



Notice of a Meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee

David Ashlee Town Clerk and Chief Executive

Date: 9 November 2020

Dear Councillor,

Please note that a remote meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee will be held on **Monday 16 November 2020 at 7.00 p.m.** using Microsoft Teams.

Members of the public and press who wish to attend the remote meeting are welcome to do so and should notify their intention to attend by emailing Ian.Reed@dunstable.gov.uk by **5 p.m. on Friday 13 November 2020**. Instructions on how to join will then be sent out in advance of the meeting

AGENDA

1. Apologies for Absence.
2. To approve the Minutes of the Meeting of Finance and General Purposes Committee held on 21 September 2020 (copies previously circulated).
3. Specific Declarations of Interest.
4. Financial Monitoring Report (see page 3).
5. Christmas Service Operations; Grove House Repairs, Maintenance and Staffing Issues (see page 9).
6. Arrangements For The Annual Council Meeting 2021 (See page 12).

7. Representatives on Outside Organisations - to receive reports from representatives on the following outside organisations:

CAB Management Committee – Councillor Bater
Dunstable International Town Twinning Association – Town Mayor and Councillors
Corkhill and Abbott
Hospice at Home Management Committee – Councillor Jones
Ashton Almshouses Charity – Councillors Corkhill and Hollick

NB: Those Members who are not members of this Committee but are representatives of organisations reporting thereto are reminded to provide a report in time for the meeting.

Yours faithfully,



David Ashlee
Town Clerk and Chief Executive

To: All Members of Finance and General Purposes Committee:
Councillors Peter Hollick (Town Mayor), Gloria Martin,(Deputy Town Mayor), Sid Abbott (Chairman), Philip Crawley (Vice-Chairman), Wendy Bater, Matthew Brennan, Mark Cant, Alan Corkhill, John Gurney, Kenson Gurney, Liz Jones, Cameron Restall, Lee Roberts and Johnson Tamara and other Members of the Council for information.

DUNSTABLE TOWN COUNCIL**FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE****16 NOVEMBER 2020****FINANCIAL MONITORING REPORT**

Purpose of Report:	The purpose of this report is to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i) provide a revenue budgetary control report for the period ending 30 September 2020 ii) provide detail of the Council's earmarked reserves as at 27 October 2020
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1. ACTION RECOMMENDED

- 1.1 For Members to note the revenue budget position for the period from 1 April 2020 to 30 September 2020.
- 1.2 For Members to note the current balance of the Council's earmarked reserves as at 27 October 2020 and known commitments in the current financial year.

2. INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 This budgetary control report summarises the net expenditure against the budget for each service area as at 30 September 2020. This forms the basis for the projected outturn at the end of this financial year taking account currently known variances.

3. REVENUE BUDGETARY REPORT

- 3.1 The summary at Appendix 1 shows the net expenditure at 30 September 2020 per service area and an indication of the anticipated outturn against budget, taking account of seasonal variances and known commitments for the remainder of the financial year.
- 3.2 The summary shows a potential overall net revenue underspend at the end of the financial year of £14,884.
- 3.3 It should be noted that whilst officers have a better view on the effects of Covid-19 on the finances, there is still uncertainty as to how this will impact the year-end position. Changes in Government guidance and a significant number of external factors could impact costs as well as income. This report does however contain an expectation of how the November 2020 lockdown will impact revenues.
- 3.4 Within **Finance and Support Services** the overall forecast is to be £1,979 underspent. Significant variances to budget are as follows:
 - *Finance and Support Services staff costs forecast to be overspent by £6,842* due a retirement payment offset by a saving in maternity costs to cover maternity leave within the team. There is also a saving from a 3-month vacancy in the team.
 - *Grove House cost centre is forecast to be overspent by £6,263* due to the offices on the ground floor being vacant due to the current circumstances surrounding the global pandemic. It is not envisaged that a tenant will be found this financial year.

- *Corporate Management Cost centre is forecast to be underspent by £3,867.* this underspend is mainly attributed to a £2,000 forecast saving on uniforms as it is predicted not as many will be required this year; there is also a £5,000 underspend projected for un-claimable VAT offsetting £4,000 variation on budgeted insurance.
- *Democratic Representation is forecast to underspend by £7,402* mainly due to unused Mayoral allowance, transport and hospitality during the lockdown period where the Mayor attended no events.

