



Devizes
Town Council

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DEVIZES TOWN **COUNCIL**

You are summonsed to attend a meeting of the Devizes Town Council Committee at the following, place and date.

Date: 4 OCTOBER 2016

Time: 6.30pm

Venue: Council Chamber, Town Hall, St John's Street, Devizes

Enquiries: Town Hall - Tel: 01380 722160

Councillors:	Mrs Bridewell	Mrs Burton	Carter
	Corbett	East	Evans
	Mrs Evans	Geddes	Giraud-Saunders
	Hopkins	Johnson	Nash
	Ody	Parker	Mrs Rose
	Wooldridge		

AGENDA

1. MINUTES

To approve as a correct record and authorise the Chairman to sign the minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on the 14 June 2016 and the Special Meetings held on 28 June, 26 July and 23 August 2016.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

3. DISCLOSURE(S) OF INTEREST

To receive any disclosures by a Councillor(s) and/or Officers in matters to be considered at this meeting in accordance with the provisions of Sections 94 or 117 of the Local Government Act 1972 or the National Code of Local Government Conduct.

4. To receive announcements and communications.

5. To answer questions (if any) under standing order No. 15.

6. MINUTES OF MEETINGS FOR INFORMATION

Since the last meeting of the Council on 14 June 2016 the following Committees have taken place whose minutes have been approved as a correct record and signed by the appropriate committee chairman.

The minutes of these meetings have been previously circulated to all members.

COMMITTEE NAME	COMMITTEE DATE
Planning	31 May 2016
Planning	14 June 2016
Planning	28 June 2016
Planning	12 July 2016
Planning	26 July 2016
Planning	9 August 2016
Planning	23 August 2016
Planning	September 2016
Community & Civic Resources	17 May 2016
Community & Civic Resources	31 May 2016
Community & Civic Resources	12 July 2016
Recreation & Properties	1 March 2016
Recreation & Properties	29 March 2016
Recreation & Properties	12 April 2016
Recreation & Properties	28 April 2016
Recreation & Properties	17 May 2016
Recreation & Properties	31 May 2016
Recreation & Properties	28 June 2016
Recreation & Properties	9 August 2016
Recreation & Properties	23 August 2016
Joint Governance	17 March 2016
Joint Governance	16 June 2016

NOTE: Before dealing with the next item (No 7) the Council will wish to consider whether or not to suspend Standing Order No 5 (members to stand when speaking). If the Standing Order is to be suspended, it must be done by way of a proposition, duly seconded and carried.

7. REPORT FOR DECISION – DRAFT ESTIMATES FOR 2017/18

Recommendation

The Council is recommended to identify any amendments to the draft estimates or matters that need be further explored, for the financial year 2017-18. The estimates will remain as draft until formal ratification and the setting of the precept in December.

Purpose of the Report

To consider the budgeted income and expenditure for the financial year 2017-18

Background

Officers have prepared the draft budget for financial year 2017-18 in line with identified business activities and plans or those which are projected.

One specific area of projection is devolution of services from Wiltshire Council. Negotiations have progressed throughout the financial year and there is a significant chance that before the end of the financial year 2016 – 2017 and during the 2017 – 18 financial year, some services may be either withdrawn by the Unitary Authority or cut to such an extent that they no longer meet the needs of Devizes Community. At that point the Town Council may wish to step in to insure that it can deliver on its Corporate Objective and Mission Statement.

Set out below is a commentary on the principal budget headings.

Explanation of Budget Headings

Revenue Budget

Officers have, where possible, held the budget at the 2016/17 level. The potential devolution of services from Wiltshire Council and the amalgamation of Roundway Parish Council into a new Town Council will have a significant impact on these calculations.

Corporate

Democratic Services

This is a revenue budget for the cost of the democracy, and includes the cost of preparing and servicing of meetings, working parties, officers attending meetings and consultation with the public.

Member Support

Members are encouraged to participate in training when available. The budget heading also provides funding for members to attend conferences and networking opportunities.

Twinning

Mayenne will host the twinning weekend in 2017. The budget heading provides for the costs associated with the arrival of the civic delegations from the twin towns of Mayenne and Waiblingen. Additional to this a moderate Ear Marked Reserve of £1876 has been put aside from previous financial years.

Civic & Ceremonial

The civic events along with the civic officers' allowances ensure that Devizes is able to uphold its civic traditions. In the past, consultation with the community has indicated that it is these kinds of events which make Devizes special.

