

Minutes of the meeting of the Sandwich Town Council Finance and General Purposes Committee, on 12th December 2022, at 6.30pm

Present: Councillors: P Carter (Chair)
J Franklin
P Graeme
D Carter
A Fox
N Gray
C Ungerson
M Pennington

Officer: Mrs K Palmer (Minutes)

Councillor C Wiles was also in attendance to observe the meeting.

13.12.22 CHAIRS WELCOME

Cllr Carter welcomed all to the Finance and General Purposes Committee and thanked the RFO for her work preparing the budget.

14.12.22 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

No apologies were received from Cllr Moorhouse.

15.12.22 DECLARATION OF DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS AND OTHER SIGNIFICANT INTERESTS

None were declared.

16.12.22 PUBLIC RIGHT TO SPEAK

Mrs C Glynn spoke about the protocol for public participation, standing orders, HR provision, IT tenders, the confidential item wording, the STBF draft budgets and the need for a temporary bus shelter on the Guildhall forecourt.

17.12.22 HR PROVISION

Members received and considered HR support quotations. Cllr Fox stated that Peninsula takes a long time to respond to enquiries, and she would prefer to choose Worknest, the second quote. She also felt that there is not enough information provided to make an informed decision. Cllr Ungerson pointed out that the budget takes into consideration a more expensive HR provider. Cllr Gray felt that STC should continue to use Peninsula. Other Councillors agreed that the council should continue to use Peninsula as it was the cheaper quote.

RECOMMENDATION: To continue using Peninsula as an HR Provider.

Cllr Graeme and Cllr Fox voted against. Cllr Pennington abstained from voting.

18.12.22 IT TENDER

Members received and considered the IT tender documentation. Cllr Ungerson stated that the IT tender documentation does not include any mention of a new website. Cllr Fox clarified that STC currently has two

separate contracts, one for IT support and one for the website. It was felt that the two items should not be combined. Cllr Fox mentioned that visits in person for IT support were not mentioned in the IT tender documentation, and this should be added.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

To add into the IT Tender document a request for a one-hour response time for IT support visits to the Guildhall. Staff to issue the updated IT tender document to locally based companies.

Cllr Graeme proposed a motion that agenda item 8 (i) and (ii) be considered before item 7.

19.12.22 DRAFT BUDGETS - FINANCIAL YEAR 2023/24

This item was considered after item 8. Members received a draft budget spreadsheet and report for the 2023/24 financial year based upon continued activities and new projects that the Responsible Finance Officer had been informed about. Members were made aware that the figure given for the 'precept' is a balancing figure at present and not a recommendation from the RFO. Members were asked to consider what amendments & research needs to be undertaken to the draft budget before being considered again. The budget must be approved at the very latest by 31st January 2023, but mid-January would be preferable to make sure of meeting Dover District Council's precept demand deadline. Members noted that the 2023/24 tax base will not be confirmed until January and until then any precept calculations are based on the 2022/23 tax base.

Mrs Summerhayes was invited to speak regarding the Curfew Ringers Supper budget. Cllr Ungerson requested a roll-forward of the Disability Access Budget underspend. The RFO advised that this couldn't be rolled forward automatically as it wasn't a reserve, but an increase in budget could be requested in April when the balance brought forward was known. Cllr Gray expressed concern that the contribution from STC to maintain the Guildhall was too large and this problem needed addressing.

RECOMMENDATION: To accept the budget put together by the RFO, i.e. zero % rise to Council Tax, which would remain at £135.96 per Band D Property.

20.12.22 CONFIDENTIAL ITEM

(i) This item was moved and considered before Item 7. It was recommended that under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 (as extended by s.100 of the Local Government Act 1972), the public and accredited representatives of newspapers be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 by virtue of the paragraph specified against the item.

RESOLUTION: That members of the public and press be excluded for the following item of business.

(ii) **STAFF SALARIES 2023/24**

Members received and considered the salaries from the Responsible Finance Officer. Members were advised that the uplift illustrated was not a recommendation.

RECOMMENDATION: A 5% uplift for Office and Guildhall staff, with the exception of two members of staff. Other staff to be uplifted in relation to minimum wage as suggested by the CEO.

21.12.22 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

To be confirmed.

Summary of Actions to be undertaken upon Resolution by full Council.

Minutes	Action	Member/Officer to complete	Update/record of completion
17.12.22	Peninsula contract to be accepted.	CEO / PA to CEO	
18.12.22	Make amendment to IT Tender document and send out to locally based companies.	CEO / PA to CEO	
19.12.22	Apply for Precept from DDC	RFO	
20.12.22	Amend payroll to pay new salaries in April.	RFO	