



## Wivenhoe Town Council

MINUTES of the Finance and Personnel Committee meeting held in the Council Chamber, 77 High Street on Wednesday 11 December 2024 at 7:00pm **Chair Approved**

Present: Cllr Guy (Chair), Cllr Burke, Cllr Boughton, Cllr Hailes- Morley, Cllr Andrews, J Beighton-Emms (TC) & E Buckley (RFO)

**12.11/01 Apologies for absence:** Cllr Widgery apologies received and accepted.

Due to Cllr Hutchings leaving the council, Cllr Boughton has now become a member of the Finance and Personnel Committee.

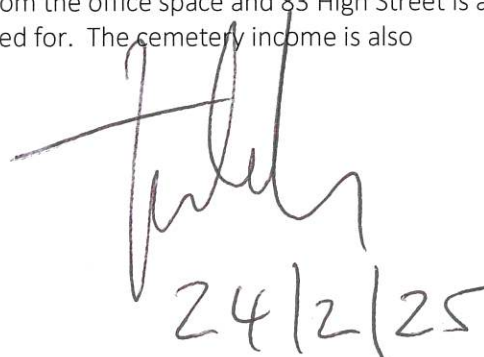
**12.11/02 Declarations of Interest:** None

**12.11/03 Minutes of the previous meeting:** The approval of the minutes for the Finance and Personnel Committee meeting held on 28 October 2024 were proposed by Cllr Burke and seconded by Cllr Hailes-Morley with all who attended in agreement.

**12.11/04 Training, complaints and FOI Policy:** TC presented to the committee policies that are required for the council to apply for the award. The training policy was discussed and amended to include induction training given by the TC and Mayor for all new councillors. It was proposed by Cllr Burke to adopt the training policy, seconded by Cllr Boughton with all in agreement. The complaints policy was proposed by Cllr Hailes-Morley, seconded by Cllr Andrews with all in agreement. Cllr Aldis had reviewed and updated the FOI policy. It was proposed to adopt the FOI policy by Cllr Guy and seconded by Cllr Hailes Morley, with all in agreement.

**12.11/05 Server security:** The RFO reported that an email from SYS3 had been received suggesting the council should install heimdal security suite on our server, this will improve the security against any breaches and ransomware for a charge of £20 per month. The security currently is Microsoft basic, which SYS3 have said is not sufficient any more due to the increasing number of cyber-attacks. The committee have in the past looked into cyber insurance and had agreed against a policy due to the data the council holds. Discussions were had about what data we currently have and if anything has changed. It was a general consensus that the larger companies are targeted, and that Cllr Guy would seek further information about this, and the committee would review at the next meeting. The website hosted by Big Red was also discussed and the RFO would request the information from this company to note what security the website is currently covered by.

**12.11/06 To discuss and recommend for FTC approval the 2025/26 annual budget and set the precept for 2025/26:** The RFO reported that the precept information had yet to be received from Colchester City Council for the 2025/26 year. It normally arrives between the 12 to 20 December. The budget for recommendation has been calculated on a 7% increase from last year. The previous two years have been 10%. The current CPI is 3.2%. The uncertainty of the income from the office space and 83 High Street is a concern for the 2025/26 year, but the income has been budgeted for. The cemetery income is also

  
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uncertain, as over the past two years this has fallen, which could be due to the cost of living crisis and the way funerals are being planned.

A 7% increase will give a precept of £471,244, with a planned surplus of £21,724. Overheads have increased this year for the council. The budget for 2025/26 is attached as Appendix A (Riaitus report 11/12/24 @ 14:05 – next year column).

The budget report was also presented to the council (Appendix B). Currently it is projected that the year end 2024/25 will end with a surplus of £13,000, the planned surplus was £ 25,405. This is due to the loss of income for the office space and 83 High Street. The council has outstanding liabilities which some have earmarked reserves for but some have not, so these may have to be taken from the repairs and renewals budget or from general reserves. There is also an election being held in February 2025, which was not fully budgeted for. The neighbour hood plan was discussed and the cost that would be expected for the new cemetery, it was suggested that it may need to be reviewed if the cemetery would still be required due to the decline in requests for interments over the past two years for the current cemetery.

If the precept information is received before the next Full Town Council meeting on 16 December it can be presented to the council, otherwise an extraordinary meeting will be held on the 14 January 2025 to agree the precept. It was proposed by Cllr Guy to recommend a 7% increase in the budget for 2025/26 to FTC, this was seconded by Cllr Boughton, with all in agreement.

**12.11/07 Update from the Personnel and Finance meeting held on 28 October:** Cllr Guy updated the committee on the part B meeting held on 28 November, where the payroll budget of £320,000 was agreed. £10,000 of this is due to the increase of employer NI contributions, which will come into effect in April 2025. It was confirmed that the NALC pay agreements are compulsory due to all staff being on the NALC contracts. The council has an insurance policy for key persons cover.

The RFO reported that on a recent training day the general reserves are usually calculated from the total expenditure budget for the year and not the precept, which is how Wivenhoe Town Council has been calculating their general reserve figure.

**12.11/08 Date of next meeting:** The RFO requested that the next meeting will be held on Monday 24 February 2025, due to workload and the Christmas break. If the precept information from Colchester City Council is not received before Full Town Council on 16 December an extraordinary meeting will need to be held on the 14 January 2025 to set the precept for 2025/26.

**12.11/09 Exclusion of Press and Public:** In accordance with Paragraph 1 (2) of The Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the Council is invited to consider if the press and public should be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of the following items(s) owing to the confidential nature of the business.

The meeting was closed at 20:04



A handwritten signature in black ink, followed by the date '24/2/25' written in a similar style.