

**South Willesborough and Newtown Community Council**  
**Finance and General Purposes Committee 28<sup>th</sup> November 2023**

**Minutes November 2023**

The Vice Chair FGP opened the meeting at 7:16pm

**In attendance Cllr Sue Mullan Vice Chair FGP, Chair SWANCC (SM) Cllr Steve Campkin (SC) and Cllr Nirosha Thilagarajan (NT)**

**78/23 Record attendance and list apologies for absence.**

Apologies were received from Cllr Andy Rogers and approved.

**79/23 Declarations of pecuniary, other significant or voluntary interest.**

No declarations were made.

**80/23 To agree the Minutes of the meeting of 24<sup>th</sup> October 2023 and sign (attached).**

Proposed SC and Seconded NT that the Minutes were a true record of the meeting and the Chair signs them.

**81/23 To receive a report of the Community Council Manager on the Government Services Pay Agreement and agree its implementation for 2023 2024**

The Chair proposed a motion to close the meeting to the public due to the confidential nature of the report Agreed Unanimously.

Meeting closed at 7:18pm

**Resolved:- Proposed SC and Seconded NT and Agreed unanimously**

- 1) To implement the pay award and the hourly salary increase immediately,**
- 2) With advice and agreement from the Internal Auditor that the backdated pay would staggered over the remaining months of the Financial Year.**
- 3) That the earmarked reserve for Staffing Costs would be used to meet this cost.**

The Chair reopened the meeting at 7:24pm

**82/23 To review the current position of Reserves and agree**

Members reviewed a previously circulated report on all reserves and agreed virements to date.

**Resolved:- Proposed SM and Seconded NT 1) All earmarked reserves reviewed and Agreed for 2023 - 2024 and to be maintained for 2024 2025, 2) To review the reserve for 3 -6 months running costs over the remainder of the financial year, as this is just over 3 months and will need to be increased to maintain a sufficient support for the budget as it grows over 2024 2025 and 2025 2026.**

**83/23 To review forecast of 2023 2024 receipts and payments budget and agree**  
Members reviewed the previously circulated report forecasting payments to the end of the financial year.

**Resolved : Proposed SM and Seconded NT 1) That the forecast was accepted and that the likely surplus for the Year End would be £10645.00. 2) To use this figure towards considerations for the Precept Calculation for 2024 2025. 3) To continue to monitor the forecast as the financial year progresses.**

**84/23 To review the budget performance to date, bank reconciliation and recommended bank transfers and agree actions.**

**Resolved:- Proposed SC and Seconded NT and agreed unanimously**

**1) To accept the prepared November budget monitor.**

**2) To note that 1 payment to HMRC was outstanding from July and this is to be made with the November payments.**

**3) That ASL had had issues with the transfer of the new contract with PEAC who have debited the Council incorrectly that credit notes have been issued and payment receipt was awaited. Siemens had also debited the Council for the Copier and the ASL Account manager was requesting the full monies to be refunded. Therefore, it was agreed to write to ASL and ask where the interest is for these funds, 2) To contact Unity Trust to ask the process on the incorrect Direct Debiting to return the monies taken.**

**4) To note that there was an issue with the transfer from the Current Account to the Reserve Account, due to a confusion on the screen the incorrect transfer was made from the reserve to the current account, and the aim to have a current account balance of £15000 and a transfer of difference in the Account to the reserve account did not occur as agreed. It was understood this was human error and unintentional, yet another new screen from Unity Trust had added to the confusion. Therefore, a large print screen had been arranged and any future transfers would be double checked before submitting for authorisation.**

**5) To transfer £20,000 to the Reserve Account to achieve interest.**

**Action SE 1) to set up transfer 2) To contact Unity Trust regarding Siemens Direct Debit and ASL regarding lost interest and unreturned direct debit.**

**85/23 To agree the payments listing (attached), new beneficiaries, endorse any payments agreed by email and any deposit key refunds required.**

