

**Finance and General Purposes Committee**  
16<sup>th</sup> December 2019 at 7.30pm  
All Saints Room, Civic Hall, Didcot



## Minutes

Note: These minutes are subject to approval as a true and correct record by the next meeting of this Committee.

### Present:

**Councillor J Moody (Chairman)**  
**Councillor P Siggers (Vice Chairman)**  
**Councillor E Hards (substitute for Cllr A Sandiford)**  
**Councillor M Walsh**  
**Councilor V Haval**  
**Councillor M McNeill**  
**Councillor A Thompson**

### Officer:

Mrs J Wheeler, Town Clerk

### Public Participation

Cllr M Khan attended later in the evening.

#### 95. Apologies

Apologies were received from Mrs S Hickman and Cllr A Sandiford. Cllr E Hards was the substitute for this meeting.

#### 96. Declarations of interests

Cllr P Siggers; Cllr M McNeil and Cllr E Hards declared an interest in item 12 as members of the Park Club.

#### 97. Minutes of the Finance Committee meeting held 25<sup>th</sup> November 2019

It was proposed by Councillor J. Moody; seconded by Councillor P Siggers:

**RESOLVED** to agree the minutes held on 25<sup>th</sup> November 2019 as a correct record.

Minute 87 had a “be” missed out – noted by Cllr V Haval.

**98. Questions on the minutes as to the progress of any item**

The Chair paged through for questions.

**99. To receive two grant reports from previous recipients**

None received.

**100. To consider grant applications**

Applications will be considered at the January meeting to allow time for the budget and precept item.

**101. To note the financial statements and budgets as at 31<sup>st</sup> October 2019**

The Committee **NOTED** the income and expenditure as at 31<sup>st</sup> October 2019. It was confirmed to Cllr V Haval that cost centre 90025 was for local elections only and was not used for the national election.

**102. To note the letter from SODC predicting the likely tax base for 2020 - 2021**

The information was noted along with the response date. The Town Clerk had contacted SODC to request a small extension to allow for tabling the proposed precept at the Full Council meeting on 13<sup>th</sup> January 2020.

**103. To receive the draft budget report for 2020- 2021**

Further reports had been circulated to all members and a revised paper copy for tonight’s meeting. The Chair introduced each budget section and various cost centres were discussed.

**1171 – Contingency** – it was AGREED that this should be reduced from £30,000 to £20,000.

**1243 - PCSO Funding** - The PCSO contract was queried. The Clerk had tried to contact them but without success. It was AGREED that no further payments would be made without contact with them.

**1235 - Civic Functions** - Cllr E Hards declared an interest in as the current Deputy Mayor. To be rounded up to £2,300.

**1160 - IT Maintenance/Website** – Keep at £12,000. The monies for the wi-fi would come from S106 contributions.

**1268 – Election** would be kept at £20,000 and the 90025 cost centre would be deleted.

**2187 - Summer Fayre** – it was AGREED to reduce the £9,000 to £4,000 due to profits on last year being carried over.

**1944 - Christmas lights** – £18,000 would include £15,000 for the contract and £3,000 to cover the electricity which is separately billed.

**3188 - Grant Aid** – increase from £40,000 to £45,000. Cllr V Haval clarified that it was not possible for District Councillors to use their grant money on parish council projects.

**3124 – Telephone Works** – change to £150

**3127 – Subscriptions** – reduce down to £225

**3141 – Vehicle fuel** – reduce down to £5,000

**3145 – Machinery** – keep at £12,500

**9034 – Ford Ranger Pick-Up** – round up to £3,200

**9039 – Ransomes HR300 Rotary** – reduce down to £5,150

**9045 – Ransomes Parkway 3** – reduce down to £1,200 – contract coming to an end

**32504 – Nissan Tipper Van Lease** – extended for six months until March 2020 – keep at £7,000

**32519 – John Deere** – keep at £3,936 – new vehicle on a 60 month deal

**3383 – Cemetery Fees** – keep at £16,675

#### **Edmonds Park**

**3152 – Electricity** – reduce down to £850

**3154 – Maintenance** – keep at £8,660

**3155 – Security** – keep at 1,443

**3170 – Waste recycling** – keep at £8,454

#### **Ladygrove**

**3165 – Ladygrove Lakes** – keep at £11,000

There was a discussion on the cost to purchase two solar powered pumps around £6,500 confirmed by email from Outdoor Services Manager.

**It was AGREED that a new budget centre to cover the pumps and power station at £7,000. Now 3154 Maintenance (Ladygrove lakes)**

**3185 – Lakes income** – reduce to £0 for this year whilst lakes recover

#### **Environmental Services**

**3159 – Grass Cutting** – keep to a 3% rise to £22,660

3180; 3184 and 3186 is income for sports hire; funfair hire and income from OCC towards the grass-cutting in 3159.

**9031 – Tree Management** – keep at £5,000 to fund a rolling maintenance programme

**9058 – Building projects** – keep at £25,000 to pay for architects

**9059 – Bus Shelter** – transfer £10,000 to 90030 and delete 9059

**9060 – Noticeboard** – keep £900 as part of a rolling programme

**32503 – Ladygrove Lakes** – delete £10,000 as covered by other cost centres

**32525 – Pavilion Build** – keep at £0 as monies available from other cost centres

**32597 – Pavilions Project to be renamed Temporary storage** - £1,000 for storage only, reduced from £40,000

Cllr M Walsh wanted to keep the £40,000 in the cost centre for project manager costs. The Chair wanted a business plan to justify the employment of this person. The vote on removing £39,000 from this cost centre was AGREED with a vote against from Cllr M Walsh.

