



**Minutes of the Council Affairs and Finance of the Democratic Services held on Tuesday,  
December 12, 2023 at 19:00 at The Bungalow, 8 North Street, Credition, EX17 2BT**

<b>Present:</b>	Steve Huxtable, Rachel Backhouse, Liz Brookes-Hocking, Guy Cochran, Giles Fawssett, Joyce Harris, Frank Letch
<b>Apologies:</b>	Jim Cairney
<b>In Attendance:</b>	Two members of the Public, Natalia Letch
<b>Minute Taker:</b>	Rachel Avery (Town Clerk)

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## MINUTES

### 102 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

Questions were raised by three members of the public. The questions and full responses would be provided on the town council's website in due course.

### 103 APOLOGIES

It was **resolved** to receive and accept apologies from Cllr Cairney. (Proposed by Cllr Fawssett).

### 104 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS

Cllrs F Letch and Cochran declared that as members of more than one authority, any views or opinions expressed at this meeting would be provisional and would not prejudice any views expressed at a meeting of another authority.

### 105 ORDER OF BUSINESS

There was no requirement to amend the order of business.

### 106 CHAIR'S AND CLERK'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Town Clerk advised that Breakthrough Communications would be attending the next committee meeting and requested that any further comments be sent by the end of the week.

## 107 COUNCIL AFFAIRS AND FINANCE COMMITTEE MINUTES

Cllr Fawssett advised he would provide further information on DCC banking at the January meeting.

Cllr Backhouse asked if the public were still able to see the data, as she can, further to the alleged breach of GDPR. The Town Clerk advised that this was the case as there had been no confirmation from the ICO.

It was **resolved** to approve the minutes. (Proposed by Cllr Harris).

## 108 FINANCE

### 108.1 TO RECEIVE AND APPROVE TRANSACTIONS BETWEEN 01 NOVEMBER 2023 AND 30 NOVEMBER 2023

It was **resolved** to approve transactions. (Proposed by Cllr Cochran).

### 108.2 TO RECEIVE AND APPROVE THE BANK RECONCILIATION TO 30 NOVEMBER 2023

It was **resolved** to approve the bank reconciliation. (Proposed by Cllr Harris).

### 108.3 TO NOTE BANK ACCOUNT BALANCES TO 30 NOVEMBER 2023

The bank account balances were **noted**. (Proposed by Cllr Harris).

### 108.4 TRANSFER OF FUNDS TO CCLA

It was **resolved** to approve the recommendations in the report. (Proposed by Cllr Cochran).

## 109 BUDGET 2024/25

### 109.1 TO RECEIVE INFORMATION REGARDING THE COMMUNITY BUDGETING WORKSHOPS

The results of the survey were discussed, and whilst attendance had been low it was felt that continued opportunity for consultation was integral.

### 109.2 TO RECEIVE THE DRAFT BUDGET PROPOSAL AND TO AGREE ANY INITIAL AMENDMENTS OR RECOMMENDATIONS

The draft budget had been circulated, with Cllr Huxtable requesting that members consider initial proposals and feedback comments to the Town Clerk before the next meeting.

It was **noted** that the proposed budget for 2024/25 included inflation and taking on additional responsibilities, with a similar process being undertaken when reviewing levels or earmarked reserves.

At this stage, a draft budget with a 4.5% increase was being recommended by the Town Clerk, which is below inflation. 6.4% and 7.4% increases were also being considered to, with a 7.4% increase adding £1.00 per month on a Band D property.

Further expenses not considered in the current budget include:

- New toilets at Newcombes Meadow
- Additional maintenance
- Cleaning of assets
- Mayoral chain repairs and valuation

Cllr Fawssett advised of his support to precept increases at higher percentage increases to ensure additional reserves for new services.

Cllr Backhouse advised that increases should be around inflation, even slightly over would be enough to cover what is required for the next financial year.

Cllr Brookes-Hocking noted the large increases in the past two years, but recognised that funds for renovating Old Landscore School, services and assets being reduced or disposed of by higher levels of local authority and ensuring a permanent home for the town council would be required. Whilst it was depressing to see the reduction of public services and lack of investment in assets, the town council cannot rely on volunteers alone and must be conscious of the resilience of the community.

Cllr Cochran noted that further information from Mid Devon District Council had not yet been received, and the Town Clerk expressed concerns that it would not be before a precept request would be made.

Cllr Harris stated that she had no further comments on the budget at this time, but wished for it to be noted that a huge amount of work goes into the budget. Decisions are not made lightly, and all members should be aware of what is being considered.

## **110 GRANTS 2024/25**

### **110.1 TO RESOLVE, FOR APPROVAL BY FULL COUNCIL, TO VIRE DIVERSITY FESTIVAL GRANT (£600) TO EAR MARKED RESERVES**

It was **resolved** to vire the funds. (Proposed by Cllr Harris).

### **110.2 TO RESOLVE, FOR APPROVAL BY FULL COUNCIL, TO ALLOCATE THE REMAINING UNSPENT FUNDS (£506.48) TO THE 2024/25 BUDGET**

It was **resolved** to allocate the remaining funds to the 2024/25 budget. (Proposed by Cllr Harris).

## **111 COMPLAINT TO DEVON COUNTY COUNCIL**

It was **resolved** that the Town Clerk would write a letter of complaint to Devon County Council and the Local Council Ombudsman. (Proposed by Cllr Cochran).

It was requested that Cllr F Letch raise these concerns with the leader and CEO regarding the way they propose to communicate with town and parish councils as Devon moves to a Devolution Deal.

**112 DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The date of the next meeting was noted – Tuesday 09 January 2024.

**113 PART II**

**114 YOUTH WORK STAFFING**

It was **resolved** to accept recommendations made in the report, subject to budget approvals in January. (Proposed by Cllr Huxtable).

**115 REPORTS PACK**

Signed .....

Dated.....