



BLACKWATER AND HAWLEY TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Finance Committee Meeting of the Town Council held on Monday 4th November 2024 at 7.15pm The Council Chamber, Memorial Hall, Hawley Green GU17 9BW

Present – Councillors:

Hobib Ali
Bob Harward
Terry Hunt
Daisy Khepar
Dave Lister
Trish Monks
Alex Worrall (Chair)

In attendance:

Jo Shaw, Town Clerk

F2478 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Sara Usher.

F2479 Declarations of Councillor Interests

Cllr Alex Worrall declared an interest in staffing matters.

F2480 Democratic Fifteen Minutes

No Members of Public were present.

F2481 Minutes

Councillors approved the minutes of the Finance Committee meeting held on 8th January 2024.

F2482 Matters Arising

There were no matters arising from the Minutes of 8th January 2024.

F2483 Finance 2023/24

1. Income & Expenditure Report to 30/09/24

Councillors noted the contents of the I&E Report for the period ended 30th September 2024.

2. Outturn Report for Year 2024/25

The Town Clerk reported the following:

- a possible year end underspend of c£19,000
- salaries figures reflect existing staff structures with no additional staff or pay increases
- anticipated completion of all projects identified within the 24/25 budget
- UKSPF Grant shows overspend following requirement for additional work
- Income amounts are anticipated and not guaranteed and will be affected by circumstances and weather



3. Initial Draft Budget 2025/26

The Town Clerk provided an initial draft budget for discussion.

3.1 Staffing

Following changes to Employers NI in the recent budget, the Town Clerk reported vastly increased costs to the Council for the staffing structure agreed for 2025/26. The draft budget was modelled using a reduced version of the staffing structure agreed at the Staffing Committee Meeting held on 7th October 2024.

RESOLVED that the Town Clerk use the staffing structure agreed for future budget modelling.

3.2 Responsibility of a Town Council

The Town Council suffers with a small precept and an above average number of aging and costly facilities which are operated and maintained by paid staff. Whilst partially financed through the precept, the Town Council has historically operated a number of small businesses (Coffee Shop and Inn on the Green) to provide social benefit and services for local residents. These outlets break-even/cover their own costs and should raise additional income in the future to assist with running costs for other facilities. Councillors noted that the Town Council's precepted income is currently around 37% of the total budget.

Councillors discussed the extent to which the operation of business/es to generate additional income was the responsibility of the council. It was concluded that the positive social benefits, employment of local people and income generation were both necessary and within the remit of the Town Council. The alternative would be to close council facilities leading to reduced opportunities for local residents and further degradation of the infrastructure.

RESOLVED that the Town Council had GPC (general Power of Competence) and would continue to operate Coffee Shop on the Green and Inn on the Green providing social benefit to the community.

3.3 Future Income

The Town Clerk reported that whilst future income was anticipated to increase, it was not guaranteed.

3.4 Projects 2025/26

Councillors noted that possible future projects had not been costed and were not included in the draft budget.



F2484 Grant Applications 2024/25

Councillors considered the following applications for grants received by the closing date of 20th October 2024 and

RESOLVED that the following grants be recommended for approval by Full Council:

1. Yelabus – a grant of £500
2. Citizens Advice Bureau - a grant £500

F2485 Capital Projects

1. Review of Projects 2024/25

Councillors noted projects for 2024/25 expected to be completed.

2. Projects 2025/26

Councillors requested inclusion of the following projects for 2025/26 in the next draft budget:

- Electrical commando socket for lighting Memorial Hall stage
- Inclusion of any outstanding works following refurbishment of Coffee Shop kitchen
- Replacement of wooden fire door/window in Coffee Shop
- LED/PIR lighting in remainder of Leisure Centre
- Squash court maintenance (decorating/floor)
- Work on sauna area to enable operation
- Replacement/repair of noticeboards and benches
- Common land maintenance
- Tree works around Leisure Centre site
- On-line squash booking app
- Cemetery hedging
- Leisure Centre accessibility (feasibility study to widen steps/coffee shop ramp)

F2486 Annual Risk Review

Councillors considered the contents of the updated Annual Risk Review 2024/25 which identified the risks which may be encountered by the Council and

RESOLVED that the Annual Risk Review 2024/25 be approved.

F2487 Review of Fees & Charges 2025/26

Councillors reviewed the Council's fees and charges and it was

RESOLVED that the charges for the Council's facilities be increased from 1st April 2025 as per attached:

Hall Hire Charges	Appendix 1
Sports Charges	Appendix 2
Other Charges	Appendix 3
Cemetery Charges	Appendix 4



F2488 Other Business – not for decision
There was no further business for discussion.

F2489 EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC & PRESS
RESOLVED that, in view of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted, it was advised that the public and press were temporarily excluded and asked to withdraw for remaining items on the Agenda.

F2490 Cottage Lease
Agenda item postponed until the next meeting of Full Council for discussion.

The meeting ended at 10.05pm

Chair _____