



GLASTONBURY TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of Finance and General Purposes Committee held on 22 November 2022 at 7pm	
Councillors Present	I. Donfrancesco, J. Cousins, Lokabandhu, M. White, P. Manning, R. Cook, M. Smyth, S. Henderson, M. Oakden, Z. Price and S. Roney-Dougal
Apologies	Cllrs MacDougall, Napper and Osborn
In Attendance	Town Clerk
Public Participation	0 members of the public were present.

12. TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Cllrs MacDougall owing to family commitments and Cllrs Napper and Osborn owing to a conflicting meeting. The reasons for absence were duly **NOTED**.

Cllrs Cottle and Mutch was absent and provided no apologies.

13. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllrs Cousins, Roney-Dougal and Lokabandhu declared interests as trustees of St Edmund's Community Hall Charity. Cllrs Roney-Dougal, Smyth and Manning declared interests as members of the Glastonbury Antiquarian Society. Cllrs Cousins and Oakden declared interests as directors of Glastonbury Information Centre CIC. Cllr Cousins declared a further interest as a founder of the Glastonbury Coronavirus Support Network. Cllrs Price, Cousins, Lokabandhu, Roney-Dougal and Henderson declared interests as shareholders in the Red Brick Building.

All members declared an interest as payers of the precept.

14. TO APPROVE AND SIGN THE MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 26 July 2022 were considered and **SIGNED** as a correct record of the meeting.

Members raised the need for a new date for the Ethical Banking and investments Sub-Committee to meet. The Town Clerk will liaise with the Responsible Finance Officer and circulate a date to consider the work done on the topic.

15. TO CONSIDER TOWN HALL CHARGES FROM 1 APRIL 2023

Members considered a new table of Town Hall charges prepared by the Town Clerk and Town Hall Manager. The Committee were informed that this new pricing structure is the first increase since 2017 and had been done in line with the pricing structures of similar venues.

Cllr Roney-Dougal proposed that the presented set of Town Hall charges be accepted. This was seconded by Cllr Oakden and **RESOLVED** unanimously.

16. TO CONSIDER APPLICATIONS FOR GRANT AID FOR THE REMAINDER OF 2022-23 FROM THE REMAINING BUDGET

Two grant applications had been received for the committee to consider. One grant application was from Glastonbury FM for renewed equipment to support their community education offer, and the other from Street Volunteer Driver Service to provide on-demand transport to residents.

Members reviewed the accounts for both organisations and the remaining £2,000 in the budget.

Cllr Henderson proposed that £1,000 be awarded to each organisation (Glastonbury FM and Street Volunteer Driver Service). This was seconded by Cllr Roney-Dougal and **RESOLVED** unanimously.

17. TO CONSIDER PROVISION OF GRANT AID IN 2023-24 AS PART OF THE BUDGET

Members considered the existing grants in the budget. Cllr Manning spoke to the grant for Glastonbury Community Development Trust. He spoke of changes to their operating model and strategy for the future. The organisation is currently dormant but still incurring contracted costs and hoping to re-establish themselves in the financial year. Members discussed the level of provision of Grant Aid and that the organisation did not require the full £3,800 provided in 2022-23. Cllr Cousins proposed that Glastonbury Community Development Trust be offered £2,000 in grant aid for 2023-24. This was seconded by Cllr Smyth and **RESOLVED** unanimously with one abstention.

Councillors considered the provision of grant aid to Citizen's Advice Mendip, which in 2022-23 stood at £7,000. The committee reflected on the importance of Citizen's Advice to the folk of the town, especially those in need. However, this was also considered in light of the change to the operating model and method of providing support on offer. The organisation has no physical presence in the Town and had not provided an impact report based on the provision of £7,000 grant aid in the current financial year. Cllr Cousins proposed that the level of grant aid for Citizen's Advice Mendip be reduced to £5,000 and that they are to be written to, requesting an impact report of previous grants. This was seconded by Cllr Henderson and **RESOLVED** unanimously.

