

THORNBURY
TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Town Council Estimates Meeting
held on Thursday 10th November 2016 in the Council Chamber

Present: Cllrs. Helen Harrison (Chairman)
Bob Griffin
Guy Rawlinson
Vincent Costello
Shirley Holloway
Benj Emmerson
Clive Parkinson
Angela Symonds
Maggie Tyrrell
Clare Fardell
Matthew Stringer (*late arrival*)
Clare Nelmes (Town Clerk)
Graham Smith (RFO)
Mary Sealey (Administrator)

Absent: Cllrs: Lesley Tuck
Martin Trueman

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

The following apologies had been received:-

Cllrs: Gail Whitehead (Out of Thornbury)
Pam Shipp (Other Meeting)

2. TO RECEIVE ANY MEMBERS DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

3. TO RECEIVE ANY CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

None.

4. TO RECEIVE ANY REPRESENTATIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

There were no members of the public in attendance.

5. TO CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING MATTERS RELATED TO FINANCE

(a) To Approve the Accounts for Payment

246/16. The following accounts now due for payment were proposed by Cllr Clive Parkinson and seconded by Cllr Benj Emmerson for payment to be approved:-

Central Services

British Telecommunications plc	Telephone bill – Town Hall	387.58
EDF Energy	Electricity Bill	262.34
The Consortium	Cleaning cloth	1.19
Danwood Group Ltd	Photocopy charge	52.09

Playing Fields & Cemetery

Abbey Loos Ltd	Toilet Unit Hire	100.80
British Telecommunications plc	Telephone bill – PFC	34.53
EDF Energy	Electricity Bill - MPF	102.84
EDF Energy	Electricity Bill - Chapel	
Sullivans Machinery	Oil & starter rope	35.80
Thornbury Motors Ltd	Petrol	126.12
Travis Perkins	Padlock, chain etc	82.10
Thornbury Tyre Service Ltd	Tyre repair & Balance	24.00
Thornbury Tyre Service Ltd	Tube	21.60
TCS Country Supplies Ltd	Gates and posts	404.08
Yate Supplies Ltd	Black Sacks	83.10

Environment

Hawkins of Thornbury	Ronseal wood stain	19.99
Thornbury Motors Ltd	Petrol	52.09
Travis Perkins Ltd	Wood	67.39
Travis Perkins Ltd	Washers, bolts etc	44.04

Grants & Contingencies

EDF Energy	Electricity Bill - Museum	180.51
Thornbury Heritage Trust	Reimbursement for Walker Fire Invoice	122.40

6. TO CONSIDER MID-YEAR ESTIMATES OF COUNCIL EXPENDITURE AGAINST BUDGET FOR 2016/17

247/16. The RFO gave an introduction on the new way he has presented the estimate of income and expenditure to the end of March 2017 and the budget for 2017/18. He stressed that the figures are a first draft.

248/16. The projected year to date summary showed an estimated surplus across all Town Council budgets at 31 March 2017 of £162,315.

Cllr Matthew Stringer entered the meeting.

249/16. The Clerk ran through each of the committees current and predicted expenditure against budget, identifying any key under or overspends predicted and the reasons for this. The Clerk reported that now the issue with the outstanding energy invoices has been resolved the proposed under spends on heating and lighting across all budgets goes to a general reserve going forward.

(i) Environment Committee

250/16. It was highlighted that some areas would be under spent this financial year and that as a result these funds were proposed to go to a ring fenced reserve for future use.

(ii) Playing Fields & Cemetery

251/16. The Clerk reported that there will be an over spend on the play equipment maintenance budget as due to the age of equipment, repairs and maintenance were increasing. Likewise there will be an over spend on the courts and pitches budget due to the additional maintenance works to the new pitches on Poulterbrook. A decision about future vehicle

options would be required by February 2017 when the current agreement ends. Cllr Clive Parkinson asked for an item to be put on the next Playing Fields & Cemetery Committee agenda to approach the Football Club for a contribution to the maintenance contract. These areas of the budget would need careful consideration for next year's budget.

- 252/16. Cllr Clive Parkinson also commented that as the Poulterbrook project and replacement vehicle options involves both the Environment and Playing Fields & Cemetery Committee, any decisions regarding them should involve both committees or be made at Full Council.

(iii) Central Services

- 253/16. The Clerk reported that the income is on target for the Central Services budget. The audit fees will be higher than in previous years as there will be an additional detailed interim internal audit undertaken in December.

- 254/16. The Clerk is currently receiving quotations for the external redecoration of the Town Hall and it is evident that the allocated budget will not be adequate so this budget is unlikely to be spent this financial year.

