

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF
THE POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE
MALVERN TOWN COUNCIL**

**held in the Council Chamber, Belle Vue Terrace, Malvern
on Wednesday 6 December 2023 at 6.00 pm**

Councillors

I Dawson (Chair)
M Birks
N Houghton
R McLaverty-Head (from 6.10pm)
K Newbigging

Absent

C Fletcher (apologies)
M Jones
C Lee
J MacLusky (apologies)

Also in attendance

Linda Blake - Town Clerk
Louise Wall – Minute Clerk

Once quorate, the meeting started at 6.12pm

44. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were **NOTED** from Cllr Fletcher and Cllr MacLusky, and Cllr McLaverty-Head for lateness.

45. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Agenda item 47, Budget 2024/25 – Cllr Karen Newbigging is an allotment holder.

46. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the following meeting be approved and adopted as a correct record of the proceedings, to be signed by the Chairman:

- Policy and Resources Committee meeting 1 November 2023

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

None.

47. BUDGET 2024/25

Report PR01/23 was received and accepted.

The Town Clerk explained that for the second year running, there had been several challenging aspects to both the re-forecast and the budget process, not least the Victoria Park community hub project and sale of Belle Vue Terrace, with timescales and predicted costs changing daily up to the time of the meeting.

At the meeting held on 1 November, Policy and Resources Committee had noted that whilst the aim was to keep any increase in the precept low, costs and inflation should be set at a reasonable level to avoid any reduction in services.

The proposed budget submitted to the meeting included an increase in precept of 8.5%.

The re-forecast for 2023/24 had resulted in a small underspend for the year and a balance being put into reserves of £324.

The tax base had not been received at the time of the meeting, but using last year's tax base and an increase on precept of 8.5% resulted in an increase of £5.79 per Band D household.

If a similar increase in the tax base to last year was applied, the increase in a Band D household would be £4.23.

Office Equipment

£3,000 for the purchase of office furniture for the new building at Victoria Park Reserves had been included in the budget but members **AGREED** that this should be increased to £10,000 to purchase new desks, chairs and other furniture, in order to ensure ongoing staff welfare.

Other expenses

Included in other expenses was an amount for annual subscriptions. It was agreed to discontinue the subscription to the Cotswold Line Promotion Group. Although only a small cost, officers confirmed that no councillors had ever asked to read the magazine, and in line with the environmental policy it was felt that paper magazines should be avoided.

The Chair of the meeting then asked members if they would be happy to see an increase in precept of 8.5%. Whilst members felt it would be preferable to see a lower increase, discussions on the proposed budget had shown this would not be possible without reducing services and projects, which was not ideal.

A report would be presented to Full Council to reflect these changes.

48. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

It was **AGREED** that the date of the next meeting would be Wednesday 7 February 2024.

The meeting finished at 7.45pm

.....(Chairman)