



EVESHAM TOWN COUNCIL



MINUTES OF THE FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE MEETING
HELD ON MONDAY 9TH JANUARY 2023
IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, EVESHAM TOWN HALL AT 6:30PM

PRESENT: Councillors: Robert Raphael (Acting Chairman), Mark Goodge, Alan Booth, Frances Smith, Sarah Schaathun, Tim Haines, Beryl Timbrell and Sue Amor

ALSO PRESENT: Councillors: John Clatworthy and Robert Hale
Two trustees of the Samuel Wallace Smedley Trust; two representatives of P.A.L. Fitness and Education; representative of Evesham Rugby Club; 1 member of the public

OFFICERS PRESENT: Jo Adams, Town Clerk

1. To receive apologies for absence

Apologies had been received from Cllrs Marlene Sale and Andrew Dyke.

2. Declarations of pecuniary or other interests

Cllrs Goodge and Booth for item 4 as trustees for Shopmobility.

3. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

It was resolved that the minutes of the meeting held on 7th November 2022 be adopted as a true record.

4. Grant applications

It was resolved to award the following grants:

Organisation	Project	Amount Requested	Rec'd in 2021 £	Agreed 2022 £
Inclusive Cycling Project	To bring exercise with specialist adapted bikes to provide cycling sessions for people with disabilities.	1,650	0	1,650

Organisation	Project	Amount Requested	Rec'd in 2021 £	Agreed 2022 £
Shopmobility	To support new and existing clients with the ability to get around Evesham	1,500	1,040	1,200
Road Lighting Blind Lane	To provide adequate and secure lighting across the access and entrance to Evesham Sports facilities	5,250	0	2,650

5. Budget and Precept

The committee discussed the draft budget and its impact on the precept. The following were noted:

The income was anticipated to be broadly similar to the previous year. Grants had been excluded as any awarded grants could be expected to show a matching spend.

Some of the budget figures had been amended based on last year's actual spend or indications from the current year's spend. There were many costs that were repeatable and fixed, such as the costs of rent and contracts. Other budget headings had been increased because there was a need or desire to carry out certain projects during the financial year.

These included:

- The NJC pay rise for 2022/23 +3%. The additional admin salaries were also included.
- An increased budget for software licences as this was overspent.
- Health & Safety including fire extinguisher services, and to fund the new contract for H&S consultancy and support services.
- Internal maintenance of the Town Hall: The budget had been increased to meet the need of internal maintenance being investigated by the working group. The budget was based on redecoration works, as well as routine maintenance.
- Increase in funds available for the council's Small Grants Scheme to provide additional support for town organisations.
- 2023 elections: a budget of £23,000 for the elections in May 2023. Additional elections resulting from casual vacancies were not funded.
- Battleton Brook, for tree works.
- Bus Shelters: The council had received complaints over the state of its bus shelters. The £5,000 budget would make a start on addressing this.
- Trees: Inspections were needed on the council's many trees, the budget included funds to put towards tree works required following these inspections.
- Buildings Maintenance, Cemetery: work was identified for the cemetery chapel buildings, following the recent condition report. The budget would make a start on addressing these issues. Maintenance was also required for cemetery outbuildings.
- Loan Repayment: Discussed further at item 6.

Trustees of the Samuel Wallace Smedley Trust spoke about the financial pressures facing the Trust and requested support of £40,000. The council had already budgeted £21,000 for 2023/24 and were minded to support an additional £19,000 towards the running of the Trust, and to add this to the budget.

The committee resolved to agree the draft budget and recommend adoption to council with the inclusion of the additional £19,000 for Wallace House.

The committee discussed the options of increases to the precept alongside funding some of the budget requirement from reserves. It was resolved to put forward three proposals for discussion at council, which were:

- i. That a precept be set of £749,708. This would draw £706,992 from taxation resulting in an annual charge to a Band D property of £75.58, a monthly increase of £1.02 per month. For this recommendation, the additional requested support for Wallace House of £19,000 would be drawn from reserves. This would be in addition to the proposed £100,000 being drawn from reserves for the Almonry project.
- ii. That a precept be set of £728,708. This would draw £685,990 from taxation resulting in an annual charge to a Band D property of £73.32, a monthly increase of £0.83 per month. For this recommendation, the support for Wallace House totalling £40,000 would be drawn from reserves. This would be in addition to the proposed £100,000 being drawn from reserves for the Almonry project.
- iii. That a precept be set of £694,900. This would draw £652,182 from taxation resulting in an annual charge to a Band D property of £69.71, a monthly increase of £0.53 per month. For this recommendation, £73,810 would be drawn from reserves. This would be in addition to the proposed £100,000 being drawn from reserves for the Almonry project.

6. Matchfund Loan

At the Extraordinary Town Council meeting it had been agreed that the council would meet the 10% match fund required under the terms and conditions of its application to the MEND fund. It was resolved to recommend to council that a loan of £160,000 be applied for, together with the £100,000 drawn from council reserves. It was further resolved to recommend that the repayment amount for the loan be set at £12,000 per year with the term set (at current rates) to 21 years, and that should interest rates change by the time the loan was taken out, that the term of the loan be increased to retain the annual repayment at £12,000.

7. Review of fees

The current fees were reviewed. It was resolved to increase the fees by 10%, to take account of increasing costs including heating and maintenance.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 8.30pm.

Date of next meeting: 20th March 2023

Cllr Andrew Dyke
Chairman