

## **DUNSTABLE TOWN COUNCIL**

### **MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE**

**ON MONDAY 12 JUNE 2023 FROM 19:00**

Present: Councillors Liz Jones (Town Mayor), Louise O’Riordan (Deputy Town Mayor), Peter Hollick (Chair), Gregory Alderman (Vice-Chair), Nick Kotarski, Richard Attwell, Michelle Henderson, John Gurney, Matthew Brennan, Philip Crawley, Robert Blennerhasset.

In Attendance: Councillor Kenson Gurney, Paul Hodson (Town Clerk and Chief Executive) and Lisa Scheder (Head of Finance and Responsible Financial Officer)

Apologies: Councillors Wendy Bater, Mark Davis and Johnson Tamara.

Public: One

#### **138/23 MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held on 20 March 2023 were approved as a correct record following one minor amendment and were signed by the Chair.

#### **139/23 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no specific declarations of interest.

#### **140/23 FINANCIAL MONITORING REPORT**

Members noted the report. The Mayor highlighted the success by officers and previous Members in achieving a £50,000 underspend in the previous year.

Members received the Final 2022/23 Internal Audit Report and noted that it would be submitted to Full Council for approval.

#### **141/23 RESERVES REPORT**

##### **RESOLVED:**

- I. To approve the release of the reserves created from 2022/23 year-end underspends for the specific uses they were created for:

<b>Description</b>	<b>Amount</b>
Development of a new 4-year corporate plan in 2023/2024	£5,000
Additional IT contribution	£10,000
Priory House contingency	£29,864
Church Street phone box maintenance	£5,000
Members Training budget underspend for new members induction	£1,000

Events budget underspend for increased costs known for the 2023 events programme	£3,000
Cemetery burial section markers	£5,000
*Splash Park canopies and bench seating with parasols	£7,000
Street Dressing	£18,000
Downside roof repairs	£36,679
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£120,543</b>

\*in total £25,000 with £18,000 from Meadway Capital Fund

- II. To approve release of £17,090 from the Tree Reserve for the following priority work requirements during 2023/24:
  - Priority 1 trees to be completed by March 2024 = £6,150 (estimate) – (has to be completed within 1 year of survey)
  - Priority 2 trees to be completed by March 2024, but could be delayed subject to funds being available, should priority 1 trees exceed estimated cost = £5,460.
  - In addition, £2,500 on static load testing on mature trees in Grove House Gardens and £2,980 future inspection on completed works and to inform the 2024/25 programme.
- III. To approve the unallocated balance of £1,000 from the Meadway Capital Fund to be allocated to the new cemetery development reserve.
- IV. To approve the underspend of £8,792 from the Downside Roof works (first round) be allocated to the Downside Reserve for known future roof repairs.

#### **142/23 INVESTORS IN PEOPLE**

Members congratulated officers on retaining silver status for Investors In People.

#### **143/23 REFERRAL REPORT - PURCHASE OF ELECTRIC PEDESTRIAN SWEEPER**

Deferred to Full Council

#### **144/23 MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS REPORT**

Members received the report.

#### **145/23 CORPORATE PLAN DEVELOPMENT PROCESS**

Members noted the proposed process for developing the Corporate Plan.

#### **146/23 PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT**

##### **RESOLVED:**

- I. To begin to stream Council and Committee meetings live when suitable technology is in place and for officers to investigate options for enabling the public to engage via chat before or during meetings.

- II. The Communications Officer to provide social media messages alerting residents when items of particular interest are to be discussed in Council meetings.
- III. All Members to be supported to hold and attend monthly surgeries called open public meetings, to be circulated between the five wards and for an online option to be offered. Branding, agenda and feedback will be consistent. Members in each ward to be invited to provide a time and location for their first surgery, and all members to be invited to each surgery. All Dunstable residents to be welcome to attend each event.
- IV. To include a “public question time” section in the agenda for each committee meeting.
- V. To recommend to Full Council that the Council reviews Standing Orders in regard to public questions at meetings to identify whether members of the public should be able to ask questions about items not on the agenda, and to review the requirement for members of the public to submit questions three days in advance.

#### **147/23 REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS**

- Citizen’s Advice Management Committee – Councillor Richard Attwell  
No update
- Dunstable International Town Twinning Association – Councillors Liz Jones, Peter Hollick and Kenson Gurney  
A meeting had taken place to discuss a proposed meeting to a proposed visit to Porz am Rhein. This will not now take place due to various travel implications..
- Hospice at Home Management Committee - Councillor Liz Jones  
A successful charity evening had been held, and the Committee had a presence at the motor rally.
- Ashton Almshouses Charity – Councillors Louise O’Riordan and Gregory Alderman  
No update.
- Ashton Schools Foundation - Councillors Peter Hollick and Gregory Alderman  
No update.
- Chew’s Foundation - Councillors Matthew Brennan and Kenson Gurney  
Councillor John Gurney updated Members that grants had been allocated and a flat had been refurbished.
- Poor’s Land Charity - Councillors Hollick and Liz Jones  
Councillor Jones updated that the charity meets once a year to agree money to be allocated on Maundy Thursday.

- Lockington Charity and Marshe Charity - Councillors Kenson Gurney and Liz Jones  
Biannual inspections were taking place and measures to improve the buildings at Ladies' Lodge were being considered.
- Dunstable and District Scout Council Executive - Councillor Nick Kotarski  
Councillor Nick Kotarski updated Members that he had attended the recent Executive meeting at 1st Dunstable H.Q. A key issue is the lack of any scouting movement in Downside. The hurdles to overcome are finding experienced leaders to start a new Beavers group initially. The second hurdle would be finding appropriate premises. Networking and advertising will be used to find new leaders. For now the 9th Dunstable (St Augustine's) Scout Group will be formally closed and any monies ring fenced pending a new group being formed. The district Commissioner notified the committee he will be retiring this year.

**The meeting closed at 20.41**