



**Minutes of the Meeting of Finance & Administration Committee held at 19:00
on Thursday 4 January 2024 in the small hall of the Village Hall**

Present: **Councillors**
D Sowry-House (Chair)
A Craven
S Florek
A Holland
P Holland
J Lortie
D Mattocks
J Stennett

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

Public Participation

There were 5 members of the public present, none of whom wished to speak.

FA 23/26 To Receive and Accept apologies for absence (LGA 1972 s85 (1))

There were no apologies for absence, all members were present.

FA 23/27 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)

Cllr Florek declared a non-pecuniary interest as the Chair of Friends of Corfe Mullen Library.

Cllr Craven declared a non-pecuniary interest relating to the proposed capital expenditure budget for bus shelters, due to a family members request for a new bus shelter at Windgreen on Wareham Road.

FA 23/28 Paper A - To Approve minutes of meeting held on 8 November 2023 LGA 1972, sch 12, para 41

The minutes of the meeting held on 8 November 2023 were **APPROVED**.

FA 23/29 Paper B – To Approve Accounts for Payment

The Accounts for payment totalling £7,392.96 were **APPROVED**.

FA 23/30 Paper C - To Receive and Note the Budget Monitoring Report for the quarter ended 31 December 2023

The Clerk presented the report, noting due to the timing of the meeting and distributing the summons and papers prior to 31 December 2023, the budget monitoring report was not available. However, the Clerk reported there was a

predicted underspend up to 31 December 2023 of circa £95,000, with comments noted as follows:

- Lower employee costs mainly due to a reduced grounds team, albeit some of the underspend was offset by the contracted-out pitch maintenance and grass cutting costs.
- Sports provision and pavilion lounge income was higher than anticipated.
- Increase in expenditure during Quarter 4 2023/24 for outstanding exceptional and capital work item costs, including cemetery driveway maintenance works and purchasing additional vehicle for the grounds team.

The Clerk concluded; the Town Council was in a strong financial position up to 31 December 2023.

The update for the quarter ending 31 December 2023 was **NOTED**.

FA 23/31

Paper D - To Consider draft Budget and Precept for the 2024/25 financial year for recommendation to Full Council

The Clerk presented the proposed budget for the 2024/25 financial year, highlighting the cost centres with a predicted underspend at the end of the 2024/25 financial year, with comments noted as follows:

- Predicted expenditure underspend of £76,744.55.
- Predicted increased income variance of £47,221.48.
- Total predicted surplus/underspend for the 2023/24 financial year circa £125,000 based on forecasted income and expenditure from December 2023 to March 2024.
- Due to the predicted surplus/underspend, the Clerk recommended allocating £35,000 to the pavilion refurbishment/rebuild earmarked reserves.
- Options 2 and 3 provided an amount to be used from the general reserves to reduce the level of precept.

It was **RESOLVED** to recommend approval to Full Council to set the Corfe Mullen Town Council annual budget for 2024/25 financial year at £611,125.00.

Members then discussed the level of precept required from Dorset Council to cover the 2024/25 budget and the effect of any increase on those who pay Council Tax, with members acknowledging the cost-of-living crisis, alongside the Town Council's responsibility to provide services within the community.

Cllr Craven proposed option 2, an increase of 9.73%. This was seconded by Cllr Florek.

Cllr Mattocks proposed an increase of 7%, which he felt was more acceptable to Council Taxpayers rather than the three percentage rates noted within the report. This was seconded by Cllr Lortie with 5 members voting in favour.

It was **RESOLVED** to recommend to Full Council to set the precept at £537,395.50, an increase of 7%, which would see a Band D property increasing from £126.34 to £135.18 per annum with £73,729.50 of general reserves used to reduce the deficit.

It was **RESOLVED** to recommend to Full Council to transfer £35,000 of general reserves to the pavilion refurbishment/rebuild earmarked reserves.

FA 23/32 Matters for forthcoming agendas No decisions can be taken¹

There were no matters for forthcoming agendas.

FA 23/33 To Agree a date and time for the next meeting – Tuesday 21 May 2024 at 19:00
in the Small Hall of the Village Hall, Towers Way, Corfe Mullen.

FA 23/34 Close of Meeting at 19:48.

Signed as a correct record of the meeting..... *F. Lathie*Date..... *22/5/24*

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)