Mayoral Allowance

This budget heading has been increased in line with inflation, in accordance with a council policy made some years ago. It would be for members to decide to increase or reduce this amount. It should be noted, however, that the Mayoral year is very demanding and the budget is intended to defray the costs of the year to ensure that financial considerations are not a barrier to taking on the role.

Communications

Due to an exercise to requote for the printing of the Town Council Messenger, officers are confident that although the Town Council will not be able to defray the cost of delivering to the residents of Roundway Parish by receiving a contribution from Roundway Parish Council, this budget heading will reduce from the previous financial year.

With the development of the new website complete the budgets has reduced to cover maintenance only.

Corporate Management

This cost centre is where the majority of senior management time is accounted for. It encompasses the cost of running the organisation, managing the various strategic corporate objectives and delivering Council decisions. It also includes items such as audit fees, professional advice and the annual report.

Bank Interest

As the level of earmarked reserves has reduced to fund larger capital project, the value of cash reserves held by the Council have decreased, This reduced the cash base limits the level of interest earned. Reserves will again be placed on deposit for different terms as appropriate and are constantly reviewed to maximise the return in a very difficult climate.

Grants

Grace and Favour bookings & Free Lettings

Provided to organisations, which benefit the community of Devizes, technically there is no limit to the value of these bookings as they are allowed in accordance with Council policies. The income is allocated against the Venues income. However, there is a cost to the Council in

terms of the buildings not being available for commercial bookings and in staffing and utility costs.

General Grants

These have remained the same and are distributed in October and March of each year to organisations who apply.

Annual Grants

There are a number of organisations in the Town who receive an annual grant. A new policy agreed this year does require that they need to make their application in writing. Historically the Council has taken the view that the activities they undertake for the town are worthy of regular direct support. The grant payable to the Drews Pond Wood has been increased to include the grant previously paid by Roundway Parish Council.

Commercial Properties

The Commercial Property Management charges are at a contract price. Legal fees and estimated repair costs remain the same as last year.

There are 4 rent reviews scheduled for the 2017 -18 financial year.

Arts Development

Devizes Outdoor Celebratory Arts and Devizes Festival

The Council gives support for DOCA and The Devizes Festival provided by free use of its venues and in the case of DOCA direct financial support.

Venues – Town Hall & Corn Exchange

Expenditure

Officers have thoroughly reviewed these cost centres and have stripped back as far as possible without impacting on service delivery. Many of the cost centres relate to items which fluctuate with the usage of the buildings.

Income

Reviewing income over three years, although there are fluctuations it is projected that income will be in line with 2016/17 budget figures.

The marketing plan has been presented to the Recreation and Properties committee.

Devizes Leisure Centre

Devizes Town Council is subject to a 60-year agreement which commenced in 1988 which requires ongoing annual revenue funding. This is subject to a calculated formula.

Parks & Open Spaces

Hillworth Park

This cost centre relates specifically to the café operation which has been taken in house since September 2015. Regular financial reports relating to the operation of the Park café are reported to members.

Open Space Management

This costs centre will be subject to a substantial increase in costs due to the introduction of services previously under the control of Roundway Parish Council, the potential devolution of services from Wiltshire Council and the non-Park Café costs associated with Hillworth Park.

An increase in the costs of general maintenance reflects the upkeep of open spaces, waste management and trees and woodland in the Roundway parish whilst a provision for the upkeep of play area reflects the position of Wiltshire Council with regards to Play area upkeep.

Officers have identified a requirement for two additional leased vehicles to ensure the efficient operation of the new area with the resultant increase in fuel costs. A new provision for gull deterance and an enhanced provision for Street Furniture and allotment costs has been provided with the cost previously incurred by Roundway Parish Council.

An accurate reflection of the costs of utilities within the Park Centre is now included within this cost centre whilst an increase in the provision for sport field expenses reflecting officer/member plans to develop the Green Lane site.

The Council will continue to outsource activities such as the watering and the buying in of plants although the main grounds maintenance delivery will be delivered through in house staff. In the past full outsourcing has been tested however due to the relatively small value of the contract sum and the nature of the contract complexity, it makes it difficult to realise savings of enough significance to make it worth the reduction in service flexibility.

This cost centre now includes the cost of administering the Cemetery. Precept income from both Devizes Town Council and Roundway parish Council is no longer applicable.