3.5 Within **Grounds and Environmental Services** the overall forecast is to be £71,353 overspent. Significant variances to budget are as follows:

- *Grounds Staff Costs* is due to be underspent by £26,100 mainly attributable to a forecast 6-month vacancy on the Parks Development Officer position.
- *Cemetery* is due to be underspent by £3,129 mainly due to over-achievement of income on burials offset by an increase in equipment, cleaning, waste disposal costs due to Covid-19.
- *Recreation Grounds* Cost centre has a forecast overspend of £14,898 mainly attributed to a loss of income on external contracts and rent due to the Covid-19 pandemic.
- *Town Centre and Gardens* also has a forecast overspend of £162 due to another potential loss of income on an external contract due to the Covid-19 pandemic
- *Town Ranger Service* is forecast to be underspent by £7,905. This underspend is attributable to underspend on public realm maintenance due to CBC not installing electronic information signs at the town gateways therefore it has not been necessary to expend this budget this year.
- *Creasey Park* has a forecast overspend of £108,603 due to a £38,000 loss of income on the ATP and a £140,000k loss on room hire, bar and catering sales due to circumstances surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic. However, there are offsetting savings: £53,000 not spent on bar/catering stock, £7,000 on bar/catering casual and overtime staffing budgets, and £5,000 on cleaning contracts during the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown.
- *Bennett Memorial Recreation Ground Splash Park* has a forecast underspend of £22,839 due to the lack of expenditure and commitments as a result of the closure this summer because of the Covid-19 pandemic.

3.6 Within **Community Services** overall it is forecast to be £84,258 underspent. Significant variances to budget are as follows:

- *Community Services staff cost centre has a forecast underspend of £28,495* mainly attributable to two vacancies within the team; Community Assistant and Youth and Community Manager (both posts are now filled).
- *Older Peoples Services* has a forecast underspend of £2,614 based on a closure of services due to Covid-19 pandemic.
- *Community Engagement* has a forecast underspend of £11,221 based on all future events currently cancelled due to the Covid-19 pandemic
- *Grove Corner cost centre is overspent by £1,824*, due to a reduction in use of the building and the reduced utility and cleaning costs.
- *Events programme* is forecast to underspend this financial year by £78,654 due to the cancellation of all events this year until further notice, subject to Government guidance on large gatherings.
- *Central Marketing* is due to underspend by £5,000 due to a saving in producing no April edition of the Council magazine 'Talk of the Town'.

- *Priory House* is forecast to overspend by £51,800 due to loss of income due to the temporary closure; the overall overspend was partly offset by savings on catering costs.
- *Town Centre Management* is £2,900 forecast underspend due to reduced events and waste during the Covid-19 lockdown period.
- *High Street Heritage Action Zone* budget is forecast to underspend by £8,396 due to a 4-month vacancy in that area. The project manager started in August.

4. RESERVES

- 4.1 The schedule enclosed at Appendix 2 provides detail of actual contributions to and expenditure from reserve funds in the current financial year as at 27 October 2020.
- 4.2 The schedule also includes the detail of further agreed/known commitments from earmarked reserves in this financial year and indicates an estimated end of year balance, which is of course subject to any further agreed expenditure.
- 4.3 The schedule does not take account of the recommendations for release of funds to be considered at other agenda items.

5. FINANCIAL GOVERNANCE

- 5.1 In place of Accounts Sub-Committee, Councillors should, as a minimum, view and audit the Councils accounts on a quarterly basis.
- 5.2 The last quarterly financial Councillor audit took place virtually due to Covid-19 Pandemic and was completed on the 2 November 2020 with the Chairman of Finance and General Purposes Committee, Councillor Abbott and Councillor Bater taking part. The Councillors carried out a 'mini-audit' which included requests of financial information on various purchase ledger invoices paid and current investments and Council loans, together with verifying all of the bank statements of the accounts against the Accounts Software relating to July, August and September 2020.
- 5.3 No issues or discrepancies, material or otherwise, were raised.
- 5.4 Further quarterly meetings have been arranged and all Councillors have been made aware and invited to attend any future Financial Governance Audit meetings they can make.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 These are inherent within the content of this report.

