



DEVIZES TOWN **COUNCIL**

You are summonsed to attend a meeting of the Devizes Town Council Committee at the following, place and date.

Date: **6 November 2008**

Time: 7.00 pm

Venue: Council Chamber, Town Hall, St John's Street, Devizes

Enquiries: Town Hall - Tel: 01380 722160

Chairman: The Town Mayor (Councillor Mrs Burton)

Councillors:	Beinhorn	Callow	East
	Evans	Mrs Evans	Gagen
	Gudgeon	Hopkins	Leighton
	Nash	Parsons	Smith
	A R Taylor	Mrs Taylor	C S Winchcombe
	Mrs Winchcombe		

AGENDA

1. MINUTES

To approve as a correct record and authorise the Chairman to sign the minutes of the Special Meeting of the Council held on the 30 September 2008.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

3. DISCLOSURE(S) OF INTEREST

To receive any disclosures by a Councillor(s) and/or Officers in matters to be considered at this meeting in accordance with the provisions of Sections 94 or 117 of the Local Government Act 1972 or the National Code of Local Government Conduct.

4. To receive announcements and communications.
5. To answer questions (if any) under standing order No. 13.

6. MINUTES OF MEETINGS FOR INFORMATION

Since the last meeting of the Council on 30 September 2008 the following Committees have taken place whose minutes have been approved as a correct record and signed by the appropriate committee chairman.

The minutes of these meetings have been previously circulated to all members.

COMMITTEE NAME	COMMITTEE DATE
Planning	16 September 2008
Planning	30 September 2008
Planning	14 October 2008
Community & Civic Resources	19 August 2008
Recreation & Properties	2 September 2008

NOTE: Before dealing with the next item (No 7) the Council will wish to consider whether or not to suspend Standing Order No 5 (members to stand when speaking). If the Standing Order is to be suspended, it must be done by way of a proposition, duly seconded and carried.

7. REPORT FOR INFORMATION – UPDATE ON CURRENT AND PROPOSED PROJECTS

Circulated alongside this agenda is a list detailing the current position with regard to ongoing and proposed projects.

8. REPORT FOR DECISION – DRAFT ESTIMATES FOR 2009/2010

Recommendation

The Council is recommended to formally consider and decide if they wish to make further amendments to the draft estimated for financial year 2009/2010.

Purpose of the Report

To formally consider the budgeted income and expenditure for financial year 2009/2010.

Background

Following the informal meeting of members on the 28 October, the Council is formally asked to consider the revised draft estimates for financial year 2009/2010.

Member Training

Two years ago, members' training was increased to prepare for the new council. It was hoped that members who felt that they would benefit, would come forward and seek the appropriate training.

Parish Council Election Fund

Following the 2007 elections, the reserves held by the Council for this purpose were exhausted. The fund is now being built up again.

Corporate Identity

There are no proposals to do more work in this area following the production of new badges for all members and staff.

Twinning Travel Costs

Next year the twinning visit will take place in Waiblingen, Germany. The visit to Tornio will take place in the current financial year.

Devizes and District Twinning Association

The Twinning Association now deals with its own affairs for which it receives a grant.

Mayoral Allowance

This has been increased in line with the retail price index in September 2008.

Town Crier Allowance

The Council has agreed that they would extend the duties of the Mayor's Officer to include the duties of Town Crier and this has a cost implication.

Web Site Costs

This budget represents the ongoing hosting and maintenance costs.

Marketing & Promotion

This is the cost associated with the production of the Messenger. Recent research has shown that our costs are very competitive compared to those incurred by other similar town councils.

Miscellaneous and professional advice

From time to time the Council seeks specialist advice on a number of issues. It is therefore prudent that budget provision is made to meet such costs.

Central Services to the Public

Grace & Favour and Free Lettings

This is the notional cost of grace & favour lettings and free lettings to the agreed list of organisations. The grant is used to offset the income shown in the venues department.

Commercial Property Repairs

In most circumstances it is the responsibility of the tenant to undertake repairs. However, on occasions there are times when that responsibility falls to the Town Council, therefore some budget provision is strongly advisable. In the current year we are in receipt of an insurance claim but the work has not been completed.

Commercial Properties Bad Debt

Audit requirements mean that an allowance must be made for bad debt. It is anticipated that no debt will be written off in the current financial year, and that it is unlikely that any will be written off in 2009/2010. However, provision must be made and, therefore, an amount of £2,000 has been included within the estimates.

Commercial Property Legal Fees

Each year there is usually some work required in a change to a lease or an issuing of a new lease, which incurs legal costs.