**32599 – Splash Park** – keep at £200,000 – on the grounds that £120,000 should be covered by CIL and it is likely to cost DTC around £80,000. This is an estimate. Meetings are ongoing to progress this project.

**32587 – CIL S106 income** – increase to £100,000 – based on likely CIL

**32581 – Grants** money must be held at £0 as we do not have any promised grants to put in the budget.

**4014 – Light & Heat** – leave at £24,000

**4015 – Cleaning & Hygiene** – It was proposed by Cllr M Walsh and seconded by Cllr A Thompson to give notice to our current contractor and leave the budget at £15,000. TUPE would apply but this would be resolved from another contractor if DTC decides to go that route. This decision would need to be noted by the Civic Hall Management Committee and the way forward resolved by this Committee.

**4018 – Waste Disposal** – leave at £3,000

**4022 – Telephone** – keep to £500

**4044 – Maintenance Contracts** – It was AGREED that work needs to be done to clarify the duties and responsibilities of different contracts. Keep at £15,000

**4046 – IT/Website** – reduce down to £2,000. A recent test on the DTC website scored 87% compliance.

## **INCOME**

**1011 – Millbrook Room (new room)** – reduce to £2,000

**1005 Weddings** – reduce down to £1,000

**1178 – Customer advertising** – keep at £100

## **BAR SALES**

- 3000 – Bar purchases** – keep at £16,500
- 3010 – Bar Wages** – reduce to £1,500
- 3020 – Bar Sundries** – increase to £500
- 1050 – Bar Sales** – reduce to £25,000

Further clarification of these cost centres is not possible due to the long term absence of the Civic Hall Manager.

Cllr V Haval requested further clarification of 3100 and 1075 – this would be done at the next meeting of the Civic Hall Management Committee.

## **EAR-MARKED RESERVES**

- 90001 – Vat Payment** – the allowance of £60,000 was noted pending the response from HMRC
- 90011 – Building Maintenance Fund** – deleted and see 1940
- 90015 – Depot Fund** – deleted
- 90025 – Election Fund** – deleted
- 90026 – Ladygrove Lakes staging** – deleted and see 9056 and 3165
- 90027 – Building Project Fees** – deleted and see 9058
- 90028 – CIL** – deleted and see 32587
- 90029 – GDPR** – this should be reduced to £500
- 90030 – Bus Shelters** – deleted and see 9059
- 90031 – CCTV** – deleted and see 1271

It was proposed to amend 9051 cost centre for May Day WW11 with £3,000 allocated.

Approx: BUDGET INCOME = £1,475,407  
Approx: BUDGET EXPENDITURE = £1,700,259  
Approx: BUDGET DEFICIT = -£224,862

## **DISCUSSION OF THE PRECEPT REQUEST**

1176 – Precept – A paper was prepared by the Town Clerk to show how the precept is arrived at using the estimated tax base from SODC. The current precept is £1,000,636 but with approximately 400 new homes in Didcot it was possible to increase the precept with a small overall increase in council tax.

This paper was discussed and the Chair proposed an increase to £1,050,667.80. This would give an average Band D property a modest increase from £106.53 per annum to £108.19 – an increase of £1.66 a year or 13p per month. This was seconded by Cllr P Siggers.

### **104. To review any response from HMRC regarding the VAT status of the Civic Hall**

The Town Council is still awaiting any information from HMRC. Our contractor is in contact on our behalf and it makes it difficult to finalise our budget without their response.

### **105. To consider applications for a grant to run the Town Fayre 2020**

No applications have been received. It was AGREED to extend the applications up to the end of January and then the Town Council will need to make a decision on whether the event can take place.

**106. To receive the quarterly usage report from Willowbrook**

The report was noted and Park would be asked to include the Didcot Town Council crest on all branding.

**107. To receive the bi-annual CCTV reports**

These reports were noted. The Committee were interested in a visit to the control rooms.

**108. Exclusion of the press and public**

**RESOLVED:** pursuant to Section 1 of the Public Bodies [Admission to Meetings] Act 1960 to exclude the press and public from the meeting on the grounds that publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

**109. To receive a report on staff salaries and staff movement**

A full report was noted concerning the total cost of employment of staff to administer Council services; work outside on Council-owned land and in the Civic Hall. The Committee requested that the salary costs should be divided among several cost centres so that pension and National insurance costs can be seen. It was noted that there is a current national pay review which has been held up by the General Election. It is not known when this will be resolved. Several staff are contractually due to increase by one spinal column point.

The Town Clerk also included a complete breakdown for all three staff centres and an estimate of employment costs for 2020- 2021:

1101 – Administrative employment costs £240,000

3101 – Outside staff employment costs £270,000

4001 – Civic Hall staff employment costs £120,000

**110. To discuss an insurance claim from a member of staff**

The Committee noted the insurance claim which is being progressed.

Meeting closed at 10.04pm.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Chairman      Date \_\_\_\_\_