

Minutes of the virtual meeting of WATTON TOWN COUNCIL Finance Committee

held on Thursday 12th November 2020

Councillors Present: Kathryn Stallard (KS) – Chairman of the Committee, Peter Bishop (PB), Sue Hebborn (SH), Don Saunders (DS), and Pat Warwick (PW).

Also Present: Jane Scarrott Town Clerk and Michelle Thompson Deputy Clerk

1. NO APOLOGIES

2. NO DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST MADE

3. INITIAL 2021-22 BUDGET CONSIDERATIONS

Prior to the meeting, members of the Committee had been presented with budget notes and an up-to-date budget position with suggested costs for 2021/22.

Each Code within the budget Cost Centres was considered and an estimate of expenditure for 2021/22 agreed.

Points raised:

- Physical IT training will be considered for staff and councillors once current lockdown restrictions have been eased.
- The laptop agreement signed by councillors who use a Town Council laptop will be reviewed to ensure it is stated that laptops must be returned to the Council at the end of the Councillors term of office.
- The RFO will monitor bank charges as increases are anticipated.
- Noted that the Council has agreed priorities of Youth Provision and the Wednesday Market.
- The PEPSO will be asked to create a Facebook page to publicise facilities at Bridle Road Play Area.
- Staff COVER line within the Staff cost centre was discussed and it was agreed that the HR Committee should be asked to look at developing a cover policy.

Agreed estimated needs for 2021-22 will be entered on the budget spreadsheet for ratification by the Finance Committee at its next meeting on November 27th, before presentation to Full Council for acceptance and precept setting on December 8th.

The recommendation from the Finance Committee is to keep the precept increase to less than 2% by transferring funds (£23,650) as necessary from General Reserves.

Although there will be a slight increase (less than 2%) in the suggested precept request, as the anticipated 2021-22 tax base of 2753.3 for Watton is slightly higher than in 20-21 (2693.6), some residents should pay less for the Watton element of their Council Tax.

Precept request suggested £384155.

Total anticipated budget need: £427605

4. DATE OF NEXT FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING: November 27th 2020 at 10.00am