Commercial Property Management

Although Town Council staff deals with the day-to-day collection of rent, the Council employs an agent to deal with rental valuations, surveys, condition reports, marketing and for general advice. This is five-year contract, which is due for renewal in mid 2010.

Festival & Carnival Free Use

This is the notional cost of free use extended to the Festival and Carnival that is offset by an equal notional venues income. Members may at some time wish to review the principles of the grant and ask the recipients to demonstrate their need for continued Town Council support.

Roof Repairs for the Town Hall

Officers have separated these costs from the venues figures as it is of a capital nature and the Council would incur this cost even if it did not let the venues out.

Heritage

Water Rates

Water rates in respect of the fountain.

Pictures and Photos

During 2009/2010 the new frames will need to be made for the Mayor's pictures and the pictures themselves will be scanned and copied.

Grant

Officers have made a £3000 allocation in the budget for the Museum as has happened in the last two years.

Venues – Town Hall & Corn Exchange

Utility Costs

Utility costs continue to fluctuate and therefore officers have attempted to base the estimates on trends.

Marketing

The new Direct Services Manager is planning a number of activities for 2009/2010 and has determined that she will need a similar budget to the current year to achieve this.

Maintenance

Maintenance within the venues is split into three cost headings.

- Maintenance contracts for service contracts.
- Responsive Maintenance as a contingency for breakdowns, which inevitably occur.
- Planned Maintenance is small works that each year the Direct Services Manager thinks should be undertaken to keep the buildings in good order.

Purchase of Tools and Equipment

Within the estimates the purchase of tools and equipment is shown in two ways. The heading 'Replacement of Tools and Equipment' is where funding is allocated for those items that fail in any financial year and need to be replaced or where it is felt the purchases of a piece of equipment will aid the operation of the business. New capital style equipment is identified in the project list.

Licences

Each year the individual premises licences will need to be renewed and there is naturally a cost implication associated with that. In 2009 the four-year licence for the use of land at the Bear Hotel as a fire exit is due for renewal.

Leisure Centre

Revenue Funding

It should be noted that the agreement actually stipulates that the level of increase is based on the RPI for April. For the purpose of drawing up the estimates, officers have taken the September figure.

Sports Pitch

The condition of the changing rooms at the Green Lane Sports pitches is poor. Given the current position, officers have only allowed for ongoing known costs and minor repairs at this time.

Open Spaces

Hillworth Park Project

No revenue budget allocation has been made in respect of project development costs as they are to be financed from existing earmarked reserves. However there is an allocation made in the capital programme to continue to build the matched funding committed in the HLF application.

Utility Costs

Utility costs continue to fluctuate and therefore officers have attempted to base the estimates on trends.

Telephone Fax

Within the Parks Department some staff need to carry a mobile phone in addition to their radio.

Replacement Tools and Equipment

As with the venues, within the estimates the purchase of tools and equipment is shown in two ways. The heading 'Replacement of Tools and Equipment' is where funding is allocated for those items that fail in any financial year and need to be replaced or where it is felt that the purchase of a piece of equipment will aid the operation of the business. Planned new equipment is usually identified in the project list at the end of the estimates.

Seeds and Bulbs

The budget for seeds and bulbs are split across two cost centres – this in Open Spaces and also in Tourism to reflect the contribution that the floral displays make. Costs are split between the two cost centres.

Tree and Woodland Management

The budget heading was significantly increased in 2008/2009 as a result of the in house tree survey, which has been undertaken.

Although little of the budget has been currently spent, work planned to trees on the Large Green during the winter will use most of the budget.

In 2009/2010 further works will be needed to trees on the Small Green and other locations.

Vehicle Leasing

Part of the lease cost for the new vehicle will be financed from the Ear Marked Reserve.

Tourism

Christmas Lighting

The budget is in line with last year.

Watering Contact

The current contract has come to an end and officers will be reviewing how this work is undertaken during the winter.

Hanging Basked Poles

The location of the poles for both the hanging baskets and the Christmas lights allows for maximum visual impact. Unfortunately this makes them vulnerable to vehicle impact, which results each year with one or two requiring replacement.

Devizes in Bloom – South West in Boom

The budget for Devizes In Bloom has been increased a little to meet the current costs of the event. South West in Bloom has been kept at the current level.

Town Centre Manager

The Council has agreed that it would make a £20,000 contribution to the Town Centre Manager costs for 2009/2010.

Central Support

Staff Training

Maintaining well-trained and knowledgeable staff is essential to the Council. Again there are a number of staff booked on training courses and seminars later this year and it is planned to continue this next year.

Telephone/Postage

Officers have allowed for an increase in telephone costs to meet our current expenditure. Post rates have increased since we set the budget last year and therefore budget allowance has been made for 2009/2010.

