

## Didcot Town Council

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### **Finance and General Purposes Committee**

25<sup>th</sup> November 2024 at 7.30pm

All Saints Room, Didcot Civic Hall



### **DRAFT 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 G Ryall  
Councillor J Broadbent  
Councillor N Hards  
Councillor D Aragao  
Councillor J Loder

#### **Officers:**

Mrs L Blake – Deputy Town Clerk (DC)

#### **93. To receive apologies**

Apologies were tendered by the Town Clerk. All members were present.

#### **94. To receive declarations of interests. Members are reminded to declare any interests they may have on any item on this agenda in accordance with Didcot Town Council's code of conduct**

No declarations were received.

#### **95. To agree the Minutes of the meeting held on 21<sup>st</sup> October 2024**

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

#### **96. Questions on the Minutes as to the progress of any item**

There were no questions.

#### **97. To review six grant summary reports**

The Committee reviewed the six reports. Cllr T Worgan asked for a news article to be created on the website to publicise the grants awarded and to thank the applicants for the work they do and the support they provide to Didcot residents.

**98. To consider the grant application for the Christmas dinners**

The Committee reviewed the application for £500 to help towards the cost of providing free Christmas Day lunch for local vulnerable people, or those on their own. Members were very supportive of this application.

It was proposed by Cllr J Broadbent, seconded by Cllr J Loder, and RESOLVED to award Anna Gattrell the full amount of £500 for this application. The vote was unanimous.

**99. To review and approve the financial reports for September and October 2024**

It was proposed by Cllr T Worgan, seconded by Cllr J Broadbent, and RESOLVED to approve the financial reports for September and October 2024. The vote was unanimous.

**100. To review the 2024-2025 budget report**

The budget report was reviewed by the Committee members.

**101. To consider the draft budget 2025-2026 with a working precept**

Members reviewed the draft budget, noting that it is a working document, and figures may be subject to change.

It was confirmed that staffing costs for managing the Splash Pad in 2025 are included within the Outdoor Services staffing budget. Additionally, members noted that the potential division of the Grant Aid cost centre into two separate categories will be further discussed at the Finance and General Purposes (F&GP) Committee meeting in February, where the frequency of Grant Aid application reviews (currently three times per year) will also be considered.

Cllr G Ryall suggested that security options for Council buildings should be discussed further by the Property and Facilities Committee (P&F).

The majority of members expressed support for increasing the Grant Aid budget to £60,000 for 2025, to enable the Town Council to support more organisations and charities.

Cllr G Ryall queried the figures for cost centre 199/4053 ('Loan Capital Repayments'). The Deputy Town Clerk (DC) confirmed this would be investigated and reported back to the Committee.

Cllr N Hards raised a query about the £5,000 increase in CCTV contributions (307/4195). It was explained that the additional cost relates to new cameras planned for 2025. The DC will liaise with the Town Clerk to provide a detailed cost breakdown for 2025-2026.

Members discussed the Christmas lights budget, agreeing that additional decorations would enhance the town, but the locations would need to be agreed, and permission granted from OCC to use additional lighting columns. With the current contract expiring in early 2025, the Council will need to decide whether to extend the contract or go out to tender. The P&F Committee will address this.

- *It was noted after the meeting that an additional single connection would cost £176.*

Members queried the repeated mentions of 'security' across various budget items. This will be reviewed with DCK Accounting on 5th December 2024.

Members noted a predicted decrease in utilities costs (411/4014) for Willowbrook Leisure Centre, attributed to the Estate Manager securing new contracts for the building.

It was confirmed that card processing fees are estimates based on projected usage of Council facilities in 2025-2026, as fees are incurred per transaction.

Cllr T Worgan requested that a report on the products sold at the pavilion during the Splash Pad's operation during the summer of 2025, be presented to the F&GP Committee next year for review.

The Chair requested that all members should submit any further budget suggestions ahead of the meeting on Friday, 29th November. At this meeting, each cost centre will be reviewed in detail by the Chair, the Deputy Chair and the DC, before the budget is presented to the F&GP Committee in December.

### **102. To review the progress report**

Members reviewed the report.

Cllr G Ryall proposed retaining the grass-cutting maps on the progress report until updated maps are provided by Oxfordshire County Council (OCC). This was agreed by all members.

An update on cyber security training for both staff and Councillors was requested. The Town Clerk will progress this matter.

Members were informed that preliminary investigations into a potential new and relocated skate park had begun. However, it was noted that it is unlikely a new facility will be installed during the 2025-2026 financial year. Officers will need to explore funding opportunities and comply with any associated requirements, including public consultations. It is also anticipated that new planning permission will be required. It is hoped that the existing skate park will last a further year or two, with regular checks and maintenance.

The Chair requested that the DC contact the Edfest event organisers to confirm their availability to attend the next Committee meeting. At this meeting, detailed plans and updated cost estimates for both events, as well as an update on the status of the charity, are to be presented.

### **103. 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.

**104. To receive an up-date on CCTV cameras**

Members received the update on the CCTV cameras in Didcot. It was confirmed that the work on the new cameras is progressing.

Members are keen to visit the CCTV Control Room.

The meeting closed at 8.29pm.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ (Chair) Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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