



EVESHAM TOWN COUNCIL



MINUTES OF THE FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE MEETING
HELD ON MONDAY 4th DECEMBER 2023
IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, EVESHAM TOWN HALL AT 6:30PM

PRESENT: Councillors: Cllrs M. Goodge (Chair), A. Booth, Mrs S. Schaathun, Mrs S. Amor, S. Brotherton, J. Clatworthy, Ms A. Lyon and Mrs C. Smith

ALSO PRESENT: Mr H. Hutchinson, Chair of Trustees for the Samuel Wallace Smedley Trust

OFFICERS PRESENT: Mrs J. Adams, Town Clerk

1. To receive apologies for absence

Apologies had been received from Cllr R. Raphael.

2. Declarations of pecuniary or other interests

There were none.

3. Minutes of the Meeting

It was resolved that the minutes of the meeting held on 4th September 2023 be adopted as a true record.

4. Draft Budget

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:

- Events: Increased by £3,600 to pay for Bands in the Park. £3,600 for 12 performances.
- Staff Costs: The draft 2024/25 budget reflected the recent pay rise of £1,925 per role pro rata +3%.

- Maintenance, Town Hall: Set to include 50% funding of replacement of the most windows, balustrades for hall windows and internal decoration.
- Elections: Elections had been called for the last three casual vacancies. Although October's election was uncontested, there was no guarantee of this for future vacancies and it was prudent for the council to be cautious. A budget of £24,000 was proposed.
- Trees: £5,000 proposed for 2024/25.
- Buildings Maintenance, Cemetery: Repairs needed to the roof of one of the cemetery outbuildings. Another needs a replacement door and repairs. Repairs are required to the cemetery chapels. A £6,000 budget has been advised.
- Grounds Maintenance: The council has started a programme of maintenance on its tarmac paths. This budget is set to allow continuation of this work over the next 5 - 10 years to get the paths up to standard.

It was noted that the taxbase for 2024/25 was not yet known.

The committee wished for an additional £1,500 to be budgeted for repairs to the War Memorial.

Two recommendations to put to council were agreed. These were:

1. That the budget be accepted requiring a precept of £849,208. This would draw £806,490 from taxation resulting in an annual charge to a Band D property of £86.20, a monthly increase of £0.89 per month or approximately 20p per week.
2. That the budget be accepted requiring £849,208 and in addition that the council consider an additional grant up to £30,000 to Wallace House (in addition to the existing £20,000 allocation). This option would result in an increase in taxation for a Band D property of £1.15 per month or approximately 27p per week.

5. Budget and Expenditure

The budget monitor for Q2 2023 was noted.

Public Questions

Mr Hutchinson explained that 40 High Street was in need of critical repairs. The building was owned by the trust and previously let out, with the income contributing towards the running of Wallace House. In addition, the building used by Wallace House as the community centre itself was in need of maintenance. However, the repairs to 40 High Street were more urgent and were preventing the building from being useable and providing income for the trust.

The trust was intending to approach another funder but wished to have secured a grant from the council before they did this.

Surveys had been carried out on 40 High Street to ascertain repair and maintenance costs. Councillors requested sight of the building repair costs identified. Mr Hutchinson agreed to supply additional information and attend a future meeting to explain the project in more

detail alongside another trustee. It was also suggested that the other funder be approached in advance, to see if they would be able to help.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 7.30pm

Date of next meeting: 19th February 2024

Clr Mark Goodge
Chairman

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