

Councillors (on the Committee): P. Reynolds (Chairman)
R. Farrow
C. Blair
N. Nutkins
C. Nutkins
P. Hearn
B. Patterson (ex officio)

Also present: Cllr De Koning (As an observer)
L. Housden (Town Clerk)

RESOLVED: Proposed by Cllr Farrow, seconded by Cllr Patterson. To accept the apologies for the reasons given. Unanimously agreed.

None made.

RESOLVED: Cllr Hearn, seconded by Cllr Farrow. To amend the date at the heading. It currently incorrectly says '13th June 2022' and should be '12th June 2023'. With the exception of this amendment to accept the minutes as presented. Unanimously agreed.

Nothing to report.

The Chair had nothing to report.

The Clerk reported that the internal audit would now be held on Tuesday 14th November 2023 (rather than 17th November).

21639. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

No members of the public were present.

21640. **POLICY REVIEW**

i) **Treasury Investment Policy** - The Committee considered the new proposed Investment Strategy & Policy, including whether they should have ethical and environmental considerations as an investment priority at paragraph 3.4. They also considered if the limit on the amount of internal fund transfers the Clerk can carry out should be increased at paragraph 5.5 d of the Financial Regulations. (So as to not conflict with paragraph 7.2 of this policy and for practical reasons) Finally they discussed if a third bank account should be considered to spread the risk.

ii) **Reserves Policy** - No amendments proposed.

iii) **Earmarked Reserves Protocol & Earmarked Reserves Statement of Purpose** - Small amendment proposed to the policy by removing the figure of £3,300 at paragraph 2.2 and replacing it with 'A fixed sum ..' No change to the rest of policy.

iv) **Community Infrastructure Levy Protocol** - No amendments proposed

v) **Pre-application Policy** - No amendments proposed

RESOLVED: Proposed by Cllr Farrow, seconded by Cllr Patterson :

(i) To recommend to Council:

- a. To approve and adopt the new proposed Investment Strategy & Policy, including having ethical and environmental considerations as an investment priority at paragraph 3.4.
- b. That the limit on the amount of internal fund transfers the Clerk can carry out be increased at paragraph 5.5 d of the **Financial Regulations**. (to reflect paragraph 7.2 of the new investment policy and for practical reasons).
- c. That opening a third bank account is still considered but further research be carried out to find banks with good green credentials.

(ii) To recommend the policies above numbered (ii), (iii) (iv) & (v) for adoption subject to any amendments stated above.

Unanimously agreed.

21641. **THE FINANCIAL OUT-TURN 2023/24**

A spreadsheet with forecasted figures for the year-end had been circulated prior to the meeting. Based on the current predictions, it was expected that there would be a surplus at year-end of £18,477.

RESOLVED: Proposed by Cllr Hearn, seconded by Cllr Patterson. To note the review of the Qtr. 2 outturn forecast. Unanimously agreed.

21642. **THE BUDGET & PRECEPT 2024/25**

The Clerk presented the baseline budget for 2024/25 (circulated prior to the meeting).

The assumptions behind the budget were explained. The baseline budget as presented showed a surplus of £2,455 with no change to the precept but this was likely to change following updates to be discussed at tonight's meeting.

The following assumptions were discussed:

- The Precept - It was felt that a 5% increase could potentially be acceptable.
- Interest received - The prediction currently provided was deemed sensible but the Clerk to make enquiries to check that the Council wasn't accountable for the interest earned on CIL receipts .
- Grants received - suggested approach accepted.
- Salary, Tax & Pensions - It was agreed that a 7% increase across the board was a sensible strategy. The Clerk would ask the payroll provider for assistance with the calculations to make these as accurate as possible.
- Mayors Allowance/ Councillors Allowance - The Committee would like the Council to consider if an annual allowance should be made to all members of Council and not just the Mayor. The Clerk to research the practicalities and limits of this.
- Advertising & Promotions - The Committee did not consider it worthwhile to carry on advertising the information center at the Tring Train Station. By stopping this it would save £495.
- Permitted Power Grants - To keep at £4,000 a year
- Annual Grants (*Cllr Hearn declared an interest as Trustee of the Youth Project*) - To keep the same organisations and amounts.
- Electricity, Gas & Insurance - Estimates deemed acceptable.
- Repairs & Maintenance the committee were asked to approve a contractor to carry out electrical condition reports of the Council Offices, Rear Offices, Shop, Information Office, Church Square, Market Place and Mansion Vista and PAT testing for the Council Offices and the Information office.
- Project Local Plan - the consensus was if costs arose they could be met from general reserves rather than be budgeted.
- Market House External works - £4,750 be earmarked from general reserves this year to start the fund up again.
- Nora Grace Hall redevelopment - Agreed unlikely to be any further expenditure next year unless funding is secured.
- Emergency Day at the Market Place - Further details of costings required but amount could remain for now for an event for the public.

RESOLVED: Proposed by Cllr N. Nutkins, seconded by Cllr Farrow.

(i) To appoint Shearer Electrical Ltd to carry out electrical condition reports of the Council Offices, Rear Offices, Shop, Information Office, Church Square, Market Place and Mansion Vista (£2376.00 plus Vat.) and PAT testing for the Council Offices and the Information office (£224.40 plus Vat.) Only one quote was obtained in this instance as this company is the council's regular contractor for electrical works and is known to be competitive with their pricing.

(ii) To recommend the above amendments and provide an updated spreadsheet to reflect any changes at the November Council meeting so that the position could be considered further. Unanimously agreed.

21643. **GRANT APPLICATIONS**

The application from Tring Bowls club to purchase a defibrillator was considered.

RESOLVED: Proposed by Cllr Hearn, seconded by Cllr Farrow .To award the grant in full (£400) to Tring Bowls Club but to encourage the club to have signage put up on the outside of the building to make the public aware that there is a defibrillator on site. For - x6 & Against - x1.

21644. **STAFF TRAINING**

Two requests for staff training were considered.

RESOLVED: Proposed by Cllr Farrow, seconded by Cllr Hearn. To agree 1. Organisation management course (£500) for the Deputy Clerk and 2. First Aid at Work training for the information officer (£165 + VAT). Unanimously agreed.

The meeting ended at 9.30 p.m.

Chairman