



Midsomer Norton Town Council

Council Offices, The Town Hall, The Island, Midsomer Norton, BA3 2HQ
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Mayor: Councillor Martyn Plant Locum Town Clerk: Lee Jakeman

Minutes from the Finance and Operations Meeting held on Monday 18th November starting at 7pm

Present: Cllrs Shaun Hughes, Gordon MacKay, Martyn Plant (Chair),
and Cheryl Scott

In attendance Lee Jakeman (Locum Town Clerk) and Kate Egan (Deputy Town Clerk)

Absent: Cllr Charlotte Lucas

1. Welcome

Cllr Martyn Plant welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2. Apologies for Absence

No apologies were received.

3. Public Question Time

There was one member of the public in attendance.

4. Declarations of Interest

Cllr Cheryl Scott declared an interest in the Town Trust as being part of the Management Committee.

Cllr Gordon MacKay declared an interest in the Town Trust as Chair of the Management Committee.

Cllr Martyn Plant declared an interest in the Community Trust as being a Trustee.

Cllr Gordon MacKay requested a dispensation for the Community Trust being a Trustee.

Members deferred the decision and agreed that they would reconsider the matter is appropriate later in the meeting.

5. Previous Minutes

The Committee **RESOLVED** to accept the minutes of the Finance and Operations Committee held on 21st October 2024 as a true record, these were signed and dated by the Chair of the Committee.

6. Office Relocation

The Committee **NOTED** to cost of £500 to move the office equipment from Unit 14 to the Somer Centre. The removal company appointed under delegated authority if Parfitt Removals Ltd. (Funded from the General Reserves).

7. Annual Pay Award

The Committee **NOTED** the annual NJC pay award for 2024-2025 has been agreed with an increase of 2.5%. The increase will be shown with the November salary payments with backpay until the 1st of April 2024.

8. Accounting Statements

- (a) The Committee **RESOLVED** to approve and sign the Bank Reconciliation October; they were signed by Cllr Cheryl Scott and to approve the payment schedule issued with the agenda for October 2024.
- (b) The Committee **NOTED** the Income and Expenditure report for October 2024
- (c) The Committee **NOTED** the Budget Review Report for October 2024

9. To receive and review an updated report and consider a draft budget for 2025-2026

Members reviewed the draft budget for FY25/26 and the associated reports prepared by the RFO.

Members were informed that recent correspondence from B&NES had been received stating that the precept demand is required by no later than 11 February 2024 and as such the final decision on the budget and the precept for FY 25/26 could be undertaken as late as the Full Council meeting in the first week of February 2025. The correspondence was considered helpful as the Council could make a budget decision a little later than it had anticipated and when there was likely to be more certainty around the Town Hall costs.

Members considered the budget line by line and made a number of comments and sought clarification around spending within budget lines. Officers agreed to review the comments made and update the budget recommendation accordingly. Comments included:

- Considering whether underspends on the current year budget should be moved to Earmarked Reserves
- Obtaining an estimate from B&NES about any likely CIL receipts next year
- Updating interest income to reflect potential income (acknowledging that the balance held in the CCLA would significantly diminish as the Town Hall nears completion.
- A re-examination of staffing costs and the allocation of pension/PAYE contributions to the correct budget lines.
- Review the level of subscriptions if in fact some of these were professional services.
- Clarification of the pension deficit contributions.
- The Ad-hoc grant funding should include ongoing grant liabilities and not be increased.
- Defer any decisions on grant funding to the Town Trust, Community Trust and Carnival until members had an opportunity to review the submissions circulated at the meeting.
- Review Remembrance Sunday costs.
- Some separation of existing budgets might be helpful to more clearly identify some items that are likely to have an enduring effect.

Members noted that the budget presented had a predicted general reserve of circa £214k and a provisional estimate for the precept of circa £600k (a percentage increase of just under 5%).

Members noted that there was no agreed reserves policy for the Council at this time.

10. Date of Next Meeting – The next Finance and Operations Committee meeting will be held on Monday 16th December commencing at 7.00pm

Meeting closed 8.56pm