

CARMARTHEN TOWN COUNCIL
FINANCE COMMITTEE
HELD ON 11th JANUARY 2024 AT 7.30PM

The meeting was held in the Council Chamber, St Peter's Civic Hall and in accordance with the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021, enabling meetings of local authorities held from 1 May 2021 to be attended by means of remote attendance.

The meeting was chaired by Cllr. Jeff Thomas. Members of the General Purposes Committee were invited to attend to discuss the budget for 2024/25.

PRESENT: Councillors: Heledd ap Gwynfor, Peter Hughes Griffiths, Gareth John, Alun Lenny (Video), Miriam Moules, Emlyn Schiavone, Jeff Thomas, Wyn Thomas, Barry Williams and Luned Voyle.

Emma Smith – Town Clerk
Wendy Dickson – Deputy Town Clerk

284. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Cllrs. Andy King, Ioan Matthews, Tom Defis and Russell Sparks.

285. Declarations of Interest

Cllr. Emlyn Schiavone for item 291 as a Trustee of Oriel Myrddin.

286. To authorise the signing of the Order for Payment of Accounts Schedule for January 2024.

Members scrutinised the payments and were satisfied with the schedule. Cllr. Wyn Thomas proposed the schedule of payments totalling **£13,444.95** should be approved and signed by two members of Council and the Clerk. Cllr. Gareth John seconded the proposal. All members agreed and it was **RESOLVED** that all payments should be approved.

287. Town Clerk's Report

(a) Financial Report

Council's Bank balances on the 31st of December 2023 were as follows:

HSBC Current Account	£97,818.97
HSBC Reserve Account	£653,301.94
Total Cash in Bank	£751,120.91

Balances in Other Accounts on 31st December 2023:

Mayor's Allowance - £3,223.70

Mayor's Fun Run - £5,072.13

- Gross expenditure for the period 1st April 2023 to the 31st of December 2023 totalled £649,963.41.
- Income for the same period totalled £157,472.97. The overall net expenditure is therefore £492,490.44.
- The Net Budget/Precept requirement for 2023/24 is £793,011, which has all been received. Members will note from the above that Council was within the year within budget on 31st December 2023.
- The final instalment of the precept was received on the 22nd of December 2023.
- £250,000 was transferred from the Current account into the Reserve account in December.

The financial report was **NOTED**.

288. Quarterly Budget Update 31st December 2023.

Members **RESOLVED** that the quarterly budget update should be approved.

289. Quarterly Bank Reconciliation

Members agreed that the bank reconciliations for the quarter be **APPROVED**.

290. List of Debtors

The schedule was **APPROVED** by Committee.

291. 2024/25 Draft Town Council Budget

Cllr. Emlyn Schiavone declared an interest as a trustee of Oriel Myrddin.

A report with relevant supporting information had been circulated to all members before the meeting, which was now presented to members by the Town Clerk. A lengthy discussion took place whilst considering the Council budget proposals and level of precept for 2024/25.

The total projected Council income and expenditure for 2024/25 is £932,625 and £1,124,891 respectively. The income includes the council precept and money received from the sale and hire of Council good and services. The expenditure consists of revenue expenditure, capital expenditure, community benefits (grants) and town centre activities and events.

Following discussion by members the following **capital projects** are proposed during 2024/25:

NEW CAPITAL PROJECTS 2024-25

a) Topple testing at cemetery (3 year programme)	3,250
b) New digger for Cemetery	30,000
c) Fixture and Fittings Tea Shop (stainless Steel worktops)	3,500
d) Wall at Parc Hinds	TBC
e) Equipment for grass cutting etc	4,500
f) Replacement shutters for Cemetery and Grandstand	35,000
g) New Bins for Parks/Cemetery (new law)	1,500
	77,750

Town Council Contributions to Events and Organisations:

Community Contributions (Grants)	7,000
Town Centre Activities	
CTC - Annual Sports Awards	1,000
St David's Day	3,000
Pride of Place	500
River Festival	2,000
Gŵyl Canol Dref	2,000
Gŵyl y Daffodil	2,600
Climate Conference	700
Remembrance Service	800
Christmas Event	10,000
Christmas Lights Installation (equipment)	10,000
Replacement Xmas Street Decorations	10,000
SUB - TOTAL	42,600
TOTAL	49,600

Members **RECOMMENDED** that the pot for community contributions should be merged into one reduced fund of £7,000.

- Capital Projects. All members were in favour of the list as presented which was **RECOMMENDED** for approval by Council.
- Community Contributions and Town Centre Activities. The list as presented, totalling £49,600 was **RECOMMENDED** to Council for ratification. All members were in favour.
- Budget 2024/25. Committee **RECOMMENDED** that the budget as presented with the amendments noted below to address the shortfall:

- i. Amendment to Tea Shop stock from £20,000 to £10,000.
- ii. Reduction of earmarked funds for chapel heating system from £12,000 to £2,000.
- iii. Reduction in Civic Expenditure and Members allowances saving £5,500.

Cllr. Alun Lenny proposed that the reserves be accessed up to £24,500. The Clerk reminded members that the current level of un-earmarked reserves was below the minimum recommended level set by Audit Wales. This motion was seconded by Cllr. Wyn Thomas and members voted 5 against 4 in favour and **RECOMMENDED** the motion to council.

Cllr. Alun Lenny proposed that a review of the income and expenditure at the Tea Shop was required. Members agreed and a review of future development options for the Tea Shop was **RECOMMENDED** to Council.

Please see **Appendix 1** for full detail of amendments.

Precept 2024/25. After a lengthy discussion regarding the budget and precept for 2024/25, it was proposed by Cllr. Emlyn Schiavone, seconded by Cllr. Heledd ap Gwynfor that the precept be increased to £924,161 or an increase of £2.07 a month over 10 months for Band D properties. With seven in favour and two against, the increase for 2024/25 was **RECOMMENDED** to Council.

292.Purchase of a replacement Deputy Mayor's chain

Committee considered options for the purchase of a replacement Deputy Mayor's chain from three separate companies. Cllr. Heledd ap Gwynfor proposed a chain available from Vaughtons, at a cost of £3,998 which would represent a saving of £2,178 by not purchasing a like for like replacement chain. The motion was seconded by Cllr. Luned Voyle and with all members in agreement and the replacement was **RECOMMENDED** to council,

The meeting closed at 9:50 pm.