

**DUNSTABLE TOWN COUNCIL****MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE****ON MONDAY 24 JANUARY 2022**

Present: Councillor Gloria Martin (Town Mayor), Liz Jones (Deputy Town Mayor), Philip Crawley (Vice-Chairman), Wendy Bater, Lisa Bird, Matthew Brennan, Peter Hollick, and Johnson Tamara

In Attendance: David Ashlee (Town Clerk and Chief Executive), Lisa Scheder (Finance and Procurement Manager) and Ian Reed (Democratic Services Manager)

Apologies for Absence: Councillors Sid Abbott, Mark Cant, John Gurney, Kenson Gurney, and Cameron Restall

Public Attendance: One

**21. MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting of Finance and General Purposes Committee held on 15 November 2021 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

**22. SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no specific declarations of interest.

**23. BUDGET PROPOSALS FOR 2022/23**

The Town Clerk and Chief Executive presented the report detailing the Council's Budget proposals for 2022/23 including the draft budget recommendations of the Community and Grounds and Environmental Services Committees. Members raised a number of issues.

- Supporting a Beacon Lighting event on Dunstable Downs to celebrate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee by way of giving a £4,000 grant to the National Trust.
- Reviewing the original draft budget proposals agreed at the Council meeting held on 6 December 2021.

Following a full discussion, it was

**RESOLVED:** That authorisation be delegated to the Chairman of this Committee, in liaison with the Town Clerk and Chief Executive, to determine the detail of the National Trusts request for a £4,000 contribution to their Jubilee Beacon Lighting event and decide upon whether to financially assist this event (or not) accordingly.

**RECOMMENDED:**

i) that the proposed budget for 2022/23 be presented to Council for approval (as previously circulated).

ii) that the Town Clerk and Chief Executive be authorised to incur the various items of expenditure detailed in the budget, subject to compliance with the requirements of the Council's Standing Orders and Financial Regulations.

iii) that the revised scale of fees and charges, set out in the report, be approved with effect from 1st April 2022 or the start of the 2022/23 winter playing season, as appropriate.

iv) that in consequence of the foregoing recommendations, the Town Council issue a precept upon Central Bedfordshire Council in the sum of £2,480,490, resulting in a Dunstable Town Council Tax (Band D) at the rate of £187.66.

Councillor Matt Brennan requested that his vote against the recommendations was recorded.

#### **24. FINANCIAL MONITORING REPORT**

The Town Clerk and Chief Executive and the Finance and Procurement Manager and Deputy RFO presented the financial monitoring report. It was noted that at the end of November 2021 the Council's financial position had improved to a level that the revenue budget was forecast to be underspent by £56,124 at the end of the financial year. This was primarily due to improved trading at Creasey Park Community Football Centre and savings accrued as a result of staff vacancies as detailed in the report. The Town Clerk and Chief Executive gave a detailed further update that at the end of December 2021, the Council's financial position had improved further which would be fully reported on in the March financial monitoring report.

The Committee noted the current balance of the Council's earmarked reserves as of 31 December 2021 and known commitments in the current financial year. The Committee had been circulated with the first interim 2021/2022 internal audit report. Members noted that the report had been given the Council a clean bill of health and thanked officers accordingly.

**RESOLVED:** that the above reports be noted, and the finance staff be congratulated on their work

#### **25. ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE TOWN MEETING 2022**

The Committee considered a report on arrangements for the holding of the Town Meeting on 28 March 2022 at the Council Chamber, Grove House. The Committee was asked to determine whether the Town Meeting should adopt a topic for a presentation

**RESOLVED:** that the Town Council take the opportunity of the Town Meeting to launch their promotional video if it was ready for viewing.

#### **26. MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS**

The Committee considered a report on arrangements for the developing of marketing plans with the Heads of Service. These would be drafted in February and final drafts completed by the end of March. It was also noted that goals for the year and desired marketing channels would be determined at those meetings. It was likely that social media marketing would be prioritised in most service areas as well as website promotions and Talk of the Town.

**RESOLVED:** that the report be welcomed, and the Corporate Marketing and Communications Officer be congratulated for her first report.

**27. REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS**

- a) CAB Management Committee – no report.
- b) DITA – Councillor Gloria Martin reported that DITA were organising a series of meetings with Town Council representatives in relation to a possible twinning visit in June. Further information would be provided at the next meeting.
- c) Hospice at Home Management Committee – Councillor Jones reported that a new Treasurer had been recruited. New volunteers were receiving training.
- d) Ashton Alms-houses Charity – Councillor Hollick gave an update report on the installation of a new boiler and central heating. Plans were in place to organise a Jubilee event.

**The meeting closed at 19.58.**