

Sevenoaks Town Council

Minutes of the meeting of the Finance & General Purposes Committee Held on 27th November 2023 in the Council Chamber, Town Council Offices, TN13 3QG

Livestreamed and available to view on YouTube until approved by Council:

<https://youtube.com/live/yNajs1kQigA?feature=share>

Meeting commenced: 7:55 pm

Meeting Concluded: 8:59 pm

Present:

Cllr Tony Clayton (Chair)	Present	Cllr Victoria Granville	Present
Cllr Nigel Wightman (Vice-Chair)	Present	Cllr Chloe Gustard	Present
Cllr Libby Ancrum	Apologies	Cllr Claire Shea, Mayor (ex-officio)	Present
Cllr Dr Marilyn Canet	Present	Cllr David Skinner OBE	Apologies
Cllr Peter Dixon	Present		

Substitute	For
Cllr Claire Shea	Cllr Libby Ancrum

In attendance: Cllr Nick Varley, Town Clerk (remote attendance), Responsible Finance Officer/Deputy Town Clerk and Senior Committee Clerk.

Representations received from Member of the Public: None

527 Apologies for Absence: As noted above.

528 Dispensations: There were no requests for dispensations.

529 Declarations of Interest: There were no Declarations of Interest

530 Minutes of the Finance & General Purposes Committee on 2nd October 2023
RESOLVED: to receive and sign the Minutes of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held on 2nd October 2023 as a true record.

531 Finance Reports to 30th September 2023

531.1 The Committee received and noted, for the period ended 30th September 2023, the Responsible Finance Officer's (RFO) Report with Income and Expenditure, Variance Analysis, Statement of Fund Balances and Capital Expenditure and funds.

It was noted that the year-to-date position at the end of September 2023 gave a revenue surplus of £40,679, allowing for: the phasing of the budget; adjustment required for Bat & Ball Station Management & Maintenance Reserves movement to be actioned at year end which offsets the Bat & Ball Station year to date deficit of £50,347; £54,000 for skate park refurbishment, to be vired from CIL; and £30,086 grant to Stag Theatre to be vired from CIL.

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The Committee considered a request that the replacement sash windows at the Vine be funded from contingency.

It was noted that following the appointment of the new RFO, it was necessary to update the Bank Mandate.

It was also noted that the RFO would be meeting with Cllrs Clayton, Wightman and Dixon the following day to review the current Investments. Report to be submitted to the next meeting of the Committee.

RESOLVED that:

- 1) The report of the Responsible Finance Officer and Management Accounts to September 2023 be received and accepted;
- 2) The replacement sash windows at the Vine be funded from contingency; and
- 3) Bank Mandate
 - i) the bank signatory lists be updated to include Georgina Jackson (simultaneously removing Rosalind Shaw) as per delegated authority held with all banking institutions with which the Council holds an account or investment;
 - ii) the Responsible Finance Officer is authorised to supply the Bank as and when necessary with lists of persons authorised to sign; and
 - iii) the resolutions be communicated to the Bank and remain in force until changed by a resolution of the Council and a copy, certified by the Chief Executive and the Responsible Finance Officer, is received by the Bank.

531.2 The Committee received and noted the following:

Suppliers' Accounts

- 1st to 31st August 2023, total gross invoices £69,047.94
- 1st to 30th September 2023, total gross invoices £118,846.70

List of Payments - Sevenoaks Town Council Nat West Account:

- 1st to 31st August 2023, total £143,443.14
- 1st to 30th September 2023, total £161,503.77

List of Payments – Mayor's Charity Account

- 1st to 31st August 2023: None
- 1st to 30th September 2023: None

Payroll Account

- 1st to 31st August 2023, total £87,102.26
- 1st to 30th September 2023, total £80,488.44

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Petty Cash Account

- 1st to 31st August 2023, total payments £505.30
- 1st to 30th September 2023, total payments £518.26

531.3 Hospitality and Gifts Register

Noted that no Hospitality or Gifts had been received by Councillors or staff for the periods 1st to 31st August 2023 and 1st to 30th September 2023.

532 Christmas Lights Feed Pillar at 30 London Road/Bank Street

Following the disconnection by Kent County Council of a lighting supply for the Christmas lights from a pillar sign, for safety reasons, it was necessary to have a separate feed pillar and cable installed at No 30 London Road (on its Bank Street elevation). The work was carried out by Kent County Council and an application for listed building consent will be submitted by the Town Council to the District Council.

RESOLVED: That the expenditure of £1,875 for the installation of the new feeder pillar and cable for Christmas lights at No.30 London Road be met from Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funds.

