**FINANCE, RESOURCES & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE MEETING**

**HELD ON 6TH JANUARY 2025 AT 7.00PM**

**Present:**

Cllr A Allen Cllr D Fletcher

Cllr S Brooke Cllr G Kennedy

Cllr M Evans Cllr S Oldrieve

**In attendance:**

Mr M Wells – Town Clerk

Ms A Christie - Assistant Town Clerk

A member of the Residents Association

A member of the Neighbourhood Watch Association

A member of the public

*The meeting was chaired by Cllr Fletcher.*

**FR&GP.25/01 Apologies for absence**

Cllr C Burton - Unwell

**FR&GP.25/02 Declarations of Interest**

None.

**\*\*Public Participation:**

**A member of the Neighbourhood Watch Association** spoke about the entrance to Mill Marsh Park and cyclists riding on the pavement. The Town Clerk advised that Devon County Council have supplied the Town Council with a ‘Cyclists Dismount’ sign which the Town Council will install.

**FR&GP.25/03 Minutes**:

i) The minutes of the meeting held on 28th October 2024 *(\*copy previously circulated)* were confirmed as a correct record and were approved.

ii) The Town Clerk provided updates on the following items since the previous meeting:

* FR&GP.24/68 The draft constitution, charity registration and governance documents are drafted and tabled for consideration by Full Council on 20th January.
* FR&GP.24/72 The maturity of investments, including the opening of a new account have all been actioned.
* FR&GP.24/73 – Following adoption of the Electronic Device Policy by Full Council, Cllr Evans has circulated further email communications to assess the demand for council devices.
* FR&GP.24/74 – The additional Solar PV Battery Storage report has been deferred until the Carbon Baseline Monitoring report is available.

**FR&GP.25/04 Standing Item – Climate and Ecology Emergencies:**

Membersnoted the Council Declaration to embed the climate and ecology emergency declaration across all Council services, activities, plans and other relevant work, considering the environmental impact of decisions, ensuring a fully integrated approach to mitigating the impact of climate change.

**FR&GP.25/05 Accounts & Financial Statement**:

i) Members received and approved payment and receipt transactions between

18th October 2024 and 22nd December 2024 *(\*copy previously circulated).*

ii) Members received and approved the bank reconciliation between

18th October 2024 and 22nd December 2024 *(\*copy previously circulated).*

iii) Members received and noted the balances and borrowing as below:

General Account: £ 17,505.84 (as at 22.12.24)

 Income/Precept A/C: £ 156,394.68 (as at 22.12.24)

 Capital A/C: £ 45,521.96 (as at 22.12.24)

 CIL A/C: £ 116,058.40 (as at 22.12.24)

 National Lottery Grant: £ 22,910.51 (as at 22.12.24)

 Redwood Bank (Rev) £ 85,000.00 (as at 22.12.24)

 Charity Bank Invest (Rev) £ 85,000.00 (as at 22.12.24)

 Cambridge & Counties (CiL) £ 130,000.00 (as at 22.12.24)

 Nationwide Build Soc (CiL) £ 85,000.00 (as at 22.12.24)

 B’hamshire Build Soc (Cap) £ 110,000.00 (as at 22.12.24)

Hampshire Trust Bank (CiL) £ 130,000.00 (as at 22.12.24)

Borrowing

Public Sector Works Loan £ - 382,206.92 (as at 22.12.24)

**FR&GP.25/06 Budget Monitoring – Position Statement:**

Members received and noted the Town Council’s budget monitoring position statement as at 22nd December 2024 (*\*copy previously circulated*).

**FR&GP.25/07 Budget and Precept 2025/26:**

Members considered making a recommendation to Full Council for the setting of the 2025/26 precept following consideration of:

1. A review of the current level of reserves (\**copy previously circulated*)
2. Draft budget (\**copy previously circulated*)

**Resolved:**

i) To confirm the adequacy of the current levels of reserves.

ii) To recommend to Full Council a budget requirement for 2025/26 of £389,771.00

iii) To recommend to Full Council a corresponding precept requirement for 2025/26 of £329,221.00.

