

Minutes of a meeting of the **FINANCE and GENERAL PURPOSES** Committee held in the Council Offices, Pine Grove, Crowborough on Tuesday 10th December 2024 at 7.30pm

Present	Councillors	Peter Bucklitsch Suzanne Dixon Martyn Everitt Martyn Garrett David Hedges* Kay Moss Neil Waller Matthew Street Natalie Whittle	Vice Chairperson Chairperson
Also present		Caroline Miles Charlotte Penny Karen Whiley	Town Clerk Meetings Administrator Responsible Financial Officer (RFO)

*Denotes non attendance

APOLOGIES

None

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr Martyn Everitt declared an interest as a tenant of Basepoint.

MINUTES

Minutes of the meetings held on 15th October 2024

- 10732 RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the meetings held on 15th October 2024 as confirmed be ratified by the Chairperson.

FINANCE

To note the Finance Report and agree any action

To note F&GP's current income and expenditure against budget and Earmarked Reserves

The Income and Expenditure was noted.

The Earmarked Reserves were noted. It was agreed that these would be reviewed at the next meeting to make any adjustments for year end.

To review and note the external auditor's report and comments

The external auditor's report and comments were noted.

Councillors congratulated the officers for their hard work and for another good performance.

It was agreed that a written update with regards Appendix A would be submitted at a future F & GP meeting.

To note the latest information on Insurance Claims

The information was noted.

To review and agree the proposed insurance renewal

The renewal was noted. The price had risen from the estimate, but this is the case with all insurance providers currently.

Councillors agreed that clarification is needed from the Auditors regarding what cyber insurance covers and what type of cover the Town Council would need before any policy is put in place. The RFO will liaise with the auditor and report back.

10733 RESOLVED to accept the proposed insurance renewal from Zurich for period 2025/2026.

To review the Annual Investment Strategy.

The information was noted.

It was agreed that point 5.3 of the strategy should be amended to read 'It is not envisaged that any investments of a capital expenditure nature as described in 5.1 will be entered into during 2024-25'

10734 RESOLVED to recommend the Investment Strategy with the amendment noted above to Full Council.

To note the report on Pinegrove

The report was noted

It was noted that although there was a profit last year, there was a 40k loss once capital and interest payments were considered. However it was noted that the running costs for the old town hall was not included in the figures.

To discuss the option of changing banks

It was agreed that the Nat West account should be upgraded once the one-year grace period has expired.

10735 RESOLVED to upgrade the Nat West account at the cessation of one-year grace period.

PROPOSED BUDGETS FOR 2025/26

To review all the committee budgets and agree a recommendation to Full Council, setting the Precept for 2025/26

10736 RESOLVED to recommend a 3.91% increase in the precept resulting in a required precept of £1,748,757 and an increase of £7.36 on a band D property to Full Council.

GRANTS

To note the officer's report and agree further action

The report was noted.

Grant Awarding policy

It was agreed that the grants awarding process and timetable should remain the same, but it would be prudent to be very clear on the application form as to when the grants will be paid.

COUNCILLOR TABLETS

To note the report on councillor tablets

It was agreed that the principle behind the use of councillor tablets for CTC business was a good one. The council must ensure data security, and the use of the tablets protects both council and councillors from legal action in the event of a data breach.

It was noted that Wealden District Councillors had been issued with WDC iPads and were permitted to not only view and store WDC data on multiple personal devices, but that the WDC iPads were not restricted to WDC business only.

It was agreed that enquiries would be made as to WDC policy and its' compliance with GDPR as this would assist CTC practice moving forward.

It was noted that Weald IT had been very helpful in terms of troubleshooting issues but that there were functionality problems with the tablets themselves. It was agreed that the creation of a troubleshooting log would be helpful. Councillors who have a particular issue should make a note of the problem and the subsequent solution advised by Weald IT. This will then be logged, and should the same issue arise for another councillor, that councillor can be advised as to the course of action. In due course the log can form a handbook for new councillors who may not be used to IT.

It was agreed that whilst there were current functionality and learning problems for councillors in terms of using the new tablets, these would be overcome by mutual support. Furthermore, it was agreed that all councillors should comply, and use the tablets provided for CTC business.

It was agreed to review the brand of tablet supplied and to update members on use in six months.

EXEMPT BUSINESS

10737 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.

To note the confidential Aged Debt report

The Aged Debt Report was noted.

10738 RESOLVED to write off Lines 5 and 7 of the Aged Debtor report.

It was agreed to consider a proposal that the council take over the running of the office letting business in Pine Grove when it reviews the business plan in February 2025.

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

The meeting closed at 21:00hrs.