

Finance and General Purposes Committee

25th March 2024 at 7.30pm

All Saints Room, Didcot Civic Hall



Minutes

Note: These minutes are subject to approval as a true and correct record by the next meeting of this Committee.

Present:

Councillor T Worgan (Chair)
Councillor G Roberts (Deputy Chair)
Councillor N Hards
Councillor G Ryall
Councillor J Loder
Councillor J Broadbent

Officers:

Mrs J Wheeler – Town Clerk
Mrs L Blake – Deputy Town Clerk

167. Apologies

Apologies were tendered by Cllr D Aragao.

168. Declarations of interests

No declarations were made.

169. To approve the Minutes of the Finance & General Purposes Committee meeting held on 26th February 2024

The Chair paged through the minutes. It was proposed by Cllr G Roberts, seconded by Cllr J Loder, and RESOLVED to approve the minutes as an accurate record and note them as such. The vote was unanimous.

170. Questions on the minutes as to the progress of any item

Cllr T Worgan asked about the commencement of the grass verge cutting. The Deputy Town Clerk confirmed that this would start early April and that the Outdoor Services Manager is due to meet with the company to decide whether a 'double cut'

is needed for the first cut of the year. It was also confirmed that the initial cut would include all areas, after this Cllrs could suggest which verges would benefit from being left 'wild'. Maps of the verges could be sent to Cllrs via SharePoint.

Cllr T Worgan also asked about the commencement of the Splash Park project. It was confirmed that the long lead items had been ordered by The Splash and work would start shortly. Some features had been 'swapped' out of the design to ensure maximum play value.

The Town Clerk informed members that DCK are currently working on re-coding the cost centres and will meet with the Town Clerk and Deputy on 26th March 2024 to discuss the on-going work.

171. To consider a grant application from the KADCC

The Committee considered the KADCC application for £5,200 to help towards the running costs of the community building. The Committee were keen to support this well-used community facility, but members were concerned over the future running costs. It was agreed that the grant scheme could not be used as a regular contribution and the building may have to look at increasing hire fees to make the venture viable.

It was proposed by Cllr G Ryall, seconded by Cllr T Worgan, and RESOLVED to award the full £5,200 to KADCC (to be taken from the 2024-2025 budget). All members agreed.

172. To approve the final figures for February 2024 accounts

The Chair paged through the figures.

Cllr J Broadbent noted that the bank charges (105/1152) and Accounting Support (105/1159) figures are over budget. The Town Clerk explained that the Town Council is charged for every transaction it makes and by implementing one-off projects such as the Medium-Term Business Plan has meant the specific cost centres may go over budget. However, the 'Corporate Management' centre as a whole, is under budget. This is partly due to the interest accrued on the CCLA bond.

It was proposed by Cllr T Worgan, seconded by Cllr J Broadbent, and RESOLVED to approve the final figures for February 2024. The vote was unanimous.

173. To receive the budget papers for 2023-2024 with some of March 2024 figures

The Committee noted the budget papers for 2023-2024 with some of March figures included.

The Town Clerk explained that although the Council has some payments due to be made, it is anticipated that the end of year figures would be higher than previously expected, which could potentially mean a further boost to the Council's general reserves.

It was RESOLVED to note the budget papers for 2023-2024 with some of March's figures. Suggestions for virements could be discussed at the next meeting of the

Finance and General Purposes Committee, with any recommendations to be considered by Full Council.

174. To receive the interim internal auditor's report

Cllr N Hards noted the recommendations made by the internal auditor and asked the Town Clerk if steps have been taken to address these. The Town Clerk confirmed that the Civic Hall booking procedures are currently being reviewed for regular hirers, to make the system simpler, and that frequent stock counting is being undertaken.

It was proposed by Cllr T Worgan and RESOLVED to receive the internal auditor's report. All members agreed.

175. To receive the Edmonds Park Community & Sports Pavilion – cost report 10 – and tracker of final payments

The Committee RESOLVED to receive the documents. The Town Clerk confirmed that the final project cost was £2,154,726.47 (ex VAT) – within budget. Cllr N Hards wanted to congratulate all those involved with the management and deliverance of the project which ensured the building was completed within budget and with minimal delays, especially during the recent storms.

It was proposed by Cllr N Hards, seconded by Cllr T Worgan, and RESOLVED to submit a motion to Full Council to officially congratulate all those involved with delivering the project in budget and with limited delays. All members agreed.

175. To agree the Signatories for third party funding agreements

The Committee considered the report.

It was proposed by Cllr G Ryall, seconded by Cllr G Roberts, and RESOLVED to agree for the Chair of the Finance and General Purposes Committee and the Town Clerk to act as signatories to any third-party funding agreements. In their absence, the Deputy Chair of the F&GP Committee and the Deputy Town Clerk could sign on their behalf. The vote was unanimous.

176. To review the progress report

The Committee reviewed the report.

It was confirmed that no response had been received by Restore to the Town Clerk's invitation to attend a meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee to discuss their future plans. Concerns were expressed about the usage of the allotment land at New Road. The Town Clerk will again contact Restore and invite them to a Committee meeting.

The Town Clerk confirmed that there had been no progress on the community building, North Brook Community Centre, although the Estate Manager had tried to contact the developer.

177. Exclusion of the press and public

It was **RESOLVED** to exclude the press and public from the meeting pursuant to Section 1 of the Public Bodies [Admission to Meetings] Act 1960 on the grounds that publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

178. To approve a quote for 64 hanging baskets at a cost of £82 each including watering - £5,248 per year + VAT

The Committee considered the report and noted that the cost was an increase on the previous year. The Town Clerk explained that investigations would be had for suppliers for the basket, for the next financial year.

It was proposed by Cllr J Broadbent, seconded by Cllr T Worgan, and **RESOLVED** to accept the quote of £5,248 (ex VAT) for 64 hanging baskets from Windowflowers Ltd. The vote was unanimous.

The meeting closed at 8.51pm.

Signed: _____(Chair)

Date: _____