

**MARLBOROUGH TOWN COUNCIL  
FINANCE AND POLICY COMMITTEE**

Minutes of a meeting of the **Finance & Policy Committee** which was held on **Monday, 11 January 2021**  
at 7.53 pm via videoconference

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**PRESENT** Councillor Andrew Ross Chair  
Councillor Mark Cooper Town Mayor  
Councillor Nicholas Fogg  
Councillor Alexander Kirk Wilson  
Councillor Guy Loosmore  
Councillor Mervyn Hall  
Councillor Susie Price  
Councillor Andy Wilson  
Councillor Jo Waltham

**ALSO PRESENT** Mrs Shelley Parker Town Clerk  
Dawn Whitehall Administrator  
Neil Goodwin Marlborough.News  
Plus 1 member of the public

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**PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

There were no questions.

**378/20 APOLOGIES**  
There were no apologies.

**379/20 DECLARATIONS**  
**Councillors Ross, Hall, Price, Wilson and the Town Mayor** – agenda item 11 – Museum & Heritage – non-pecuniary interest.

**380/20 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**  
The **Chairman** congratulated the **Town Clerk** in securing a discretionary COVID-19 grant from Wiltshire Council of £8,000, an increase of £1,000 on the amount reported at the last meeting. He also thanked the **Town Clerk** and her staff for their efforts which had resulted in the Annual Governance & Accountability Return (AGAR) being signed off without comment by the Town Council's auditors.

**381/20 MINUTES**  
**RESOLVED:** that the minutes of the meeting held 21 September 2020 were approved as a true record and signed by the Chairman

**382/20 COMMITTEE BUDGETS 2020/2021**  
Members noted the committee income and expenditure reports to end November 2020 (Month 8) and lists of payments.

**383/20 INTERIM AUDIT REPORT 2020-21**  
Members noted the first interim Internal Audit Report, where only very minor recommendations had been made and quickly actioned. This was a great credit to staff, especially because this audit had been conducted remotely under COVID19 restrictions.

**384/20 URGENT MATTERS**

Members noted urgent decisions taken during the pandemic under paragraph 3.2 of the Scheme of Delegation.

**385/20**

### **BUDGET AND PRECEPT SETTING 2021/2022**

Members considered the draft budget for the Finance & Policy Committee including the recommendation from the Staffing Sub-Committee; proposed budgets for the Property, Amenities & Open Spaces and Planning Committees, and a final budget and precept figure to be recommended to Full Town Council for a final decision on 18 January 2021.

Members noted that the proposed figures amounted to an increase to the precept of 3.75% for a Band D property, a reduction from 11.62% at the start of the budgeting process. If agreed this would be a smaller increase than for the previous 5 years in Marlborough and was significantly below expected precept increases in some other, similar sized towns in Wiltshire.

Whilst there was some discussion about whether further small budget line savings could be identified, Members agreed that this was the lowest figure that could realistically be achieved in order for the Town Council to continue to operate effectively against a background where the financial impact of the Coronavirus pandemic had resulted in:

- income being (and likely continuing to be) reduced through a combination of loss of hiring income and rent holidays
- a reduction in the Tax Base as more households qualify for the Council Tax Reduction Scheme meaning that just to stand still the precept would need to rise by.81%, and
- increased costs to make buildings and working practices COVID secure and uncertainty about how long these costs would continue

**RESOLVED:** (i) to accept the proposed Finance & Policy Committee budget including the recommendation from the Staffing Sub-Committee

**RESOLVED:** (ii) To accept the proposed budgets for the Property, Amenities & Open Spaces and Planning Committees

**RESOLVED:** (iii) to recommend 2021/22 budgets to Full Town Council with a net budget and precept figure of £744,373, representing an increase equivalent to 3.75% for a Band D property equating to £214.11 per annum

**386/20**

### **FINANCIAL RISK ASSESSMENT**

**RESOLVED:** to recommend the Financial Risk Assessment to Full Town Council

**387/20**

### **VAT HEALTH CHECK**

Members noted the annual VAT Health Check undertaken in November 2020 and commended staff for a positive outcome where all VAT had been able to be reclaimed.

**388/20**

### **MUSEUM & HERITAGE**

Members noted a report by the Town Clerk and considered contributing, via the Museum & Heritage budget line, to the running costs of the museum.

Due to the COVID19 pandemic the museum had not been able to open during 2020 and would likely reopen to the public in the autumn of 2021. Ahead of this work was needed around equipment and the remodelling of exhibits.

**RESOLVED:** to contribute £1,000 towards the Town Museum  
*Councillors Ross, Hall, Price, Wilson and the Town Mayor did not vote*

The meeting closed at 8.38 pm

Signed: ..... Date: .....  
Chairman

DRAFT