



## CHEPSTOW TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of Ordinary Meeting of Chepstow Town Council held in the Council Chamber and remotely via Zoom on Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> January 2024 at 7pm

**Present:**

**Chair:** Cllr M Griffiths (Town Mayor)

**Councillors:** S Ashby, D Barnes (remote), V Badderley-Potter (remote), E Becker, P Griffiths, T Griffiths, H Livesey-Jones (remote, left 9pm), J MacTaggart, N Meyrick, M Perkins, D Rooke, M Le Peltier, D Power, G Rosser, J Rosser, A Thompson-Lancaster, S Tulley

**Apologies:** A Watts

**In Attendance:** Mrs L Allen (Town Clerk)  
Mrs A Sandiford (Deputy Town Clerk)  
Mr M Turner (Drill Hall Manager)

**141. Apologies**

To receive apologies for absence.

**142. Declarations of Interest in Items on the Agenda**

None

**143. To Suspend Standing Orders**

**a) Public Open Forum (15 minutes at the discretion of the Mayor)**

There were no members of the public in attendance.

**144. Minutes**

The Minutes of Full Council meeting held on the 22nd November 2023 were approved as a true record and will be signed by the Mayor following the meeting.

**145. Matters Arising**

Members received the Clerk's Update on progress of resolutions. The Mayor advised that the Communications Officer had commenced employment and was looking into improving the Council's website.

**146. Financial Plan and draft budget 2024/25**

**146.1** Members considered the Financial Plan and draft budget 2024/2025. Cllr J Rosser outlined the lengthy discussions that took place at Finance, Policy and Audit Committee's on 6th December 2023, resulting in the recommendations below (146.2) and as Chair of that Committee, responded to Members' queries on the following budget heads:

|                               |                                  |
|-------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1101: Salaries                | 1130: Insurance                  |
| 1121: Recruitment Advertising | 1434: Roadside Seats             |
| 1442: Dog Waste Disposal      | 1446: Apple Day                  |
| 1573: Platinum Jubilee        | 2255: Thornwell Community Garden |

**146.2** Members considered the recommendations of Finance, Policy and Audit Committee meeting held on 6<sup>th</sup> December 2023 as follows:

**RESOLVED:**

- a) That the level of building contingency funds for the Drill Hall, Bulwark Community Centre and the Old Memorial Building is £12,000 per property (allocated within the draft budget).
- b) To increase the revenue funding from £8,000 - £12,000 for the Drill Hall, Bulwark Community Centre and Palmer Centre and detail these separately in the accounts.
- c) To continue the practice of not charging traders for summer floral hanging baskets and Christmas trees.
- d) To investigate and if feasible hold a Sunday flea market between April and September, to be allocated from general reserves.
- e) To hold an event to mark the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the granting of a charter to Chepstow – *budget code 1573 to be increased to £2,000.*
- f) To refer improvements for parking at Bulwark Shops to the Environment & Amenities Committee.
- g) To include a budget for a feasibility study for a community garden project on land adjacent to Thornwell Primary School – *budget code 2255 Thornwell Community Garden.*
- h) To install an information board at the Severn Bridge tunnel to provide publicity of Chepstow for walkers / runners in the area – *to be taken from earmarked reserves where there is £4,156.00 available under Noticeboards.*
- i) To support in principle a New Year's Eve running event - *£1,000 proposed costs to be taken from earmarked reserves where there is £11,819 available under Tourism events.*
- j) To approve a Service Level Agreement for play provision in Chepstow – *budget code 2240 to be increased to £43,500 to support existing and proposed provisions.*
- k) To include a new budget head for maintenance of the Dell Water fountain - £1,000
- l) To amend the following:
  - 1440 - Amend budget heading to read Public Toilets
  - 1446 - Amend budget heading to read AutumnFest
  - 1490 - Amend budget heading to read MCC Partnership – Town Crew
  - 1557 - Increase budget to £3,885
  - 1573 - Amend budget heading to read Chepstow 500
  - 2255 - Amend budget heading to read Thornwell School Community Garden

**146.3 Any amendments not already considered.**

None

**146.4 Adoption of the Financial Plan and draft budget for 2024/25.**

**RESOLVED:**

To adopt the Financial Plan and draft budget for 2024/25 as presented.

**146.5 To fix the precept for submission to Monmouthshire County Council.**

Members were pleased that despite an increase in the budget for 2024/25 the precept would remain unchanged during the current cost of living crisis. It was agreed to promote this decision immediately via social media and reiterate the decision at the start of the next financial year.

**RESOLVED:**

To fix the precept, for submission to Monmouthshire County Council at £657,533 (six hundred and fifty-seven thousand, five hundred and thirty-three pounds for 2024/2025 against a budget of £746,275 (seven hundred and forty-six thousand, two hundred and seventy-five pounds) with the balance of £88,742 (eighty-eight thousand, seven hundred and forty-two pounds) being made up from general reserves.

Members noted the council tax base for Chepstow for 2024/2025 has been calculated as £5,897.04, approved by Individual Cabinet Member Decision at Monmouthshire County Council on 20 December 2023, resulting in a Band D precept charge of £111.50 (one hundred and eleven points and fifty pence).

**147. Exclusion of Press and Public**

There were no press and public to exclude for the discussion of Item 148. Drill Hall, however members acknowledged the confidential and sensitive nature of the item.

**148. Drill Hall**

Members considered the confidential reports, circulated to Members prior to the meeting.

Ref Report 1: The Drill Hall Roof

**RESOLVED:**

For the Drill Hall Manager to carry out a thorough Risk Assessment of the building and manage the hire on an event by event basis.

Ref Report 2: The Drill Hall Roof replacement costs

**RESOLVED:**

To fund additional projected approximate shortfall of £47,000 from earmarked and convene an extraordinary meeting to consider the tenders.

Ref Report 3: The Future of the Drill Hall

**RESOLVED:**

That the arrangements for 2024-25 are set as per the advice of the internal auditor that the Town Council manages the Drill Hall as a venue taking responsibility for all financial decisions and operations of the building, employing the Drill Hall Caretaker and the Drill Hall Manager, the latter to organize an events programme for the venue working with the volunteers.

**149. Date of Next Meeting**

Confirmed the arrangements for the next Ordinary Meeting to be held in the Council Chamber and via Zoom at 7.00pm on Wednesday, 24<sup>th</sup> January 2024

**CLOSE:** This completed the business of the meeting at 9.10pm

**SIGNED CHAIRPERSON:** \_\_\_\_\_ **DATE:** \_\_\_\_\_