



SANDGATE PARISH COUNCIL
Minutes of a meeting of the Finance Committee held on
Monday on 18th November 2024 at 6.30pm

~~~~~

**Present:** **Chairman: Simon Horton**

**Councillors: Gary Fuller, Michael Fitch, Tim Prater and Hazel Barrett**

**RFO/Deputy Clerk: Chani Sanger**

~~~~~

These Minutes will only be deemed to be a correct record of the meeting when approved and signed at the next meeting.

1. **Apologies for absence:** None
2. **Declarations of Interest:** None
3. **Minutes:** The minutes of the previous Finance Committee meeting on **21st October 2024**, were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.
Proposed by: Councillor Tim Prater
Seconded by: Councillor Gary Fuller
Approved by all present

4. **Six-month update:** The six-month update was circulated a day prior to the meeting. There were no surprises or any figures out of the ordinary. It was noted that tree reports were increasing costs, and this would need to be considered in the future.

Councillors queried whether the council could seek more competitive pricing, however it was noted that it isn't the cost of the reports themselves but the costs of the works that the reports outline. Each tree survey is identifying an increasing amount of tree works that will need to be completed and these come with a cost.

5. **Monthly finance information:** The finance information was circulated ahead of the meeting and there was nothing out of the ordinary to note. There were no questions from councillors regarding the information.
6. **2025/2026 budget:** The budget setting process and timeline was outlined with the 28th January being the date by which precepts must be set and sent to FHDC. It was noted that the council tax base number used in the calculation is not circulated until early December. Councillors expect that FHDC and KCC will raise their precepts by the statutory maximum for Local Authorities which are 3% and 5% respectively. It was noted that while parish councils are not restricted by a maximum increase, it is preferred to keep any increase as low as possible and ideally within 3-5%.

It was noted that certain expenditure is known and can be planned for such as staff costs, business rates and energy costs. Certain receipts can also be planned for, such as rent payments. The challenge comes where unexpected costs arise. There are one off costs that need to be factored into the budget and those costs include the 20mph zone through Sandgate, Speedwatch costs, a planting project on the Esplanade and essential tree works.

Chairman's initials and date

The RFO and chair of finance will work together to draft a budget for 25/26. It was noted that while grant funding is being sought for larger expenditure for example replacement play park equipment, there is merit in creating a list of expected projects or ambitions spanning the course of one or two years, so that grant funding can be explored for smaller items.

7. PWLB

It was noted that another bond is due to mature in mid-December however the last financial quarter tends to see higher expenditure. While there is a desire to reinvest the funds quickly, it would be beneficial to evaluate where money is available and how much cash is needed to ensure proper cashflow through to the end of the financial year.

8. Correspondence

None at this time

9. Information

Christmas trees are being displayed in Sandgate High Street as part of an initiative by SPC and local businesses to make Sandgate look more festive and attractive during the Christmas period. SPC are sponsoring around ten trees but there is expected to be upward of 20 trees on display.

10. Date of next meeting: 16th December 2024

Meeting finished at 6.58pm.

Signed by Chairman of Finance Committee Dated