

Minutes of the meeting of the Peacehaven Town Council's POLICY AND FINANCE COMMITTEE held on Tuesday 22nd November 2022 at 7.30pm in Community House

Present – Cllr C Cheta (Chair), Cllr D Seabrook, Cllr C Gallagher, Cllr L Duhigg, Cllr L Symonds, Cllr I Sharkey, Cllr A Milliner.
Town Clerk T Allen; Finance Officer Z Malone.

PF820 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and covered the housekeeping matters.

PF821 PUBLIC QUESTIONS

There were no public questions.

PF822 TO CONSIDER APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE & SUBSTITUTIONS

It was resolved to accept apologies from Cllr C Collier and Cllr A Goble.

PF823 TO RECEIVE DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS FROM COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Cllr Seabrook, re. Item PF837 as a member of the Community Orchard group.

PF824 TO ADOPT THE COMMITTEE'S MINUTES OF 11th OCTOBER 2022

It was resolved to adopt the minutes as a true record.

PF825 TO REVIEW THE 2022/23 FINANCIAL POSITION OF THE COUNCIL YEAR TO-DATE: -

1. Finance Officer's report

The Finance Officer's report was received and noted.

2. Bank account & Bank Reconciliation statements (for signing)

Received and resolved for signing.

3. Income & Expenditure report

Received and noted.

Cllr Seabrook noted that, at two-thirds of the way through the current financial year, the salaries budget was c. 50% spent; however this did not include the recent cost-of-living pay award, which when accounted for puts the salaries expenditure on target.

4. Balance Sheet

Received and noted.

5. CIL & S.106 report

Received and noted.

6. List of payments (for approval)

It was resolved to approve the October 2022 payments amounting to £87,601.22, as scheduled in the meeting papers.

7. Review of external contracts, SLA's & their ongoing authorisations.

No items for discussion.

8. Funding report for buildings equipment maintenance works.

Received and noted.

PF826 TO APPROVE THE 2023/24 BUDGET

The Finance Officer introduced this item and referred to the circulated draft budget papers, which contained two options' giving either a 5% or 10% increase in Precept requirement.

It was noted that, to achieve the 5% option, salary increases were set at 4% and £10K provision for play equipment and provision for tree planting/works had been removed.

It was resolved to recommend a net budget of £749,113 to Council, representing a %5 increase in Precept requirement.

PEACEHAVEN TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the POLICY AND FINANCE COMMITTEE Meeting – 22nd November 2022

In taking this decision, the Committee took into account the following factors:-

- Financially difficult times for Peacehaven residents.
- Rising energy costs.
- Salary increases were an unknown factor and reserves could support additional funding in this area.
- The increase in monetary terms was c. 60p per household.
- Other authorities will likely be increasing their own Council Tax requirements, so it was important to keep the Town Council's element as low as possible.

The Clerk noted the following:-

- The latest Band D Tax Base figure is awaited.
- Caution re the possible reliance on reserves to support salary costs.
- Salary cost-of-living, pensions and National Insurance increases are not controlled by the Town Council.

PF827 TO APPROVE THE HIRE CHARGES FOR 2023/24

It was noted that the proposed increases were the lowest that were practical and were included in the Draft Budget figures.

It was resolved to adopt the figures quoted on the spreadsheet circulated with the meeting papers.

Finance Officer to look into Commercial hire charging 'On Request', how these charges are determined, and send a report to the CCE Committee.

PF828 TO APPROVE THE 2022/23 INTERIM INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT & NOTE ACTIONS

The Clerk noted that this was an excellent audit report and the Finance Officer was thanked for her hard work.

Actions quoted for further improvement were noted.

PF829 TO DISCUSS THE COMMITTEE'S ACTION PLAN AND AGREE ANY FURTHER ACTION

The Clerk noted that the hearing loop works in the main hall at Community House had been completed.

It was noted that the planned surveys of Community House remain on-hold as these are being requested as part of the Morrisons redevelopment project.

PF830 TO RECEIVE A REPORT ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE NEW BUSINESS PLAN

The Clerk noted that, as actioned by the Committee, the Plan was being reviewed and updated by Committees and updates would be seen by the Committee as they arise.

PF831 TO ADOPT UPDATED HEALTH & SAFETY POLICY STATEMENT

It was resolved to adopt this policy as drafted.

PF832 TO ADOPT UPDATED SAFEGUARDING POLICY

It was resolved to defer discussion of this policy until after the safeguarding training had been completed from which there may be further updates.

Cllr Seabrook noted that the policy for The Orchard, was very comprehensive and worth using in developing the Council's policy

PF833 TO ADOPT UPDATED EQUALITY & DIVERSITY POLICY

It was resolved to adopt this policy as drafted.

PF834 TO ADOPT UPDATED INVESTMENT POLICY

It was resolved to adopt this policy with an amendment to include the following:-

"To exclude investments based in fossil fuels as far as is reasonably practicable".

PEACEHAVEN TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the POLICY AND FINANCE COMMITTEE Meeting – 22nd November 2022

PF835 TO ADOPT UPDATED EMAIL POLICY

It was resolved to adopt this policy as drafted.

PF836 TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON THE PURCHASE OF AN ELECTRIC VEHICLE

The Clerk related the background to this item and the contract hire costs involved.

It was noted that, at the Council meeting on the 27th September 2022, it was resolved that the Council begins the process of a contract hire/lease agreement for an electric Toyota van by finalising the costs involved with this option.

It was resolved to proceed and purchase this vehicle under contracted terms, as set out at the recent meeting of Council.

PF837 TO RECEIVE THE MINUTES OF THE GRANTS SUB-COMMITTEE MEETING OF 15th NOVEMBER 2022 & APPROVE RECOMMENDED ROUND 2 2022/23 GRANTS

The Clerk noted that the draft minutes of the Grants Sub-Committee meeting would be with the papers for the next Council meeting.

The circulated report of grants proposed by the Sub-Committee was discussed.

The Finance Officer reported that the Sub-Committee was unable to approve the grant for The Orchard as the number of meeting members voting became inquorate, as one Councillor had declared an interest and could not vote.

It was resolved to approve a grant of £272 grant for The Orchard.

It was resolved to approve all the other grants as recommended by the Sub-Committee.

PF838 TO RECEIVE A PROPOSAL FROM PEACEHAVEN PLAYERS

The Finance Officer related the background to this item.

It was resolved to allow a £200 discount towards the room hire fees for the Peacehaven Players Christmas production for 2022.

PF839 TO APPROVE THE FINANCIAL RISK ASSESSMENT

It was resolved to adopt this risk assessment.

NOTE: In accordance with Standing Order No. 3(d) and the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, Section 1, in view of the confidential nature of the following business to be transacted, the public and press were excluded from the rest of the meeting.

PF840 AGED DEBT ANALYSIS

The Finance Officer's report was received and noted.

The Finance Officer reported on progress in reducing these debts.

PF841 DATE OF NEXT MEETING – TUESDAY 24th JANUARY 2023 AT 7.30PM

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 20:39.