

MINUTES of the extra ordinary Council Meeting of EDENBRIDGE TOWN COUNCIL, held in Rickards Hall at 8.12 pm on Monday 25 November 2019

Present: Cllrs J Aldridge, A Baker, V Jennings, A Layland (Chairman), N Lloyd, M McArthur (Vice-Chairman), S McGregor, A Read, Z Roberts-Smith, P Smith, S Sumner and B Todd

In attendance: Town Clerk, Responsible Financial Officer (RFO); no members of the public and no members of the press.

1. TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received, noted and accepted from Cllrs Damodaran, Smart, and Scholey.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS OR PREDETERMINATION

None.

20:13 Meeting was adjourned for agenda item 3.

3. PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND STATEMENTS

None.

20:13 Meeting was reconvened.

4. TO RECEIVE, ADOPT AND SIGN THE MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON [11 November 2019](#)

Resolved: that the minutes of the Council meeting held on Monday 11 November 2019 be duly signed by the Chairman as a true and accurate record of the meeting; pages 9269-9275

5. TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE VIEW ON THE PROPOSALS FOR THE BUDGET 2020/21 AND TO MAKE A RECOMMENDATION TO THE FINANCE COMMITTEE TO CONSIDER

Members received an updated view on the budgets for 2019/20 and 2020/21, together with a view of different Precept scenarios and the impact of these to the Town Council's General Reserves. The current year would see £65k movement from the General Reserves to support the expenditure. Members discussed at length the budgets, possible budget savings and the Precept. It was noted that:

- The Council owned and managed its own open spaces (Stangrove Park; the Recreation Ground; Mowshurst, Blossoms Park; Market Yard Car Park), the cemetery, allotments, public toilets and buildings (Doggetts Barn; Rickards Hall; Church House; the Pavilion; Nomads; Mowshurst Barn; the Depo)
- Staff costs had not been commensurate to the cost of living/inflation increases (the historic differences had been rectified this year)
- The 2019/20 end-of-year cash balances had included £400k of CIL money; the Council was the custodian for CIL, and it was not for use towards the Council's running costs. Therefore, this had not been a true representation of the Town Council's cash balances
- The Council's 10 and 30 year maintenance plans for its buildings, open spaces and play areas showed £1.3m planned maintenance over the next five years. It relied on the Precept contribution and transfers from the reserves to fund this

- The budget was not sustainable and whilst the Council continue to seek efficiencies the painful choice was either cutting services or increasing the precept.

Members voted on increasing the Precept by 4%. Cllr McGregor requested a recorded named vote.
10 voted in favour: Cllrs Aldridge, Baker, Jennings, Layland, Lloyd, McArthur, Roberts-Smith, Smith, Sumner and Todd
2 against: Cllrs McGregor and Read.

Resolved: a Precept increase for 2020/21 of 4%; increasing to £551,028 (was £529,835). Based on the expected tax base figures this would be an annual increase for a Band D property of £5.77 or 48p per calendar month.

The Finance Committee would receive the detailed budget for 2020/21 at its meeting on 16 December. The full Council would confirm the budget at its meeting on 27 January 2020.

The Town Clerk was asked to investigate a full Financial Risk Assessment of the Council's Assets and to present a proposal for the Council to consider so that it could obtain a more accurate view of its required level of reserves for the 2021/22 budget.

The Chairman expressed his gratitude to Cllr Lloyd for the detailed explanation of the Council's finances and answers to the many questions. He also thanked the Town Clerk and the RFO for their work on preparing the figures.

6. DATE OF NEXT MEETING – Monday 9 December

Meeting closed at 21:30