7. APPENDICES

7.1 Appendix 1 - Summary of Net Revenue Expenditure
Appendix 2 - Summary of Reserves

8. AUTHORS

8.1 David Brough – Senior Finance Manager
Lisa Scheder – Finance & Procurement Manager
E-mail: David.brough@dunstable.gov.uk
E-mail: Lisa.Scheder@dunstable.gov.uk

Finance and Support Services

Service Area	Budget 2020/21	Actuals to Date (30th Sep)	Year-end Forecast	Year-end Variance
Staff Costs	321,437	177,708	328,279	6,842
Central Services	105,600	40,948	101,785	-3,815
Grove House	47,505	28,431	53,768	6,263
Corporate Management	91,447	79,346	87,580	-3,867
Democratic Management & Representation	15,750	2,521	8,348	-7,402
Capital & Projects (inc loan charges)	96,915	77,093	96,915	0
Grand Total	678,654	406,047	676,675	-1,979

Grounds and Environmental Services

Service Area	Budget 2020/21	Actuals to Date (30th Sep)	Year-end Forecast	Year-end Variance
Staff Costs	660,850	309,378	634,750	-26,100
Allotments	-800	1,451	700	1,500
Cemetery	-71,190	-51,040	-68,061	3,129
Recreation Grounds	40,200	26,000	55,098	14,898
Town Centre and Gardens	29,100	8,612	29,262	162
Town Ranger Service	19,200	2,760	11,295	-7,905
Capital & Projects	121,696	102,903	121,601	-95
Sub Total	799,056	400,064	784,645	-14,411
Income: Creasey Park - Football	-148,000	-25,882	-127,025	20,975
Costs: Creasey park - Football	67,532	33,886	84,793	17,261
Income: Bar & Catering	-190,000	-12,930	-56,497	133,503
Costs: Bar & Catering	305,804	120,738	242,668	-63,136
Sub Total	35,336	115,812	143,939	108,603
Bennett Memorial RG Splash Park	33,216	8,207	10,377	-22,839
Grand Total	867,608	524,083	938,961	71,353

Community Services

Service Area	Budget 2020/21	Actuals to Date (30th Sep)	Year-end Forecast	Year-end Variance
Staff Costs	187,246	66,521	158,751	-28,495
Older People's Support Service	24,074	2,915	21,460	-2,614
Community Engagement (inc Grants)	23,507	8,510	12,286	-11,221
Grove Corner	14,879	-6,049	16,706	1,827
Events Programme	147,176	27,022	68,522	-78,654
Central Marketing	28,500	5,001	23,745	-4,755
Town Centre Services (inc Special Markets)	60,911	19,316	58,011	-2,900
Public Conveniences (Ashton Square)	3,050	758	2,800	-250
High Street Heritage Action Zone	24,594	8,497	16,198	-8,396
Capital & Projects	66,020	48,527	65,420	-600
Sub Total	579,957	181,018	443,899	-136,058
Income: Priory house - Tea Rooms	-135,000	-20,770	-57,530	77,470
Costs: Priory house - Tea Rooms	48,000	8,981	20,557	-27,443
Income: Priory house - Shop	-13,500	-1,636	-3,343	10,157
Costs: Priory house - Shop	6,500	2,328	3,000	-3,500
Other Costs (Inc Staff)	337,104	144,507	332,220	-4,884
Sub Total	243,104	133,410	294,904	51,800
Grand Total	823,061	314,428	738,803	-84,258
DTC Grand Total	2,369,323	1,244,558	2,354,439	-14,884

