by Unity Bank and one account which is offered by Starling Bank.

It was noted that the Starling account would offer a monthly saving of £38 compared to the current Lloyds account, which is lower than the other accounts being considered.

It was also noted that the Starling account would enable to Council to cash cheques up to the sum of £300 per transaction, as and when required for petty cash, locally from the post office

RESOLVED:

That the Clerk be instructed to switch Ledbury Town Council bank account to Starling Bank as soon as possible.

F557 RECOMMENDATIONS FROM OTHER COMMITTEES

RESOLVED:

1. That the recommendation to appoint Sports and Play Consulting as and when required on the terms as outlined by the Deputy Clerk for the purchase of new children’s play equipment be approved.
2. That the additional sum of no more than £750 to enable Pear Mapping to complete the outstanding works be approved.

3. That officers be authorised to instruct the company who carried out the works to the ivy at the cemetery to date to return and complete the ivy removal at a cost of £1,400.00 plus VAT.
4. That the following requests from the Events Working Party and the Climate Change Working Party be approved:
 - 4.1 £2,000 for World Book Day, to be taken from the 2022/23 Events Budget.
 - 4.2 £2,000 for Climate Change Working Party, to include the Great Big Green Week Event in June 2023, to be included in the 2023/24 budget.

F558 DSE ASSESSMENTS FOR OFFICE STAFF

RESOLVED:

That the Clerk be authorised to engage Worknest to undertake DSE Assessments for all office staff at a cost of £885 plus VAT, noting that as an employer they are required to ensure that these assessments are undertaken in accordance with Health & Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations 1992.

F559 LOCAL GOVERNMENT PENSION SCHEME - V2 AGREEMENT TO THE PROPOSED CONTRIBUTIONS OUTCOME OF THE 2022 ACTUARIAL VALUATION

RESOLVED:

That a recommendation be made to the meeting of Council scheduled for 2 February 2023, that the attached form be completed, signed and returned to WLGPS no later than close of business on 10 February 2023, noting that there are no figures included in the 2023/26 Deficit recover amount of the 2022 Actuarial Variation Contribution Projections as set out in the 31 March 2022 Actuarial Valuation Report Results.

F560 PUBLIC SECTOR DEPOSIT FUND FACT SHEET 30 NOVEMBER AND 31 DECEMBER 2022

RESOLVED:

That the Public Sector Deposit Fund Fact Sheets of 30 November and 31 December 2022 be received and noted.

F561 MARCHES ENERGY GRANT

RESOLVED:

That the Clerk be instructed to make application for an energy efficiency assessment of the Council Offices, following which the concluding report be provided to a future meeting of the Environment & Leisure Committee for review prior to signing up for any help that the scheme can offer to improve energy efficiency and costs at Ledbury Town Council.

F562 SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

RESOLVED:

That the Draft Social Media Policy be approved.

Governance

F563 GENERAL DATA PROTECTION REGULATIONS (GDPR)

RESOLVED:

That the Clerk identify a date for a GDPR Task and Finish meeting noting that Councillors Howells, Hughes and Sinclair have agreed to participate in this.

F564 TO REVIEW RISK REGISTER PART 4 – COUNCIL PROPERTIES

That the Council's Disaster Recovery Plan be reviewed at the earliest convenience.

Line 3 should be amended to read *“HC gritting routes, LTC grit bins and adequate supplies of salt.”*

RESOLVED:

That Properties Section (Part 4) of the Risk Register be approved subject to the following amendments:

- 1. That the Council's Disaster Recovery Plan be reviewed at the earliest convenience.**
- 2. Line 3 should be amended to read *“HC gritting routes, LTC grit bins and adequate supplies of salt.”***

F565 TO RECEIVE AND NOTE THE MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE GRANTS WORKING PARTY HELD ON 30 NOVEMBER AND 21 DECEMBER 2022 AND TO GIVE CONSIDERATION TO ANY RECOMMENDATIONS THEREIN

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of a meeting of a meeting of the Grants Working Party held on 30 November and 21 December 2022 be received and noted.

F566 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

THE NEXT MEETING OF THE FINANCE, POLICY & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE IS SCHEDULED TO TAKE PLACE ON THURSDAY, 23 MARCH 2023 AT 7.00 PM, AND WILL TAKE PLACE IN THE LEDBURY TOWN COUNCIL OFFICE, CHURCH LANE

RESOLVED:

To note that the date of the next meeting of the Finance, Policy & General Purposes Committee is scheduled for Thursday, 23 March 2023.

The meeting ended at 7.58pm.

Signed Dated
(Chair)