

Oakham Town Council

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MINUTES OF A FULL COUNCIL MEETING OF OAKHAM TOWN COUNCIL HELD ON WEDNESDAY 10th JANUARY 2024 AT 6.30 P.M. IN THE TOWN COUNCIL CHAMBERS

IN ATTENDANCE: Cllrs: S-A. Wadsworth, (Chair), P Ainsley, A Lowe, P Wildbore, C Nix, J Hall, P Buxton, C Clark.

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: Chris Evans (Clerk) and two members of public.

Cllr Wadsworth opened the meeting and welcomed all present.

A minute silence was held for former Town Councillor Stan Stubbs

01/2024-01

APOLOGIES AND REASONS FOR ABSENCE: To receive and approve apologies for absences.

Cllr J Lucas and Cllr L Chatfield due to illness. Cllr H Williams due to work commitment. Proposed by Cllr C Clark and seconded by Cllr P Buxton. Carried.

01/2024-02

DECLARATION OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS AND APPLICATIONS FOR DISPENSATION: None

01/2024-03

DEPUTATIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC: An opportunity for members of the public to speak in accordance with Standing Orders 1 (d)- 1(i) .

A member of the public addressed Agenda Item 13 on the Flower Display in Oakham. He was particularly concerned over the proposal by a Councillor for a two thirds reduction in the number of floral displays, as these displays had been so successful last year. He conducted an ad hoc survey, the feedback of which was massively in favour of the Oakham Town Council continuing the Floral Display as per last year.

01/2024-04

UPDATE FROM COUNTY COUNCILLOR:

County Cllr Ramsey Ross introduced himself and highlighted the work with Anglian water on the sewage treatment plant. Also he addressed the recent flooding issue and highlighted the need for an emergency response plan for all councils.

01/2024-05

TO RECEIVE AND ACCEPT MINUTES: Full Council 13th December 2023:

The Clerk stated there had been two minor amendments agreed via email. Proposed by Cllr P Wildbore and seconded by Cllr P Buxton. Carried

01/2024-06

COUNCILLORS QUESTIONS:

Cllr J Hall requested that the Recreation and Planning Committee only consist of one Councillor from each ward. The Chair pointed out that attendance was not mandatory. Cllr A Lowe suggested this could be considered when the Council's Policy document is reviewed.

01/2024-07

CLERKS REPORT: None

01/2024-08

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT:

The Chair reported that she had attended a RAF Cadet drone display and a meeting with the Chief Exec and Leader of RCC. There had been discussions over Green Spaces that RCC owned and the potential for Oakham Town Council to take over ownership of some of these spaces.

There were also discussions on the Town Improvement Scheme and progress to date.

01/2024-09

BANK STATEMENTS:

The Rialtas reconciliation, Current, Deposit and Cambridge Savings accounts were presented to council.

It was proposed by Cllr P Ainsley and seconded by Cllr C Clark that these be accepted. This was carried unanimously.

01/2024-10 EARMARKED RESERVES AND BUDGET/ PRECEPT: Council to consider a policy on Earmarked Reserves and set the Budget and the Precept (2024-25).

Earmarked Reserves: Cllr A Lowe introduced this agenda item and highlighted the minutes from the Finance meeting earlier in the week, which had been very successful in thoroughly going through the policy on reserves and budget.

The Earmarked Reserves had been simplified down to six categories

- Severe Weather
- Equipment Replacement
- Capital
- Unplanned Legal
- Election
- Unplanned Maintenance

It was proposed by Cllr P Ainsley and seconded by Cllr A Lowe that the Council adopt the policy of having these Earmarked Reserves.

Budget and the Precept (2024-25). Cllr A Lowe then described the budget allocation , highlighting that VAT income was now identified as an income.

As can be seen from the table below, there would be some draw down from the General Reserves to establish the Earmarked Reserves.

The overall Precept would thus be set at £280,325 an increase of 6.7% reflecting the increase in costs associated with inflation over the last financial year.

Cllr J Hall proposed and seconded by Cllr A Lowe. Carried unanimously.

SUMMARY BUDGET 2024-25

A	General Administration	116875
B	Contracts & Grants	111500
C	Recreation & Planning	31000
D	Other Expenditure	69300
E	TOTAL EXPENDITURE	328,675
F	Non Precept Income	-£63350
G	EXPENDITURE LESS INCOME	265,325
H	EARMARKED RESERVES	72000
I	TRANSFER FROM RESERVES	-57000
J	Expenditure Less Income	£280,325

The precept demand to RCC would be
£280,325.00

This represents about a 6.7% Increase on
last year

2023/24 Precept was £262,675.00

01/2024-11-FINANCIAL REGULATIONS:

The Clerk went through the items requiring editing or addition and also stated that LRALC had informed him that the Financial Limit for Contracts should go from 25K to 30K Proposed by Cllr P Ainsley and seconded by Cllr P Wildbore. Carried

Cllr S Prior joined the meeting at 19:08

01/2024-12 ADVERTISEMENT OF GROUNDS AND TOILETS MAINTENANCE:

The Clerk pointed out that both the Grounds Maintenance and the Toilet Maintenance contracts were due to finish at the end of March and therefore requested funds up to 2.5K to advertise these for tenders. The Grounds Maintenance contract would be over 30k and therefore would, under Public Contracts Regulation require advertising via the Compulsory Contracts finder.

Proposed by Cllr C Clark and seconded by Cllr P Wildbore. Carried

01/2024-13 CONTACT FOR FLORAL DISPLAY 2024:

The Clerk introduced this item by pointing out that last year the contractor had submitted a bid for three years, but the Council had decided to take up only the first year. The contract indicated that in the following years the price would only increase with inflation, which has been honoured with the contract before councillors. The Contractor has indicated that any significant reduction in displays would require prices to be reviewed because of scaling issues.

Cllr A Lowe highlighted the fact that the budget just voted through by Council indicated a requirement to reduce the budget for next years Floral Contract. There were issues both in Mill Street with hanging baskets and Goal Street with a perception of too many floral displays for the space. Cllr A Lowe had simply used Google to review all the sites which any Councillor could have done.

Cllr P Ainsley could simply not support such a dramatic reduction in this year's floral display; however he could understand some reduction.

Cllr A Lowe suggested a compromise, which would be that the council go ahead with this year's contract with the caveat that it stays within last years budget plus inflation, but that next year the council go out to tender.

Cllr P Buxton agrees that we should go with this year's contract especially with the important installation of Queen Elizabeth's statue.

Proposed by Cllr A Lowe and seconded by Cllr C Clark. Carried unanimously.

01/2024-14 DEFIBRILLATOR IN CUTTS CLOSE:

The Chair reflected on the pointless criminal damage to the defibrillator in Cutts Close , which now amounted to three times within the last six months. The Chair reluctantly proposed that it be moved to the Church Street toilets. Cllr P Ainsley question the advantage and Cllr A Lowe stated that this is a more populous area and covered within meters by CCTV.

It was also requested that a sign be placed on the previous site to indicate the new location.

Proposed by A Lowe and seconded by Cllr C Nix. Carried

TIME AND DATE OF NEXT MEETING: 6:30pm 14th February 2024

Meeting Finished at 19:40 pm

Signed



Date

14/2/24