(iv) Land and Property

- 255/16. The income expected from land and property is set to be on target with new lease agreements recently signed for both the flat and offices at 67 High Street.

(v) Grant and Contingencies

- 256/16. The Clerk commented that the Local Council Support Grant may be reduced again next year or cut completely.

RESERVES

- 257/16. The Clerk and RFO described the new proposed process for dealing with reallocations of under spends at year end and the creation of more allocated reserves. Members requested that the reserves each committee holds are listed separately and if a committee want to spend from a reserve that isn't planned for in the next year they will need to apply to do that at a full council meeting.

Cllr Guy Rawlinson asked how long amounts can be held in reserves, the Clerk replied that it depends what purpose the money is intended for and if you have a designated plan for it. It is prudent to have general reserves and at the moment we fall short on what is recommended as best practice. The recommendation is to keep 3-12 months of total budget in reserves, however, this is something the internal auditor will look at and give a recommendation.

7. TO CONSIDER THE DRAFT COUNCIL BUDGET FOR 2017/18

- 258/16. The Clerk ran through the initial draft budget for 2017/18 by committee highlighting any key changes from previous years and spending pressures. Estimates of income have been prudent and conservative and do not include any future changes to fees and charges.

(i) Environment Committee

- 259/16. Cllr Clive Parkinson asked for the localism budget of £29,000 to be itemised into grass cutting, flower beds and dog bins. It was also agreed that there needs to be a seating budget.

(ii) Playing Fields & Cemetery

- 260/16. The Clerk highlighted the need to replace some of the aging play equipment and how this could be delivered and funded. Provisional increases to the budget for play maintenance, replacement play equipment and pitches and courts have been suggested by the Clerk.
- 261/16. As Town Council has agreed to explore taking on a lease for Vilner Lane Field, £2,000 has provisionally been budgeted for maintenance of this area, should the Council become responsible for it.
- 262/16. The current reserve for resurfacing of the Mundy Playing Fields car park is unlikely to be enough to complete the works and future funding would need to be identified to deliver this.

(iii) Central Services

- 263/16. Cllr Clive Parkinson asked for the proposed training budget to be separated from the fees and subscriptions budget.
- 264/16. The Clerk informed members that an allowance has been made in the wages budget for a 1% increase and a 3% increase in superannuation. Checks are being undertaken to account for the pension deficit repayment and further details would be provided on this. The draft budget does not include any changes to current staffing hours.
- 265/16. The Clerk informed members that she has not included a sum for planning consultancy and they may wish to budget for professional advice on planning strategy.

(iv) Land and Property

- 266/16. The proposed budget for Land and Property took into account the fact that professional fees were unlikely to be required now leases have been agreed for the flat and offices.

(v) Grants and Contingencies

- 267/16. The Clerk commented that this budget was based on existing grant arrangements and would be subject to change after the Council Grants meeting in December. The Clerk also commented that the Armstrong Hall Complex grant may need to be increased to address a range of repairs and maintenance issues. Cllr Clive Parkinson recommended waiting to see the Armstrong Hall budget before any decisions are made and in the meantime leave the grant at £47,000 as existing.
- 268/16. To take account of the emergency youth grant awarded this financial year, the youth services budget has been provisionally increased to £22,000 for 2017/18.
- 269/16. Cllr Guy Rawlinson questioned whether, in view of Council raising the profile of its Community Grant Scheme, whether the £11,000 budgeted for 2017/18 will be adequate. It was agreed to wait and see what applications come in before making a decision.
- 270/16. The Clerk pointed out that we have a reserve of £9,500 for election expenses.

(vi) Precept Requirement

- 271/16. Using the provisional 2017-18 budget figures gave a precept requirement of £638,563, which equates to a 30.6% increase. The RFO agreed to amend figures as discussed, updated with revised information from South Gloucestershire Council for consideration at the full Council meeting in January 2017 for a final decision to be made.

8. TO RECEIVE CORRESPONDENCE AND NOTICES NOT REFERRED TO SPECIFIC COMMITTEES OR TO BE DEALT WITH ON GROUNDS OF URGENCY

Cllr Clare Fardell wished to raise the following item on grounds of urgency:

- 272/16. A resident of Sawmill Lane has brought to Cllr Clare Fardell's attention that in recent weeks BT have erected an obtrusive high telegraph pole to serve a new house. The wires from this pole are now crossing the roof of a neighbouring house and will prevent them from carrying out maintenance work. Sawmill Lane is on the edge of the Conservation Area and all the other houses in the area are connected via underground cables. It was proposed by Cllr Maggie Tyrrell, seconded by Cllr Helen Harrison and unanimously agreed to ask the Clerk to write to the BT Wayleaves Officer as a matter of urgency to request measures are taken to address the concerns of the residents.