**FR&GP.25/08 Utilities (Gas/Electricity) (Deferred item FR&GP.24/75 & FR&GP.24/61):**

Members received an updated report and considered the actions/recommendations within (\**copy previously circulated).*

**Resolved:**

i)To approve the change of energy supplier from Ecotricity to Octopus, subject to a final check of the favourability of energy prices providing financial benefit at point of switch. The preferred tariffs are the 24 month standing charge tariff for the Riverside Community Centre and the 12 month no standing charge tariff for other relevant supplies.

ii)Toapprove the continuation of energy supplies with the existing provider Ecotricity for supplies that may not fit the criteria for switching to Octopus.

**FR&GP.25/09 Risk Management:**

 i) Members reviewed and considered making a recommendation to Full Council to re-adopt the Financial and Non-Financial Internal Controls (*\*copy previously circulated*).

ii) Members considered making a recommendation to Full Council to adopt a Risk Register (*\*copy previously circulated*)

**Resolved:**

i) To recommend that Full Council re-adopt the Financial and non-Financial Internal Controls with the amendments as discussed (e.g. adding completion dates for amber coded activities).

ii) To recommend that Full Council adopt the Risk Register with the following amendments:

* Deletion of asterisks
* Addition of RAG status of risks
* Amendment to the description of risk number 23.

**FR&GP.25/10 Model Publication Scheme:**

Members received a draft revised Scheme and considered a recommendation to Full Council to adopt the Scheme (*\*copy previously circulated*).

**Resolved:** To recommend that Full Council adopt the revised Scheme as circulated.

**FR&GP.25/11 Noticeboard – Heathfield:**

i) Members considered approving a quotation for the purchase and installation of a new noticeboard in Mill Marsh Park with the refurbishment of the existing noticeboard to be relocated and installed in Heathfield.

ii) Members discussed quotations verbally provided at the meeting and considered agreeing the source of funding.

**Resolved:**

i) To approve the purchase and installation of a noticeboard in Mill Marsh Park and the refurbishment of the existing noticeboard to be relocated and installed in Heathfield.

ii) To approve a budget of up to £3,000 to be funded from Capital reserves.

**FR&GP.25/12 Mill Marsh Outdoor Exercise Equipment Refurbishment:**

Members received and considered a recommendation from the Recreation, Parks & Property Committee to allocate and approve a budget of £60,000 towards the redevelopment of the outdoor exercise equipment in Mill Marsh Park. Cllr Brooke advised that a £20,000 grant has recently been awarded by the National Lottery, which left a remaining budget requirement from the Town Council of approximately £40,000.

**Resolved:** Following discussion, in consideration of the grant of £20,000 of National Lottery Funding recently awarded to the Town Council, it was agreed to commit £40,000 for the redevelopment of Outdoor Exercise Equipment from current CiL contributions, subject to public design consultation.

**FR&GP.25/13 Matters brought forward by Councillors:** *(for information only*).

 **The Town Clerk** provided an update on the Town Council’s grounds maintenance vehicle being involved in an accident and subsequently written off by the Insurance Company as uneconomical to repair. The Town Clerk will provide a further update on options available as and when further information becomes available. Cllr Evans is supporting the Town Clerk in looking at other vehicles currently available on the market, with consideration of the option for an EV, lease or purchase options, budget and operational requirements of the vehicle.

 **Cllr Evans** requested an update on the uptake for rentals of the bike hubs in Station Road car park.

 **Cllr Allen** requested an update on the capital receipt for the Brimley Field development. The Town Clerk advised that no further update has been received.

 **Cllr Allen** provided a recap of the repainting carried out in June 2024 by the Probation Service to the cemetery railings previously reported to the RP&P committee after completion.

 **Cllr Kennedy** requested copies of the Capital Expenditure Programme and any subsequent additions for updating by all committee members to review scoring.

The meeting closed at 8.22pm.