

CARMARTHEN TOWN COUNCIL
FINANCE COMMITTEE
7.30pm 11 NOVEMBER 2021

The meeting was held via video link in accordance with the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021, enabling meetings of local authorities held from 1 May 2021 to be held by means of remote attendance.

The meeting was chaired by Cllr. Tom Defis

PRESENT: Cllrs: Tom Defis, Gareth John, Emlyn Schiavone, Jeff Thomas and Matthew Thomas.

Mr Alun Harries – Clerk to the Town Council
 Mrs Emma Smith - Deputy Town Clerk and Finance Manager

219. Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillors Ken Lloyd, Ioan Matthews, Miriam Moules and Wyn Thomas.

220. Declarations of Interest

None.

221. Matters arising from minutes of the previous Finance Committee Meeting

No matters arising.

222. To authorise the signing of the Order for Payment of Accounts Schedule for November 2021.

Members scrutinised the payments and were satisfied with the schedule. Councillor Gareth John proposed that the schedule of payments totalling **£79,017.88** should be approved and signed by two members of Council and the Clerk. Cllr. Jeff Thomas seconded the proposal. All members agreed and it was **RESOLVED** that all payments should be approved.

223. Financial Report

A financial report was provided for the period April 2021 to 31st of October 2021.

Council's Bank balances on the 31st of October 2021 were as follows:

	£
HSBC Current Account	83,484.70
HSBC Reserve Account	368,597.15

Total Cash in Bank	452,081.85
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Balances in Other Accounts on 31st October 2021:

Mayor's Allowance	-	£4,415.64
Mayor's Fun Run	-	£ 5,846.06
Carmarthen Park Tea Shop	-	£22,365.73

- Gross expenditure for the period 1st April to the 31st of October 2021 totalled £394,136.82.
- Income for the same period, including the Park Tea Shop, totalled £70,123.19. The overall net expenditure is therefore £324,013.63.
- The Net Budget/Precept requirement for 2021/22 is £779,264.55, of which £519,419.71 has been received. Members will note from the above that Council is within budget as at 31st of October 2021.

The Town Clerk's report was **NOTED**.

224. Schedule of Monthly Income

The schedule was **NOTED** by committee.

225. Utility Bills

The Deputy Clerk explained that all of Council's gas and electricity meters have been moved to two new suppliers with contracts aligned to have the same end date and make the management of Council's energy bills much easier. All new contracts come with 100% green energy certification. The Deputy Clerk was thanked for undertaking this work.

Members **APPROVED** the change.

226. Climate Change – Friends of the Earth Cymru call for Dyfed Pension Fund not to invest in fossil fuels

The letter received from Friends of the Earth Cymru was discussed by Members and consideration given to progress already made to address this issue by Dyfed Pension Fund. The Clerk had recently attended a meeting with a senior officer responsible for the Dyfed Pension Fund within the County Council and Members were updated accordingly.

Following discussion, Cllr. Jeff Thomas proposed that the Town Council should write to Friends of the Earth Cymru supporting their request and also the Dyfed Pension Fund to ask them to address the problem more quickly and set a deadline to resolve the matter. Cllr. Emlyn Schiavone seconded the proposal, all were in favour and **RECOMMENDED** the course of action to Council.

227. Carmarthenshire County Council Christmas Toybox Appeal

The Clerk reminded Members that the small grants policy states that '*the Council will not normally provide grant support to the same organisation or applicant during successive years*'. The Town Council has supported this appeal for the last 3 years with an annual contribution of £100.00. Cllr. Jeff Thomas proposed a contribution of £100 and was seconded by Cllr. Emlyn Schiavone. All Members were in favour and the donation was **APPROVED**.

The next agenda item 'Annual Review of Council Charges' was moved to the end of the agenda.

228. Budget Planning 2022/23

Members considered the budget planning document that had been circulated prior to the meeting. The Town Clerk noted that the revenue budget was within the overall budget, with forecast increases included. Special consideration would need to be given to capital projects and how they could be afforded in the year ahead.

The Town Clerk explained the background to each of the proposed capital projects in the budget planning document.

Cllr. Matthew Thomas left the meeting at this point.

Following the discussion, it was **AGREED** that a prioritised list of projects would be re-submitted to the joint Finance & General Purposes Committee in January for the annual budget meeting once more detailed information about costings was available. It was proposed by Cllr. Gareth John seconded by Cllr. Jeff Thomas that officers should continue their budget preparations for that meeting on the assumption that there will be no reduction in the precept next year and there will be no increase to the precept beyond 2%, subject to further consideration by Full Council in January 2022.

Members also **AGREED** that work should begin now to seek funding for Carmarthen Park bandstand as repairs will have to be carried out to the listed structure within the next 5 years.

229. Annual review of Council Charges

Committee considered the current charges for Council services. Cllr. Emlyn Schiavone proposed that charges should remain unchanged given the challenging financial circumstances being experienced by many at this time. Cllr. Jeff Thomas seconded the proposal; all members were in favour and **RECOMMENDED** the decision to council.

The meeting closed at 9pm.