Members considered the provision of Grant Aid to St Edmund's Community Hall. This financial grant aid enables the price of hire for users of the hall to remain low and it was reflected upon how important the hall is for its users in an area of deprivation in the Town.

Cllr Smyth proposed that £4,000 of grant aid be awarded to St Edmund's Community Hall. This was seconded by Cllr Price and **RESOLVED** unanimously with three abstentions.

Glastonbury Museum in the Tribunal had requested provision of Grant Aid at £5,000 to help cover substantially increased utility costs. The Town Clerk reminded members that he is a director of the Glastonbury Museum but played no part in the decision to apply for Grant Aid and does not take part in any decisions of the Council. Cllrs reflected that the museum is run by volunteers and is an important part of exhibiting the Town's heritage. Cllr Smyth proposed that Glastonbury Museum be provided £3,000 in Grant Aid for 2023-24. This was seconded by Cllr Cook and **RESOLVED** unanimously.

18. TO CONSIDER WHETHER TO INCREASE THE ALLOWANCE FOR MACEBEARERS AND THE TOWN PIPER FROM £18 PER APPEARANCE

Members considered the level of Honorarium provided for the two Macebearers and Town Piper. The current honorarium is £18 per appearance for 19 appearances comprised of 12 Council meetings and seven events.

The Town Clerk had forecasted the cost of increasing this by just over 10% to £20 per appearance. The forecasts in the budget were for two Macebearers at 19 appearances and the Town Piper at seven appearances.

Cllr Cousins proposed that the honorarium for Macebearers and the Town Piper be increased to £20 per appearance. This was seconded by Cllr Smyth and **RESOLVED** unanimously.

19. TO CONSIDER THE DRAFT BUDGET FOR 2023-24 AND RECOMMEND A PRECEPT DEMAND FIGURE

Members considered several draft budgets prepared by the Town Clerk and Responsible Finance Officer. Officers had sought to include the projects that members indicated a desire to undertake, whilst building the Council's reserves that had been depleted by subsidising a freeze in the precept for two financial years and unexpected expenditure as a result of having to replace the Town Hall boiler.

The prioritisation of various projects was discussed by members in consideration of their affordability and impact on the Town Council's future income or expenditure. The Climate Emergency and Resilience Officer will prepare a report for members as to what energy efficiency and decarbonisation measures can be achieved within the budget and with the use of grant funding and/or loans as needed.

Members discussed the enhanced relief available to residents on their Council Tax under the new Unitary Authority, which is increasing from 80% to up to 100% and the need for any increase to be fully explained to the public through a leaflet along with information on the aforementioned Council tax relief.

The Town Clerk updated a draft budget projection with new information as a result of earlier resolutions from this meeting and monies from a reduction in projected Grant Aid and removal of the Mendip District Council CCTV contributions budget line were added to the Glastonbury information Centre budget area.

Cllr Roney-Dougal proposed that the committee accept the draft budget based on a 50% Precept increase to £628,740. This was seconded by Cllr Henderson and **RESOLVED** by majority.

Cllr Roney-Dougal left the meeting at the end of the above item.

20. TO CONSIDER ANY ACTION TO BE TAKEN FOLLOWING THE RECEIPT OF THE EXTERNAL AUDITOR REPORT FOR 2021-22

The Responsible Finance Officer was absent from the meeting owing to illness, however the Town Clerk informed the Committee that the External Auditor concluded that the Council was being run properly and in line with legislation.

Members extended a vote of thanks to the Responsible Finance Officer for her hard work.

21. TO CONSIDER HOLDING AN ADDITIONAL MEETING OF THIS COMMITTEE ON 6 DECEMBER 2022

Members considered holding an additional meeting of this committee on 6 December, as the provisional Tax Base for 2023-24 which is usually received in early November had been delayed by Mendip District Council until early December.

In order to understand before the January Full Council meeting when the Precept Demand must be made, members agreed to hold an additional meeting on 6 December to analyse the impact of any change in Tax Base and additional information that will affect the budget.

SIGNED:	DATE:
----------------	--------------