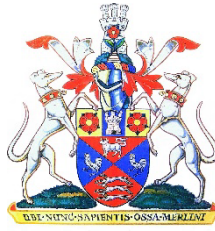


Marlborough Town Council



Finance and Policy Committee

Minutes of a meeting of the Finance & Policy Committee held Monday, 8 July 2024 in the Council Chamber, Marlborough Town Hall at 7pm

PRESENT	Councillor Jane Davies	Chair
	Councillor Kym-Marie Cleasby	Town Mayor
	Councillor Mervyn Hall	
	Councillor Andrew Ross	
	Councillor Caroline Sadler	
	Councillor Kelvyn Shantry	
	Richard Spencer-Williams	Town Clerk
ALSO		
PRESENT	Sasha Thorbek	Greatwood Charity

PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were no questions.

Cllr Davies (Vice Chair) assumed the Chair of the Committee in the absence of Cllr Thomas

95/24 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from **Councillors Fogg and Thomas**

96/24 DECLARATIONS

There were no declarations of interest.

97/24 CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were no announcements.

98/24 MINUTES

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the meeting held 22 April 2024 were approved as a true record and signed by the Chair.

Cllrs Ross and Sadler abstained.

99/24 ACTION LOG

Members noted there were no outstanding actions.

100/24 GRANTS

RESOLVED: to award a grant of £1,000 to the Greatwood Charity towards the purchase of new IT equipment, specifically laptops and tablets to be used by those learners with SEND (special educational needs and disabilities) and SEMH (social, emotional mental health) difficulties

101/24 FINANCE REPORT Q1 2024-25

Members noted the finance report for Q1 (month 2) 2024-25.

The Town Clerk made the Committee aware of the potential Wiltshire Council election charges for both the March and July Marlborough Town Councillor elections at a cost of £9,752 each, and that these charges would mean an overspend from the general reserve. Also, that the 2025-26 budget would need to provide for the May 2025 election of circa £20K.

ACTION Town Clerk to ask Wiltshire Council whether the full election charge remains valid, given it was run in tandem with the General Election?

ACTION Town Clerk to send the Committee the relevant Committee minute detailing this decision.

There was a question raised by the **Chair** as to why the *4113 Insignia Funds*, which showed at 863.1% overspent, was not highlighted as a 'red/overspend'. The **Town Clerk** explained this was because the increased spend was due to a spend and vire from an EMR for the purpose it was intended, and as such did not present a budget risk. The Chair questioned who had made the decision for this expenditure, the Town Clerk clarified this decision had been made by the Committee.

ACTION Town Clerk to prepare a report outlining what council services could incur an external charge.

102/24 YEAR END FINANCIAL REPORT 2023-24

There was a debate about accounting practice and whether the current council practice (as advised by RIALTAS) was best practice. **Cllr Ross** questioned and challenged the accounting competence of the **Town Clerk** and **Committee**; and that this could be a cause of risk to the Council. Cllr Ross also questioned the year end reports and whether their presentation represented the Council's position satisfactorily.

The **Mayor Cllr Cleasby** and **Cllr Sadler** both asserted their own experience of accounting and budget management and considered themselves sufficiently competent in this respect for oversight of the councils' financial activities. Both Councillors stated their support and appreciation for the current practice and the financial information provided.

The Town Clerk clarified that all accounting and financial practices and reporting was a result of several parties being involved including the **Town Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer**, the **Office Manager**, the **Internal Auditor**, **RBS RIALTAS** (the accounting system with accounting support accounting service used by most Local Councils), and the **External Auditor**, as well as the **Committee** itself. The Town Clerk did not consider the Council was at risk.

Members agreed that the Council did need to be mindful of realistic budget and prudent precept setting, and the need to exercise due diligence with council finances and public money, and the **Chair** thanked everyone for their interest and commitment in this respect.

Members noted the year-end financial report for 2023-24.

103/24 INTERNAL AUDIT

Members noted the final internal audit report for 2023-24. Two recommendations raised by the auditor had already been actioned:

- The asset register had been added to the website in relation to a comment regarding the Transparency Code
- A recommendation to review the Town Council's investment strategy was the next item on this agenda (*Min. No. 104/24*)

104/24 INVESTMENTS POLICY

Members noted the Town Clerk's report and considered the Town Council's policy and practice regarding investments.

RESOLVED: To transfer £100,000 from the general reserve to the CCLA¹ deposit fund.

ACTION the Town Clerk to prepare a further report on the next Committee meeting detailing more information about the CCLA fund, and other similar investment options.

105/24 INSIGNIA AND REGALIA

Members debated the cost and benefits of Councillor insignia and regalia, in particular the badges given to past mayors, mayoresses, and consorts.

Members noted the Town Clerk's report setting out the status of insignia and regalia assets.

106/24 GRAVE DIGGING POLICY

Members noted the Town Clerk's report and the recommendation by the Amenities and Open Spaces Committee that the draft Grave Digging Policy (Adjacent Graves) be supported for adoption by Full Council.

¹ Churches, Charities and Local Authorities

RESOLVED: that the draft Grave Digging Policy (Adjacent Graves) be recommended to Full Council for adoption

107/24

LONE WORKING POLICY

Members considered the draft policy and made the following contributions for addition:

- to add a coverall risk assessment to the policy document
- to clarify the actions and expectations on the 'trusted person'

RESOLVED: that the draft Lone Working Policy be reworked to take account of the points made and re-presented at the next Committee meeting.

The meeting closed at 8.30 pm

Signed: Date:
Chair