

Minutes of the Finance and Resources Committee
Held on Monday 8th January 2024, at Bruton Community Hall, 7.30pm

Present: Councillors Cullen (Chair), Buckland (arrived at 7.45pm), Coulter, Crawford, Fradley, Hood, Jones (Vice Chair), Robinson.

In the chair: Cllr Cullen

Officers present: Town Clerk

No members of the public present, therefore the public session was not required.

The meeting opened at 7.30pm.

MINUTES

FR23/36: Apologies for absence (LGA 1972 s85(1)).

To receive and approve any apologies of absence and to approve the reasons given.

No apologies have been received.

FR23/37: Declarations of interest

Declarations of Interests Members to declare any interests, including disclosable pecuniary interests, they may have in agenda items that accord with the requirements of the Town Council's Code of Conduct and to consider any written requests from members for dispensations that accord with the Localism Act 2011 s33 (b-e) (This does not preclude any later declaration).

- Cllr Hood declared a non-pecuniary interest in item FR23/44 grant applications received (One Planet Bruton grant application, Bruton Memory Cafe) and a pecuniary interest in item FR23/41b allotment fees.
- Cllr Robinson declared a non-pecuniary interest in item FR23/44 grant applications received (Bruton Library grant application) and a pecuniary interest in FR23/46 SALC consultation.
- Cllr Jones declared a non-pecuniary interest in item FR23/44 grant applications received (Bruton Museum grant application)
- Cllr Buckland declared a non-pecuniary interest in item FR23/44 grant applications received (Jubilee Pavilion Trust grant application).
- Cllr Crawford declared a pecuniary interest in item FR23/41b allotment fees.

FR23/38: [Minutes of the last meeting](#) held on 14th November 2023 (LGA 1972 sch 12 para 41 (1)).

To agree the minutes from the meeting on 14th November 2023 as a true and accurate record of the meeting.

It was RESOLVED [7-0-0] to approve the minutes of the meeting on 14th November 2023 as a true and accurate record of that meeting.

FR23/39: Review of Risk Register.

To review the Risk Register, and consider any changes if required.

The risk register was reviewed, in particular the changes agreed at the November Finance and Resources meeting were

It was RESOLVED [7-0-0] to approve the risk register as presented.

FR23/40: To consider a draft Investment Policy, as required once balances held exceed £100,000 in total.

To consider the initial draft Investment Policy, as circulated. To consider the information received from Churches, Charities and Local Authorities (CCLA) regarding access to better interest rates for Town Council funds.

The draft Investment Policy was considered, with the following recommendations.

- Point 3.8a shall be under the oversight of the Finance and Resources Committee as a whole.
- An additional point is required to ensure that Bruton Town Council will always bank and invest ethically. Bruton Town Council will not directly invest in Fossil fuels and petrochemical industries, other extractive industries and arms manufacturing.

It was RESOLVED [7-0-0] to approve the investment policy with the amendments as listed above and to recommend to Full Council that the policy adopted.

The Finance and Resources Committee would like to speak with the CCLA representative, which the clerk can arrange..

It was RESOLVED [7-0-0] to recommend to Full Council to invest in CCLA as recommended in the report presented, and to recommend an amount to be invested by Bruton Town Council, once this meeting has taken place.

Cllr Buckland arrived at 7.45pm

FR23/41: to review fees and charges for the following year, 2024/25, and consider if any changes are required.

a. Cemetery fees.

To recommend to Full Council to raise the cemetery fees across the board in line with inflation at 5%, to a reasonable rounded amount.

It was RESOLVED [7-0-1] to recommend to Full Council to raise the cemetery fees, as published, by 5%, to a reasonable rounded amount, from 1st April 2024.

Cllrs Hood and Crawford left the meeting at 7.47pm.

b. Allotment fees.

Allotment fees were discussed and it was agreed to recommend to Full Council that full plots at both allotment sites to be increased by £1 per plot per year, and a half plot by 50p per plot per year. The annual fees for raised beds to remain unchanged.

It was RESOLVED [6-0-0] to recommend to Full Council to increase by £1 for a full allotment plot and 50p for a half allotment, raised beds to remain the same. These changes to take effect from February 2025, with the appropriate notice given to allotment plot holders.

FR23/42: To review the Town Council asset register.

To review the Town Council Asset Register, (currently published on the Town Council website) consider any changes that are appropriate. To agree the Asset Register to date, in order for Full Council to agree the Asset Register before the end of the year, 31st March 2024.

There was a query regarding the purchase value of the MUGA as stated on the circulated asset register. After some investigation, the clerk determined that the approximate installation value of the MUGA was £95899, less the floodlight value of £23460 would give an installation cost for the MUGA of an estimated £72439.

The clerk had also reduce the play area equipment value by £3139.90 as unsafe equipment has been removed.

Other amendments:

- The war memorial asset register value was amended to £1 nominal value.
- The Engine Shed asset register value was amended to £1 nominal value.
- Patwell Pump asset register value was amended to £1 nominal value.

The previous values stated were insurance values, and not the purchase price.

Items added:

- Cemetery and allotment field at Cuckoo Hill. The purchase price was £150, but the nominal value is stated as £1.
- Other purchases throughout the year have been added accordingly at the purchase value.

