

## MELTHAM TOWN COUNCIL

### MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE PROPERTIES, ADMINISTRATION AND FINANCE COMMITTEE HELD ON MONDAY 7 DECEMBER 2020

**Present:** Councillor Bampton (Chair), Councillor Buchanan, Councillor Haigh, Councillor Keighley and Councillor White.

**PUBLIC SESSION:** There were no members of the public present.

**20/23 NOTICE OF MEETING**

Public Notice of the meeting was taken as read.

**20/24 ADMISSION TO THE PUBLIC**

As printed agenda.

**20/25 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Millward.

**20/26 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No declarations were made.

**20/27 BUDGET MONITORING /INTERNAL CONTROLS**

Councillors considered a budget monitoring report up to the end of November and noted that the complete budget monitoring report for the third quarter of the financial year will be reported to the next council meeting in January. The Chair pointed out that the commentary provided explained in detail the position at the end of November 2020 and that some budget heads were significantly underspent because of the impact of Covid but there were some increased costs as well. Councillors went through the report line by line.

Councillors agreed to recommend to Council a virement of £200.00 from the 'Postage and Petty Cash' budget head into 'IT costs' to cover the costs of Zoom and it was noted that this would require a resolution of the full council.

Councillors agreed to recommend to Council a virement of £5000.00 from the 'Ask Meltham' budget head into 'Park Reserves' which balanced the expected spend on projects in the last quarter against the fact that Covid had limited the progress of some projects this financial year. The virement into Park Reserves was consistent with the outcomes of Ask Meltham. It was noted that this would require a resolution of the full Council.

**RESOLVED:** That the Properties Administration and Finance Committee recommend to Council the following:

- A virement of £200.00 from the 'Postage and Petty Cash' budget head into 'IT costs' to cover the costs of Zoom
- A virement of £5,000 from the 'Ask Meltham' budget head into 'Park Reserves'

Councillors considered the Schedule of receipts and payments for October and November 2020 circulated with the agenda and

**RESOLVED:** That the Schedule of Payments for October 2020 in the sum of £14474.18 (net) be approved.

**RESOLVED:** That the Schedule of Payments for November 2020 in the sum of £6931.05 (net) be approved.

Councillors noted that in the absence of face-to-face meetings the schedules of payments, monthly bank reconciliations and the corresponding current account bank statements are being scanned and sent to the Town Mayor and Chair of Finance for checking and everything had been found to be in order.

## **20/28 BUDGET PLANNING / PRECEPT 2021/22**

The Clerk had circulated a revised report setting out the projected year end position for this financial year and a suggested draft budget for 21/22 with an explanatory commentary, together with an indicative precept calculation and comparison with previous years.

The Clerk reported that the report attempted to project what the year-end spend position will be which could obviously change. The Clerk reported that spend in some areas is significantly down due to the restrictions created by Covid 19, but this could alter significantly depending on what happens in the remainder of the financial year.

The Clerk reported that the budget is split into 4 sections and that for 'Compliance Communications and Administration' and the 'Park' the spend was on track. In relation to 'Services' there was a £6.5k predicted underspend (assuming there was an in year virement of the 'Ask Meltham' funds of £5k to park reserves). The Clerk clarified that a virement from one budget head to another would require a Council resolution. The Clerk reported that in relation to 'Income' there will be a small under achievement due to the allotment rent holiday that was granted.

The Clerk clarified that there is no capacity to carry forward underspends to the next financial year, but these are deducted before the precept is calculated.

The projected year end spend and suggested draft budget for 20/21 was considered by Councillors line by line. A discussion took place regarding the establishment of a new budget for events in the park. The Clerk was asked to do some work to model the amounts that may be required but a figure of around £1500.00 was suggested and the Clerk was asked to revise the budget figures for 21/22 accordingly. It was also noted that the Council had received notification of a fee increase for 20/21 from one of the Councils main contractors and the Clerk had approached another for clarification as to any price increases.

It was agreed to recommend to Council the draft budget and precept calculation set out in the report considered subject to the revisions suggested.

In particular the committee recommend to Council:

- The establishment of a new budget head for events /activities in the park
- Where applicable a 2% inflation increase should be applied
- The budget for audit and accounting fees should be increased to cover the cost of the scribe accounting package
- The budget for IT costs should be increased to cover Zoom and Councilor emails

- The budget for postage and petty cash should be reduced to reflect reduced postal costs
- The budget for professional fees should be increased to reflect the increased number of tree surveys required
- The budget for salaries should be increased to cover any increases in employer pension contributions and increments
- The budget for devolved services should be reduced by £500 based on spend in previous years

A discussion took place regarding the capital grants scheme for 2021/22 and it was agreed to recommend to Council that the grants scheme should be reduced from £25k to £15K (£10k for general applications and £5k for shop front grant applications).

It was noted that revised reports would now be produced by the Clerk for consideration at full Council on the 4 January 2020. The final decision on the 21/22 budget and precept must be taken at the Council meeting on the 8 February when information such as the tax base should be available.