**Resolved:- Agreed unanimously**

**1) To the payments listing except for the Siemens Direct Debit which is awaiting a refund see item 84/23.**

**2) To agree 1) Signatories for December would need to be NT FGP Committee and EP Council and that new online set up to be arranged with Unity Trust for EP. The Account Submission form was signed in the meeting and to be sent to Unity Trust 29<sup>th</sup> November 2023, that as previous experience with Unity Trust had not been efficient if the online set up was not arranged in time cheques would be used. 2) Payments for December salaries would be paid on advice from Mannington's on 20<sup>th</sup> December 2023, The Water bill and National Allotments Subscription and any monthly regular bills would be paid by Signatories for December with all invoices being sent by Email to both Signatories. 3) if any urgent matter arises requiring payment this would be agreed by email.**

**3) To endorse decisions taken by email to pay the Council Agreed Insurance Invoice to JMG and salaries which were due before the date of this meeting.**

**ACTION SE to send account management form to Unity Trust 29/11/23**

**86/23 To review the Council requirements for Health and Safety and Human Resources for 2024 2025 and agree**

**Resolved Proposed SM Seconded SC and agreed unanimously 1) That whilst the Committee did not want to exceed its terms of reference there was a need to review the risk to the Council if it hired Self Employed over Employed and correct advice needed to be sought. To recommend to Council that this is reviewed.**

**2) To seek an external professional HR service for the Council to include as part of the service the drafting of Contracts and Staff Handbook which is continually updated in line with the Law and to provide a continuous HR service for the management of all employees.**

**3) To seek an external professional Health and Safety consultation service to review all the Health and Safety for the Council and its employees with a secure tool to manager and monitor health and safety within the Council.**

**4) To seek 3 quotations for this service and bring back to the January FGP meeting. 4) For the purpose of the 2024 2025 budget to forecast £3250 for this purpose.**

**87/23 To review the draft budget proposal for 2023 2024 and agree**

**Resolved :- Proposed SM and Seconded NT and agreed unanimously**

**1) The budget is forecast without VAT as an income or expenditure**

**2) That as inflation is currently sitting at 6.7% - 5% be set as an anticipated rise on the unfixed costs for the Budget for 2024 2024.**

**Including:- Water Charges, Site Maintenance, Clerk Expenses, Printing and Distribution, Events Working Group, Small Projects, Stationary and Equipment, PLI**

**Insurance and Salary Award.** That the office rent be split out to clearly define costs for Office Energy and Office Insurance and these would have a 5% rise however Office Rent would remain the same, Room hire at Baxendale had been agreed as a donation for January 2024 – December 2024 that the Salvation Army hall was putting up the cost of the rent but this had not yet been clarified therefore 5% was added to this cost also.

- 3) That the insurance for the Copier is covered by the Councils Zurich policy and to recommend to Council it considers to not continue further insurance with PEAC providers to save costs.
- 4) That the Area Enhancement Budget on its setup was to include the Litter Picker and Public Spaces Enhancement Officer and agreed April 23 the Community Gardener there the budget for these items would be £3840 budgeted for Community Gardener, £2150 for the PSEO and £4680 moved to staffing costs. That the Area Enhancement Budget would be £10,000.
- 5) As the rising costs crises now had more partners involved in supporting residents and the budget for this had not been spent in the 2 previous years to adjust this from £8000 to £5000 to include community support initiatives the Council may wish to make or support and grants for rising costs if requested.
- 6) That the Railway Event was a one-off successful event but as the Council had agreed not to do a large event next year but to focus on the D DAY beacon £1050 be budgeted for the cost of the beacon and possible costs for the management plan of this event.
- 7) That the budget expenditure forecast would be £96252 rounded up.
- 8) To forecast £1000 for interest and £2000 for allotment rents as income.
- 9) However mindful that the overall tax bill would incur increases from all contributing parties and inflation is still high at 6.7%, Rising Costs is still being felt by residents and support was needed, to therefore support the cost of the precept with 6.7% of the total forecasted budget for 2024 2025 as Precept Support at £6449 from the Receipts and Payments forecast review.
- 10) To recommend to Council that the precept is set at £89803 at a cost of £70.16 for the year and £1.35 per Band D Property a rise of 25p per week.
- 11) To review the ongoing budget for 2024 2025 and to consider any unspent precept support from 2023 2024 to support the Earmarked reserve for 3 -6 months running costs as this was currently just above 3 months overall.

**88/23 To agree the date of the next meeting as 19<sup>th</sup> December 2023 and items to be included on the agenda**

That the next date of the meeting would be 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2023.

There being no further business to discuss the Chair closed the meeting at 8:25pm

Signed Chair \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_