It was RESOLVED [8-0-0] to agree the Asset Register as presented but including the amendments as listed, and recommend to Full Council to approve the asset register as presented and including the amendments as listed, when presented before 31st March 2024.

FR23/43: To consider quotes received for IT support (if available).

To consider quotes received for IT support for the Town Council, if available.

Three quotes were received and discussed, and the desire for councillors was that the IT support for the Town Council is provided by a local contractor. The contractor that was well received is based in Glastonbury, and also an IT provider for another local council.

It was RESOLVED [8-0-0] to agree to accept the quote received for IT support submitted by the Glastonbury based contractor.

FR23/44: To consider grant applications received for 2024/25 financial year, as part of the budget setting process, and any new applications received since the last Finance and Resources Committee meeting in November 2023.

The grant applications have been circulated to councillors for review.

The grants were approved as follows:

Organisation	Amount requested	Amount agreed	Any comments
Bruton Choral Society	£500	£500	Resolved [8-0-0] agreed
Bruton Festival of Arts	£3500	£1500	Resolved [8-0-0] that the funding is agreed in principle but accounts information is required by 31.03.2024 to enable any funding to be released.
Bruton Library	£1592	£1592	Resolved [7-0-0] agreed
Bruton Library	£600	£600	Resolved [7-0-0] agreed
Bruton Museum	£2000	£1000	Resolved [7-0-1] to agree £1000 funding
Bruton Memory Café	£500	£500	Resolved [7-0-0] agreed
BUFC	£2500	£1900	It was resolved [8-0-0] to agree Bruton Town Council take responsibility for the pitch cutting all year round, therefore deduct £600 from the grant amount applied for
Citizens Advice	£1262.50	£1262.50	Resolved [8-0-0] agreed
Friends of Bruton Railway Station	£176	£176	Resolved [8-0-0] agreed
Friends of Sexeys School	£1500	£750	To request further details of the possible programme of delivery, and earmark half of the amount applied for.
Jubilee Park Pavilion	£1000	£1000	Resolved [7-0-0] agreed, but to discuss the transfer of the electricity supply before the current contract expires later this year
Mini Day Centre	£200	£200	Resolved [8-0-0] agreed
One Planet Bruton	£150	£155	Resolved [7-0-0] agreed
Promise Works	£800	£800	Resolved [8-0-0] agreed
SSCAT	£1500	£1500	Resolved [8-0-0] agreed
The Growing Space	£1100	£1100	Resolved [8-0-0] agreed
Wild Ones Forest School	£1000	£0	The Town Council is to apply for grant funding, to support some of these organisations and match funding, this organisation will be included in the application.
Total grant amount	£19885.50	£14535.50	

It was RESOLVED [8-0-0] to approve the grants as listed, making the Community grant budget figure £14535.50.

FR23/45: To consider the budget for 2024/25.

To consider the draft budget for 2024/25 as circulated. To recommend approval of the agreed draft budget to Full Council at the January 2024 meeting. To consider the precept for 2024-25 as a result of agreeing the draft budget, and make recommendations to be considered at Full Council at the January 2024 meeting.

The budget presented was discussed.

- Remove £25k contingency for Somerset Council. To date there has been very little input from Somerset Council. There is an appetite for discussing Riverside Walk and also County Fields, but only when there is firm financial information to support consulting with the community.
- Walls were discussed and both maintenance £5k and also the £5k in the walls reserve fund are to remain.
- £3k for Abbey Ponds is an ongoing annual expense, for contributions to the abbey ponds pathway,
- It was resolved to recommend moving the earmarked reserve for Library Junction to Jubilee Park Development Fund. This would require further discussion at Full Council

The proposed budget is shown on the spreadsheet in turquoise.

It was RESOLVED [8-0-0] to recommend to Full Council to approve a budget of £180089.12

It was RESOLVED [8-0-0] to recommend to Full Council to approve a precept demand of £174395.12

Cllr Robinson left the meeting at 9.20pm.

FR23/46: To further discuss the recent Somerset Association of Council communication regarding service provision and consider a response as required.

The questionnaire was detailed

1. What plans does your council have to take on assets devolved from Somerset Council?
Bruton Town Council has given Somerset Council a list of Assets that we are interested in discussing. The town council is particularly interested in devolving Riverside Walk and County Fields, subject to additional information provided by Somerset Council.
2. What plans does your council have to take on services devolved from Somerset Council?
None currently.
3. Is your council interested in partnering with neighbouring councils to devolve services across your local area?
No.
4. Would your council be keen to use a SALC appointed legal team to manage asset and service transfers?
Yes.
5. Would your council value professional advice on TUPE and risk relating to asset and service transfers?
No, unless the assets discussed with Somerset Council imply that TUPE may be required as part of that asset transfer.
6. What additional services should SALC consider developing to support your council?
Don't Know.

FR23/47: Date of next meeting.

The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday 16th April 2024, to be held in Bruton Community Hall.

Meeting closed at 9.24 pm.

Agenda items: final figures for end of year for Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR).

Final spend to budget.

To discuss reserve transfers for the end of year 2023/2024

END OF MINUTES