If members wish to reduce these budgets then there will need to be clarity of expectation as to where the reductions in service will be made.

Public Conveniences

The Town Council took over the provision of the Devizes Superloo and the Toilets on the Green in April 2016 and as a result TUPE'd over two members of staff. The lack of information from the transferring authority has meant that officers are still collating information regarding utility costs and usage over the current financial year. Income is proving to be marginally above that which was anticipated at the outset.

Christmas Lights

Christmas Business Trees

It was agreed this year to continue with the project which helps to increase the amount of Christmas lights displays in the town.

Christmas Festival & Lights

Officers supported by the Christmas Lights Working Party tendered for a new installation contract in 2016. Whilst this makes budgeting more challenging, Indications are that any change should be in line with the current budget.

Admin Support

All costs have been reviewed and in some cases reduced even with the merger of Roundway Parish Council. The provision for professional advice has however increased significantly on the assumption that legal costs will be incurred with the potential devolution of assets from Wiltshire Council.

Cemetery

The precept demand from Devizes Town Council and Roundway Parish Council is no longer applicable to the new authority. Costs incurred and income derived from the operation of Devizes Cemetery are broadly in line with the historical data incurred in the preparation of the financial results of the Devizes & Roundway Joint Burial committee.

Community Safety

The Council has currently agreed to further the Town's CCTV system to a value of £18000.

Town Centre Management

Town Council uses this budget to support economic regeneration projects. With the development of groups such as the retails this is likely to be an ongoing demand on this project.

Salaries

Whist salaries have seen an increase, this is due to a more accurate reflection of Café Staff payroll costs and the provision of Public convenience staff which were not provided for in the 2016/17 financial year.

An estimated increase of 1% has also been provided on the assumption that current member salaries will increase to that percentage.

The Park café salary costs are partially offset against café income.

Future Operational Activates

As set out in the introduction to this report officers have increased the enhanced service provision on the assumption that this will be required during 2017/18 financial year in order to maintain the upkeep of the Town in line with the expectations of residents of the amended Town/parish area.

Capital Expenditure

Items, which are not regular revenue expenditure, are identified separately. In line with members wishes, funding has been included to support a town wide community event.

Earmarked Reserves

In addition to the budget, officers have attached a copy of the Council's Earmarked Reserves. These are funds which have been accumulated for specific projects where it has not been possible to raise the finance in a single financial year.

Following the Finance working party which is to be held on Thursday the 29th of September 2016, amended draft estimated will be circulated for information.

Options Considered

The Council needs to decide if they feel that the proposed budget is in line with the level of services it wishes the Council to deliver in 2017/18

Implications & Risks

Financial and Resource Implications

The budget reflects the Council's ability to fund its Financial and Resource needs for the financial year 2017/18.

Legal Implications and Legislative Powers

The Council will be considering this matter under its power of General Competence

Environmental Implications

Officers are not aware of any environmental implications associated with this decision.

Risk Assessment

Not setting a budget would leave the Council open to challenge by the auditors for financial mismanagement. In addition, the Council will not be able to set a precept and therefore will have its precept imposed by Wiltshire Council.

Crime and Disorder

Officers are not aware of any implications Under Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder act 1998.

8. TO PASS THE FOLLOWING SEALING RESOLUTION

THAT the Common Seal of the Council be affixed to or the Town Clerk do sign on behalf of the Council where appropriate any Orders, Deeds or Documents necessary to give effect to any of the matters and recommendations contained in the reports received and adopted at this meeting or other decisions of the Council thereat.

9. QUESTION TIME

A short time is allowed at the discretion of the Town Mayor for councillors to ask questions on matters which are not on the current agenda but which are related to matters which have been previously discussed on an agenda relevant to the committee.

At least 24 hours' notice must be given to officers of the intended question. All other matters should be raised on an agenda and the request should be submitted through the Town Clerk

10. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

At the Chairman's discretion, members of the public attending the meeting will be allowed to ask questions addressed to the Chairman concerning the administration, function or responsibilities of the Council or upon a matter, which was the subject of debate at the meeting.

A person may also be permitted to make a statement or address the Council upon a matter of concern to that person which is relevant to local government, or to the Council's administration or upon a subject, which may be of general interest to the Council. A time limit of 5 minutes per person will be permitted, but this may be extended at the Chairman's discretion and a maximum period of 20 minutes has been allocated by the Council for this item of business.

Deputy Town Clerk