

Sevenoaks Town Council

Notes of the advisory meeting of the Finance & General Purposes Committee Held on 17th January 2022 via Zoom

Livestreamed on YouTube: <https://youtu.be/OtPmLMfpHjI>

Arrangements During COVID 19

Sevenoaks Town Council is endeavouring where possible to continue with its day-to-day activities. There are still public health restrictions and "Council Meetings" via Zoom are not currently permitted.

This advisory meeting was held by electronic means in accordance with the emergency measures agreed at the meeting of the Town Council held on 6th December 2021 (*Minute 411 refers*).

Meeting commenced: 7.00pm

Meeting Concluded: 7.47 pm

Present:

Cllr Tony Clayton, Chairman	Present	Cllr Roderick Hogarth	Present
Cllr Keith Bonin, Vice-Chairman	Apologies	Cllr Tom Morris Brown	Apologies
Cllr Sue Camp	Apologies	Cllr Robert Piper	Apologies
Cllr Dr Merylyn Canet, Mayor (from 7.11pm)	Present	Cllr Simon Raikes	Present
Cllr Andrew Eyre	Present	Cllr Edward Waite	Apologies
Cllr Victoria Granville-Baxter (from 7.02pm)	Present		

Substitute		For
Cllr Richard Parry	Present	Cllr Robert Piper

In attendance: Cllr Busvine, Cllr Mrs Parry, Cllr Shea, Town Clerk, Responsible Financial Officer and Senior Committee Clerk.

Representations received from Members of the Public: None

461. Apologies for Absence

As noted above.

462. Dispensations

There were no requests for dispensations.

463. Declaration of Interest

Cllr Raikes declared a pecuniary interest in respect of street lighting matters included in Agenda Item 10, Current Matters, insofar as they related to Woodside Road.

464. Minutes of the Finance & General Purposes Committee on 22nd November 2021

RESOLVED: To receive and sign the Minutes of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held on 22nd November 2021 as a true record.

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465. Finance Reports

465.1 Management Accounts 1st to 30th November and 1st to 31st December 2021

The Committee received and noted, for the periods 1st to 30th November 2021 and 1st to 31st December 2021, the Responsible Finance Officer's Report with Variance Analysis, Income and Expenditure, Working Capital Summary and Statement of Fund Balances, together with:

- Suppliers Accounts:
1st to 30th November 2021, Balance £65,987.96
1st to 31st December 2021, Balance £53,954.33
- Payroll Accounts:
1st to 30th November 2021, Balance £79,373.97
1st to 31st December 2021, Balance £84,886.34
- Petty Cash Accounts:
1st to 30th November 2021, Balance £892.25
1st to 31st December 2021, Balance £906.54

It was noted that the year-to-date position at the end of December 2021 gave a revenue surplus of £42,077. Adjusted for required Bat & Ball Station Management & Maintenance Reserves movement (YTD deficit of £31,611 to be adjusted at year end), the position was an adjusted surplus of £73,688. There were a number of cost commitments later in the year but a full year surplus of at least £30,000 was predicted.

The Responsible Finance Officer proposed that contingency funds be used to meet the costs of the cleaning and repointing of the St Nicholas War Memorial (less grant received of £1,820) and the cost of filming and livestreaming the Remembrance Day Service. The unspent contingency balance after meeting these costs would be £59,537.

At the Sevenoaks Town Council meeting held on 6th December 2021, the 2022/23 precept of £1,295,675 was agreed. The Committee noted that Sevenoaks District Council had now confirmed that the Band D number for 2022/23 was 9766.28. This meant that the 2022/23 precept costs each Band D equivalent £132.67 per year or £2.55 per week. This was a 3.24% increase compared to 2021/22, equivalent to 8p per week.

RESOLVED:

- 1) To accept the Management Accounts 1st to 30th November 2021 and 1st to 31st December 2021;
- 2) To approve the following expenditure from contingency:
 - £2,004.62 towards the costs of cleaning and repointing the St Nicholas War Memorial (remainder met by £1,820 grant)
 - £2,861 for the costs of filming and livestreaming the Remembrance Day Service

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- 3) To note that following confirmation of the Band D number for 2022/23 the precept costs each Band D equivalent £132.67 per year or £2.55 per week. This was a 3.24% increase compared to 2021/22, equivalent to 8p per week.

465.2 Hospitality and Gifts Register

The Committee noted the following hospitality received in the period 1st November to 31st December 2021:

Date	Donor	Recipient	Item	Value
21.12.21	Theis & Khan Architects	Town Clerk	M&S Hamper	Approx £40
24.12.21	Wettons Cleaning services Ltd	Facilities Manager	Hamper	Approx £40

466 Review of Internal Controls

The Committee considered the following documents. It was noted that there were a couple of points where the wording could be tightened up: the Responsible Finance Officer was asked to address these at the next review.

466.1 Financial Regulations 2022/23

RESOLVED:

To adopt the updated Financial Regulations 2022/2023.

466.2 Internal Policies 2022/2023

(i) Investment Strategy, Policy and Risk Management 2022/23

It was agreed that it would be useful for the Responsible Financial Officer, Town Clerk and some councillors to undertake training in investment management.

RESOLVED that:

- 1) the Investment Strategy, Policy and Risk Management 2022/2023 be adopted, and
- 2) alternative investments be explored including fixed term investments and CCLA Property fund for Revenue reserves brought forward and balances more than three months working capital (precept), to be reported to a future meeting.

(ii) Reserves Policy 2022/2023

RESOLVED:

To adopt the Reserves Policy 2022/23 with the emphasis on continuing to build revenue reserves up to a level of 6 months of precept, as part of the medium-term plan.

467 Cyber Security Update

The Committee received and noted the report outlining progress towards the basic Cyber Security Essentials accreditation and advising of the Town Council's participation in a free pilot of the Government's Cyber Defence Services currently

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available to principal authorities. Training was being arranged for staff and councillors.

468 Bligh's Market Lease Renewal

RESOLVED:

- 1) that a licence renewal is sought for the next 5 years, providing that any increase to the licence fee still results in a surplus position for Bligh's market; and
- 2) once the licence renewal fee has been received, consideration be given to the stallholder fee, to reflect any increase in cost.

469. Recruitment of Temporary Staff

469.1 Heritage Engagement Officer

RESOLVED that:

- 1) a Heritage Engagement Officer be employed for 20 hours per week on a fixed term contract for a period of up to 18 months;
- 2) the sum of £42,000 be approved for this purpose, to include £9,000 for an Activity Plan; and
- 3) the position be for an initial term of 12 months, with a review at 9 months to determine if it should be extended to a total term of 18 months.

469.2 Climate Change Project Officer

RESOLVED that:

- 1) the Climate Change Project Officer role be combined with the current vacancy of Planning Assistant (enabling staffing cover for Planning Officer) and the new temporary role be created for one year.
- 2) the additional £8,500 to cover the salary for the next financial year be covered by predicted surplus of budget at end of 2021/22 and Earmarked for this purpose.

470. Current Matters

The update on Current Matters was received and noted.

471. Press Releases

It was agreed that a press release be issued once the new Heritage Engagement Officer was appointed.

There being no further business the Chairman closed the Meeting.

Signed

Dated

Chairman