533 Recommendations from Open Spaces & Leisure Committee

The Committee received and noted the recommendation from the Open Spaces & Leisure Committee [*Minute 417, 13.11.23 refers*] proposing adoption of the draft charges in respect of Cemetery Charges; Sports Facilities Charges; and General Open Spaces Charges (attached as Appendices A, B & C to the Open Spaces & Leisure Committee minutes).

The Committee received and noted the recommendation from the Open Spaces & Leisure Committee [*Minute 416, 13.11.2023 refers*] that the draft Revenue Budget 2024/25 (attached as Appendix D to the Open Spaces & Leisure Committee minutes) be adopted.

RESOLVED: That the recommendations from the Open Spaces & Leisure Committee held on 13th November 2023 be received and noted and considered in the final Precept requirement in January 2024.

534 Recommendation from Youth Services Committee

The Committee considered a recommendation from the Youth Services Committee [*Minute 483, YSC 08.11.23 refers*] requesting funding of £15,000 from West Kent Housing to enable them to maintain the detached youth service in Sevenoaks District following the withdrawal of funding from Kent County Council from March 2024. The funding was for one year to enable West Kent Housing to continue to provide the service whilst developing a funding plan (including bids to the National Lottery and large charitable trusts) for a long-term project starting in April 2025.

RESOLVED: That £15,000 funding from 2023/24 contingency be approved for the West Kent Housing, Sevenoaks District Detached Youth Work Project for 2024-2025 subject to appropriate reporting and delivery measures being put in place.

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535 Review of Charges 2024/25

The Committee reviewed proposed draft Town Council charges for 2024/25 which had been prepared based on an assumption of 7% inflation.

RESOLVED: That the proposed draft Town Council charges 2024/25 in relation to the following be reviewed further at the meeting of this Committee to be held on 15th January 2024 with a view to reducing the current rate of inflation:

- Hire of the Council Chamber & House in the Basement Youth Café
- Bat & Ball Centre
- Bat & Ball Station
- Business Hub
- Market Stalls
- General Open Spaces
- Cemetery
- Sports Facilities

536 Draft Revenue Estimates 2024/25

The Committee received and considered the report of the Responsible Finance Officer which set out the key assumptions in the preparation of the draft Revenue Budget & Precept 2024/25. It was noted that the initial draft revenue estimate indicated a draft precept of £1,402,706, a 2.4% increase on previous precept. This was expected to change in the final Precept requirement.

RESOLVED: To receive and note the first draft Revenue Estimates 2024/25 which would be subject to further review of the December year to date performance and actuarial pension review, prior to submission to Council for approval in January 2024.

537 Grant application: Sevenoaks Summer Festival

Consideration was given to the grant application received from the Sevenoaks Summer Festival organising committee. The Summer Festival was in its 54th year but had been prevented from holding festivals in 2020 and 2021 due to Covid restrictions and in 2023 due to significant losses in 2022. The aim was to have a hoped for “return to normal” Summer Festival from 22nd June to 7th July 2024.

RESOLVED: That a grant request be awarded under the General Power of Competence (Localism Act 2011 Sections 1-8 refers) as follows:

Grant Ref No.	Organisation	Purpose of Award	Grant Application	Grant Approved
20	Sevenoaks Summer Festival	To provide core seed funding for the Summer Festival 2024	£5,000	£5,000

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538 Notes of Communication Working Party held on 29th September 2023

RESOLVED: That the notes of the meeting of the Communication Working Party held on 29th September 2023 be received and noted

539 Minutes of Town Team AGM Meeting held on 11th October 2023

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting of the Town Team AGM held on 11th October 2023 be received and noted.

540 Minutes of Bat & Ball User Group held on 18th October 2023

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting of the Bat & Ball User Group held on 18th October 2023 be received and noted.

541 Current Matters

The updates to the Current Matters schedule were considered.

RESOLVED that the updates on the Current Matters be received and noted.

542 Press Release

It was agreed that Press Releases be issued regarding the grant to the Sevenoaks Summer Festival and funding for the West Kent Housing, Sevenoaks District Detached Youth Work Project for 2024-2025.

543 Private & Confidential

RESOLVED: That under the Public Bodies (Admission of Meetings) Act 1960, the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the following item by reason of the confidential nature of the business.

544 Operation of Cafes

The Committee considered a report regarding the operation of the Town Council Cafes.

RESOLVED:

- 1) To move the Café on the Vine to a concession from 1st April 2024 or sooner.
- 2) To move the Bat & Ball Station Café to a concession from 1st April 2024 or sooner.

There being no further business the Chair closed the Meeting.

Signed
Chair

Dated