	Description	Balance as at 01.04.20	Contributions Revenue/Other	Expenditure in year	Bal as at 27.10.20	Commitments/Programme of works etc	Committed Amount	Bal after committed
310	General Reserve	£520,570			£520,570			£520,570
311	Corporate Plan Reserve	£16,342	£2,000	-£11,935	£6,407	Bal of £788.85 for GH Gdns Entrance/Car Park Improvements (from £35,000 agreed) Council Minute 85 28.06.20- Bal of £5,620 for Market Clock refurbishment (from £8,432 agreed)	£6,406	£12,813
312	Vehicles Reserve	£54,719	£20,000		£74,719	FGP Minute 8 20.01.20- Bal of £30,242 for new grounds equipment (from £42,000 agreed)	-£30,242	£44,477
313	CP Sinking Fund	£14,874		-£2,000	£12,874	£4,995 for new tills at CPCFC	-£4,995	£7,879
314	Christmas Lights Reserve	£23,744	£3,500		£27,244	New/improved lighting		£27,244
316	Downside Building Maintenance Res	£4,523			£4,523			£4,523
317	Grove Corner Building Maint Reserve	£38,596	£4,000	-£16,311	£26,285	Bal of £3,689 for e-gaming equipment (from £10,000 agreed)	-£3,689	£22,596
318	Building Security Systems	£5,357			£5,357			£5,357
319	Cemetery Memorial Safety	£2,300	£1,000		£3,300	Memorial safety inspections		£3,300
320	Priory House Tearooms Equipment	£0	£1,500		£1,500			£1,500
321	IT/Equipment Reserve	£14,700	£15,000	-£4,904	£24,796	Bal of £14,700 for Cemetery Software (from £21,890 agreed)	-£14,700	£10,096
322	Older People's Day Care Svce	£12,545			£12,545	£3,887 for increased transport costs Bal of £237 donation for activities (from £1,000 received)	-£3,924	£8,621
323	Election Reserve	£5,517	£12,500		£18,017			£18,017
324	Grove House Building Reserve	£157,427	£29,000	£0	£186,427	Bal of £877 for GH Gdns Entrance/Car Park Improvements (from £17,000 agreed) £20,000 for GH Parapet repairs FGP 21.08.20-Minute 106- £75,000 for GH Heating works	-£95,877	£90,550
326	Mayoral Reserve	£3,000			£3,000	FGP 19.01.15-Minute 24 - to be retained for transport/allowance as required		£3,000
327	Priory House Exhibition	£15,000			£15,000	Exhibition		£15,000
328	Priory Churchyard	£29,862	£5,000		£34,862	As determined by quinquennial report		£34,862
329	Performance Area Reserve	£6,000	£8,772	-£813	£13,960	Council Minute 85 29.06.20- Bal of £13,187 for Performance Area (from £14,000 agreed)	-£13,188	£772
330	Town Twinning Reserve	£7,867	£500		£8,367	Retained for twinning activities to be determined		£8,367
331	Tree Reserve	£14,436	£5,000	-£8,410	£11,026	GES Minute 67 13.03.17- 5 year tree maintenance programme	-£11,026	£0
332	Open Spaces Improvement Plan	£25,000	£15,000		£40,000	FGP Minute 8 20.01.20- Bal of £23,543 for improvement works (from £28,888 agreed) Council Minute 85 28.06.20- £15,000 agreed for Priory Gardens Pergola	-£38,543	£1,457
333	Priory House Building Reserve	£334,618	£21,778		£356,396	FGP Minute 181 18.11.19= £300,000- HSHAZ Scheme (2022/23 exp)	-£300,000	£56,396
334	Pavilion Buildings Maintenance Res	£50,435	£15,000		£65,435			£65,435
338	Allotments Reserve	£20,246	£5,000	-£590	£24,656	Improvement works required		£24,656
339	Creasey Park 3G Pitch	£6,895	£156		£7,051	Interest accrued on ringfenced deposit - retained for contribution towards future pitch replacement - with 381 below		£6,851
341	Splashpark/Skatepark/BMX Reserve	£35,408	£12,000		£47,408			£47,408
342	Memorial Kerbs Reserve	£6,570			£6,570	for purchase of future supplies		£6,570
343	Cemetery Building Maintenance Res	£24,413	£5,000		£29,413	FGP Minute 8 20.01.20- £23,800 agreed for Cemetery works	-£23,800	£5,613
344	Fencing Maintenance Reserve	£2,957	£1,000		£3,957	FGP Minute 8 20.01.20- £2,957 agreed for Fencing works	-£2,957	£1,000
346	NEW - HSHAZ Scheme	£98,751	£23,010	-£2,039	£119,722	4 year HSHAZ scheme programme	-£119,722	£0
	Earmarked Reserves Total	£1,552,470			£1,711,185		-£656,255	£1,054,930

