



**Minutes of the Meeting of Finance & Administration Committee held at 18:45
on Tuesday 10 January 2023 in the Main Hall of the Village Hall**

Present: **Councillors**
J Lortie (Chair)
A Craven
P Harrison
A Holland
P Holland
B Honeyman
J Stennett

In Attendance: Catherine Horsley (Town Clerk & RFO)
Rachel Virrill (Deputy Town Clerk– Minute taker)

Public Participation

There were four members of the public present, none of whom wished to speak.

FA 22/26 To Receive and Accept apologies for absence (LGA 1972 s85 (1))

Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Cllr Sowry-House who was unable to attend due to personal commitments.

FA 22/27 To Record any declarations of interest Members to declare any interests, including Disclosable Pecuniary Interests they may have in agenda items that accord with the requirements of the Town Council's Code of Conduct and to consider any prior requests from members for Dispensations that accord with Localism Act 2011 s33(b-e) (NB this does not preclude any later declarations)

There were no declarations of interest.

FA 22/28 Paper A - To Approve minutes of meeting held on 11 October 2022 LGA 1972, sch 12, para 41

The minutes of the meeting held on 11 October 2022 were **APPROVED**.

FA 22/29 Paper B - To Approve Accounts for Payment

Cllr Craven raised the following query:

- Line 649: Was this an annual charge. The Clerk confirmed the charge was the annual fee for Councillor email accounts.

Cllr Craven noted there were a number of payments relating to pavilion maintenance and queried if the current spend was within the allocated budget. The Clerk confirmed the current spending was circa £30,000.

It was **RESOLVED** to APPROVE the accounts for payment, totalling £9,838.51.

FA 22/30 Paper C - To Receive and Note the Budget Monitoring Report for the quarter ended 31 December 2022

Cllr Craven raised the following queries:

- Line 73: Was the overspend shown under the Small Grants Programme correct. The Clerk explained the remaining balance of the Platinum Jubilee Celebration budget totalling £1506.41 formed part of the Small Grants Programme, as previously agreed.
- Line 64: What did the insurance costs relate to. The Clerk confirmed the insurance covered the Cemetery Chapel and War Memorial.

The Budget Monitoring Report for quarter ending 31 December 2022 was RECEIVED and **NOTED**.

FA 22/31 Paper D – To Review Bad Debtors and Agree How to Proceed

The Clerk presented the report, noting that while most sports teams had settled their sports pitches invoices, there were five football teams who had been chased for payment, however, there invoices totalling £250.00 remained unpaid.

Members had a robust discussion with Cllr Craven proposing to pursue the outstanding invoices via the small claims court.

Cllr Lortie suspended Standing Order 3e to allow Cllr Jefferies, as a member of the public to speak with regards to how the Corfe Mullen Sports Association (CMSA) previously dealt with unpaid sports pitches invoices. Cllr Jefferies advised that each year there were a few teams who did not settle their invoices. However, they were in the minority and fees were waived by the CMSA, due to the time and effort to chase payment.

Cllr Lortie thanked Cllr Jefferies for the information and re-instated Standing Orders.

Cllr Craven proposed Council write a letter informing the football teams they must settle their invoices, or they would be blacklisted from using the sports pitches in the future.

Cllr Lortie proposed writing off the debts and to blacklist the football teams to save on administration time and costs.

It was **RESOLVED** to write-off unsettled sports pitches invoices from August and September 2022, totalling £250.00 and not to allow the football teams to make any future bookings until outstanding invoices had been settled.

FA 22/32 Paper E - To Consider draft Budget and Precept for the 2023/24 financial year for recommendation to Full Council

The Clerk presented the proposed budget for the 2023/24 financial year, noting the draft budget had been put together alongside Cllr Lortie, as the Chair of the Finance & Administration Committee.

The Clerk provided an update on the financial position as at 31 December 2022, along with the forecasted position at the end of the 2022/23 financial year, with comments noted as follows:

- Allotments: Predicted income and expenditure was based on the Allotment Association taking on self-management of the allotment site with effect from

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1 April 2023. It was noted 60% of allotment holders would need to vote in favour of the proposal and if not, the allotment site would continue to be managed and rent payable to the Town Council.

- Utility costs were unknown, due to the current economic climate with energy costs continuing to rise.
- Recreation Ground budget had increased from £43,950 in 2022/23 to £86,350, due to taking on the management of sports provision and the sports pavilion at Corfe Mullen Recreation Ground.
- Two budget calculations had been provided, one based on including additional income from the sports pavilion lounge area, and the other excluding the income.

Cllr Lortie noted the Council was in a much better financial position than in previous years and asked members to consider each cost centre budget section rather than individual lines. Members sought clarification on the following items:

- Line 16: Budget had increased to cover the cost to replace any faulty litter bins with recycling facility bins, as and when necessary.
- Line 24: The budget covered maintenance costs of play areas and equipment.
- Line 98: The budget covered the costs to maintain amenities areas, sports pitches including tennis courts maintenance and sports pitches line marking.
- Lines 39 & 47: The proposed budget appeared higher than in previous years. The Clerk confirmed the Chairman of the Council was considering holding civic events during 2023, relating to a Thanksgiving service at St Nicholas Church and a Christmas Fair.
- Civic Regalia: What did the exceptional expenditure relate to. The Clerk confirmed the proposed budget related to replacement regalia rebranded with the Town Council crest, noting the importance of the regalia worn at civic events attended by the Mayor of the Council.

It was **RESOLVED** to recommend approval to Full Council to set the Corfe Mullen Town Council annual budget for 2023/24 financial year of £502,456.00.

Members then discussed the level of precept which would be required from Dorset Council to cover the 2023/24 budget.

Cllr Craven proposed an increase of 8.55%, noting this percentage was lower than the current rate of inflation and was necessary to cover all expenditure. This was seconded by Cllr Harrison, who noted it was positive the Council had kept the percentage increase in single figures for the 2023/24 financial year.

Of the 7 members present, five members voted in favour with Cllrs A & P Holland voting against.

Members thanked the Clerk and Deputy Clerk for their work in drafting the 2023/24 budget.

It was **RESOLVED** to recommend to Full Council to set the precept at £502,456.00, an increase of 8.55%, which would see a Band D property increasing from £116.39 to £126.34 per annum.

FA 22/33 Matters for forthcoming agendas No decisions can be taken¹

¹ Councils cannot lawfully decide items of business which are not specified in the summons/agenda (LGA1972 sch 12, paras 10(2)(b) and Longfield Parish Council v Wright (1918) 88 LJ Ch 119)

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There were no matters for forthcoming agendas.

FA 22/34 **To Agree a date and time for the next meeting** – Tuesday 9 May 2023 at 18:30 in the Main Hall of the Village Hall, Towers Way, Corfe Mullen.

FA 22/35 **Close of Meeting at 20:04.**

Signed as a correct record of the meeting..... *F. Lister* Date..... *9/5/23*.....