

Minutes of a meeting of the **FINANCE and GENERAL PURPOSES** Committee held in the Council Offices, Pine Grove, Crowborough on Tuesday 29th November 2022 at 7.00pm

Present	Councillors	Peter Bucklitsch* Mike Cooke Suzanne Dixon* Martyn Garrett Kay Moss David Neeves Neil Waller*	Chairman Vice-Chairman
Also present		Caroline Miles Karen Whiley Tracie White	Town Clerk Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) Minute Taking Administrator

1 member of public online.

*Denotes non attendance

APOLOGIES

CLlr Peter Bucklitsch
CLlr Suzanne Dixon
CLlr Neil Waller

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

CLlr David Neeves declared a personal interest in Item 6.1 as a member of Crowborough Cricket Club.

MINUTES

Minutes of the meeting held on 29th November 2022

9974 RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting held on 29th November 2022 as confirmed be ratified by the Chairperson.

The Chairperson moved to hear Item 4.7 first due to a member of public present with an interest.

FINANCIAL MATTERS

To discuss the landlord insurance requirements at Alderbrook

The Chairman of Crowborough Athletic Football Club (CAFC) sought clarification regarding responsibility for the insurance for CAFC stadium. He stated that Clause 5.2 of the lease between the Town Council and CAFC states that insurance is the obligation of the landlord.

The RFO advised that legal advice had been sought regarding Clause 5.2 of the lease. The landlord responsibility is to insure the demised premises. However, this does not include

any tenant fixtures. The RFO explained that demised premises cover all additions and improvements but exclude any fixtures that have been installed by clients. The responsibility for the stadium therefore lies with CAFC.

The Chairman confirmed that CAFC are happy to accept responsibility for insuring the stadium but asked the town council to provide written confirmation of the changes to confirm that CAFC will not breach any terms of the lease, particularly as the town council have paid the insurance from 2007 to date.

The Town Council will contact CAFC in due course.

A member of public left the meeting at 19:45hrs.

To review F&GP's current income and expenditure against budget and EMR position

The Income and Expenditure report was noted.

The Earmarked Reserves report was noted.

To review and note the internal auditors report and comments.

The report was noted

9975 RESOLVED to accept the recommendations made by the RFO.

To note the latest insurance claim information

The report was noted.

To note the current agreements on trade accounts

It was noted that as the Council obtains more electric vehicles there would need to be a way of monitoring the charge and perhaps splitting the cost across the relevant committees.

To review the Annual Investment Strategy

9976 RESOLVED to recommend the Annual Investment Strategy to Full Council.

To review the current investments

Members discussed options for the Natwest and Lloyds bank accounts.

9977 RESOLVED to give notice on the 95-day Natwest account to enable the money to be moved to a higher interest account.

9978 RESOLVED to give notice on the 95-day Lloyds account to enable the money to be moved to a higher interest account.

PROPOSED BUDGETS FOR 2023/24

To review all the committee budgets and agree a recommendation to Full Council, setting the precept for 2023/24

It was noted that Wealden District Council had released the provisional Council tax base figure for 2023/24 which enabled the RFO to produce updated figures for the meeting. The band D base figure for Crowborough is set at 8,901.60 which means that a 10.26% increase would be required to meet the current funding requirements.

Members discussed how best to meet the requirements of the Council whilst taking into account the current economic situation. It was noted that the figures presented take into account the staff structure review recommendations and the deficit could be funded from General Reserves. The General Reserves currently stand at £748,000 but there is likely to be another £100,000 added to the figure by the end of the financial year.

There were also some areas that budgets could be amended to help address the deficit, for example; the F & G budget did not include profit share from Basepoint and it was reasonable to conclude that profit share would be received for 2023/4. It was also noted that interest rates may increase which would have an impact on the figures.

Budgets could be re-assessed and cut but members agreed that the committee could not look at cutting individual committee budgets without all Chairpersons' present.

Members discussed the benefit of having the Chairperson from each committee sit as a member of the Finance and General Purposes Committee, particularly as part of the budget setting process.

A proposal was made to recommend a 0.00% increase. The RFO was asked what the financial consequences would be for making that recommendation.

The RFO advised that the £157,411 taken from General Reserves to cover the shortfall for 2023/4 would mean either a substantial increase to precepts in future years or for general reserves to be used each year, the majority of the costs are rolling expenses and may mean a bigger deficit in 2024/5, particularly as staff costs are ongoing and costs are still rising.

However, Crowborough residents would be protected this year from any increase.

The proposal of a recommendation for a 0.00% increase was seconded.

9979 RESOLVED to recommend to Full Council a 0.00% increase in band D FOR 2023/4

EXEMPT BUSINESS

To note the confidential aged debt report

9980 RESOLVED that pursuant to Section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 that the public and press be excluded from the meeting on the grounds that publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reasons of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

The report was noted. Members discussed the outstanding balances.

9981 RESOLVED to recommend to Full Council that the debt from Line 6 of the ledger be written off.

URGENT MATTERS AT THE DISCRETION OF THE CHAIRMAN FOR NOTING AND/OR INCLUSION ON A FUTURE AGENDA

None

The meeting closed at 20:17hrs.