S106/External Funding/Ringfenced Expenditure specified by funding body

315	Awards for All Event	£207			£207	Weird and Wonderful Event- 7 & 8 September 2019	-£207	£0
325	Shop Front Improvement Scheme	£7,153	£4,942	-£7,552	£4,543	Shop Front Scheme	-£4,543	£0
337	Market Town Regeneration Fund	£23,010		-£23,010	£0	Bal trfd to HSHAZ Scheme		£0
380	Developers Contributions- CAP	£18,065			£18,065	Frenchs Avenue S106 £13,778; Frenchs Avenue Fencing £4,286		£18,065
381	CPCFC Capital	£88,491			£88,491	Retained for future repair/replacement of All Weather Pitch (with 339 above)		£88,491
385	Development Contributions- REV	£34,316			£34,316	Bal of £148 for Priory Gardens Footpaths (from Eastgate S106 £847); £8,000 committed in 20/21 revenue budget from Bal of £22,129 for Wiloughy (from S106 £47,845) Bal of £4,038 for Court Drive Landscaping (from CBC £15,000)	-£12,187	£22,129
570	Joint Committee Fund	£13,009		-£300	£12,709	Bal in holding code as committed Joint Committees fund only = not DTC	-£12,709	£0
	S106/External Funding Total	£184,251			£158,331		-£29,846	£128,685
		£1,736,722			£1,869,516		-£685,901	£1,183,615

DUNSTABLE TOWN COUNCIL**FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE****MONDAY 16 NOVEMBER 2020****CHRISTMAS SERVICE OPERATIONS; GROVE HOUSE REPAIRS AND MAINTENANCE AND STAFFING ISSUES**

Purpose of Report: The purpose of this report is to recommend to Members arrangements for Council service operations over the Christmas period; to update the Committee of ongoing repairs and maintenance to Grove House and to inform Members that a small number of staff will be furloughed for the duration of the second lockdown period.

1. ACTION RECOMMENDED

- 1.1 That Members approve the proposed arrangements for service operations over the Christmas period as detailed in paragraph 3 below.
- 1.2 That Members note the ongoing repairs and subsequent cost implications to Grove House as detailed in paragraph 4 below.
- 1.3 That Members note the decision to furlough a small section of Council staff for the duration of the second lockdown period as detailed in paragraph 5 below.

2. INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 This report proposes arrangements for service closures over the Christmas period as well as updating Members on specific issues relating to this Committee

3. PROPOSALS FOR CLOSURES OVER THE CHRISTMAS PERIOD

- 3.1 Typically, the period between Christmas and New Year is very quiet for the Council but Grove House remains open as do other service areas where applicable. This year the period between Christmas and New Year is a three-day period falling on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday due to the timings of the Bank Holidays.
- 3.2 As a result of this it is proposed that for this year all Council operations effectively close down on Tuesday 29 December, Wednesday 30 December and Thursday 31 December. Grove House and other service areas will close at 2.00 pm on Thursday 24 December as normal and all services will re-open as normal on Monday 4 January.
- 3.3 Creasey Park will open on Boxing Day for a short period to allow a match to take place on the main pitch and there may be a few staff doing safety checks and some work from home over the three days between Christmas and New Year to carry out essential tasks.
- 3.4 If approved, all staff will have to take annual leave for the imposed closedown.

4. GROVE HOUSE REPAIRS AND MAINTENANCE

- 4.1 Members are aware that significant maintenance work is currently being undertaken at Grove House. This primarily relates to a complete overhaul of the heating system (as reported at the last Finance and General Purposes Committee meeting) and essential repairs to the front roof.
- 4.2 The heating system overhaul is taking place currently and is due to be completed on time by the end of November/ early December and within the allocated budget of £75,000.
- 4.3 The roof repair has proved to be more complicated and is not due to start until week beginning 9 November or possibly even the week after, despite the scaffolding being in place for some time already. The reason for this is that it has been difficult to diagnose the problem and then engineer a solution that would be effective whilst not requiring listed building consent; and then there has been a delay in securing the services of a specialist roofing contractor compounded by the lead in time for the supply of lead roofing materials.
- 4.4 The cost of this project is likely to be approximately £20,000 which has been approved by the Town Clerk and Chief Executive in liaison with the Chairman of this Committee in line with the Council's Financial Regulations.
- 4.5 Early in the New Year further work will be required to carry out internal repairs for both the main first floor front office and the ground floor reception area, both of which have experienced considerable flood damage as a result of the leaking roof explained above. It is anticipated that this work will be funded through an insurance claim.
- 4.6 The Grove House allocated reserve will be at £90,500 once all the work has been completed.

5. STAFFING ISSUES AS A RESULT OF THE SECOND COVID-19 LOCKDOWN

- 5.1 A full schedule of how Council services are affected by the second Covid-19 lockdown was sent to members on Thursday 5 November. As a result of a number of services either being closed or partially closed, the Senior Management Team, in liaison with the Chairman of this Committee, have taken the decision to furlough and part furlough a number of staff. The staff affected are all either part time or casual and are based at Creasey Park Community Centre, Priory House, and Grove Corner.
- 5.2 A total of approximately 35 staff have been furloughed or part furloughed (15 of which are casual staff). It will not be possible to accurately calculate the saving this exercise will accrue until after the furlough period but it should be in the region of £10,000. All furloughed and part furloughed staff will receive 100% of their normal income, in line with previous directives made by the Council.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 These are detailed in the body of this report

7. HUMAN RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

7.1 These are detailed in the body of this report

8. POLICY AND CORPORATE PLAN IMPLICATIONS

8.1 The recommendations of this report accord with the Councils Corporate Priority of *'Continuing to improve the organisational management, efficiency and environmental sustainability of the Council'*

9. HEALTH AND SAFETY, EQUALITY AND LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

9.1 Maintaining a safe and functioning heating system in Grove House is vital for the health and safety of staff working in, and other users of, Grove House.

10. AUTHOR

10.1 David Ashlee – Town Clerk and Chief Executive
E-mail – david.ashlee@dunstable.gov.uk

DUNSTABLE TOWN COUNCIL**FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE****MONDAY 16 NOVEMBER 2020****ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE ANNUAL COUNCIL MEETING 2021**

Purpose of Report:	For Members to consider options for the venue for the Annual Council Meeting to be held on 17 May 2021.
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1. ACTION RECOMMENDED

- 1.1 That the Committee agrees that the venue for the Annual Council Meeting and Mayor Making Ceremony to be held on 17 May 2021 be secured by the Democratic Services Manager in consultation with the Mayor subject to the hire of the venue not exceeding £700.

2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 2.1 As Members will be aware, last year's Mayor Making Ceremony was held remotely because of the Covid-19 pandemic. In 2019 it was successfully held at All Saints Academy. Although it is not certain what the circumstances will be in May 2021, the Council would like to secure a venue for the Annual Council Meeting and Mayor Making Ceremony so if it is possible the arrangements can go ahead at a suitable venue.

3. VENUE FOR 2021

- 3.1 The Democratic Services Manager (DSM) has made enquiries of the suggested alternative venues to ascertain whether the Annual Council Meeting and Mayor Making Ceremony could be accommodated in 2021.
- 3.2 Incuba Centre has turned its large room that could accommodate the meeting into workshops. Therefore, it cannot accommodate large events.
- 3.3 Dunstable Conference Centre would be very happy to host the meeting with hall hire cost of approximately £650 plus catering costs. There would be no restrictions on alcohol consumption on the premises or on the Town Council using its own caterer.
- 3.4 All Saints Academy - despite numerous telephone calls and emails the DSM has not been able to discuss venue hire with the Academy so far. In 2019 the meeting was held at the school at a cost of £400 plus catering costs.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The cost of the venue hire, catering and associated costs for the Annual Meeting are met from the Civic Hospitality budget of £3,000, which is also used to fund other civic events as required.

4.2 Catering costs vary dependent on numbers attending and menu options. The catering cost for the 2019 meeting was £7.50 per head for 120 people, totalling £900.

5. **AUTHOR**

5.1 Ian Reed, Democratic Services Manager
e-mail: ian.reed@dunstable.gov.uk