Insurances

Insurance costs seem to be coming down and therefore budget has been reduced for this reason.

Financial Services

This cost heading is for professional accountancy services needed to help prepare the year-end accounts.

Devizes and Roundway JBC

Precept

At it's meeting on the 16 October 2008 the burial committee set a precept of £71,314 for financial year 2009/2010. Devizes Town Council portion of the precept is 73.5% totalling £52,416.

Community

Cleaning Service

Budget provision needs to be made to clean the Town Council's bus shelters and maintain them. From time to time glass in the shelters is smashed and although an insurance claim is made it is subject to policy excess.

CCTV Revenue Funding

It has been agreed to increase our contribution from £5000 to £7,500 for maintaining the CCTV system in Devizes.

Salaries

The national negotiated salary increase for financial year 2008/2009 has not been completed and therefore officers have allowed for 3.5%. Some staff will also receive an incremental rise on their salary scale.

The cost of salaries also includes a provision for sickness, which is 3% of the gross payroll. Likewise an amount of mileage has also been included.

No provision has been made for any increase that might accrue from the adoption of the National Terms and Conditions of Service.

Income

Corporate and Democratic

The Council is currently carrying a very high level of earmarked reserves and therefore income from bank interest has shown a sharp increase. Officers have adjusted the budget accordingly.

Central Services to the Public

A review of project rental income in 2009/2010 shows an increase to over £279,000.

Town Hall and Corn Exchange

Bookings for the venues are currently fairly good and therefore officers have increased room hire income to reflect this. However officers have been more cautious with the income for ancillary services as the current trend is for hirers to limit the amount of extras they book.

Sports Pitches

In setting the 2009/2010 budget officers have taken an account of the income from 2007/2008 and the half year to date, but given the condition of the facilities at Green Lane they are concerned that the uses will start to drop off.

Open Spaces

In 2007/2008 there was an additional Circus on the Green, which boosted the income for that year. An inflationary increase is more realistic for 2009/2010.

Central Support

The resources needed to run and administer to the affairs of the Joint Burial Committee have been reviewed, and the level of work, which the Town Council will undertake has been agreed. The review has influenced the charge made to the Joint Burial Committee

New Projects

Within the heading new projects, officers have set out items of expenditure, which are one off in nature and therefore should not be considered under the normal revenue headings.

New Christmas Lights

It was agreed by this Council that it would spend £20,000 on new Christmas lights over two years, 2009/2010 is the second year of this decision.

Open Space Asset Management Software

Following the comprehensive tree survey undertaken by in-house staff, it is essential to record that information on a database making it possible to identify risks, programme work and avoid accidents. Space Asset Management Software allows not only all trees conditions to be recorded but also all other street furniture owned by the Council.

Town Hall and Corn Exchange Decoration

Areas of both these building are in serious need of decoration and therefore money has been allocated for this purpose.

At the Town Hall the areas needing work include the stairwell and vestibule, Grand Jury Room and the part of the outside. At the Corn Exchange the work includes the basement, foyer, Ceres Hall and part of the outside.

Corn Exchange Exterior Stonework

For some years this has been an area, which has needed some attention. Officers have commissioned Colin Johns, an architect with historic buildings architect expertise, to undertake a review of its condition. This report will be presented to the Recreation & Properties committee once it has been received. It is likely that this will be a project for financial year 2010/2011, as it will require further funding.

Mobile PA System

There have been a number of occasions when we have had a need to hire this type of equipment. With all the consultation events planned for Hillworth Park there would be some benefit in the Council owning its own equipment.

Crammer Wall

No further provision has been made for the work to the Crammer wall. Officers anticipate the there is sufficient in the earmarked reserves to fund the works to the Town Council's element of the wall.

Corn Exchange Basement Flooring

This project was abandoned some years ago, as given the possibility of a smoking ban in the future; it was not prudent to change the carpet at that time. The smoking ban is now in place and given the current demands for venue space, officers now feel that it would be an appropriate time to change the carpet as it has a much better chance of remaining in good condition and will allow greater use of the area.

Hillworth Park Project Funding

Now that the project has received a stage one pass, the Town Council needs to secure its own element of the match funding which is £100,000. Officers have placed £50,000 in this year's budget with the second balance being budgeted in 2010/2011. There may also be the possibility of using redundant reserves to part fund this.

Keeping the precept to below 5% the following adjustments have been made.

- Venues decoration has been capped at £25,000.
- New Christmas lights will be funded by drawing down a £10,00 redundant Capital Receipt.
- £20,000 will be drawn from the allotment reserves for the Hillworth Park Project.

Options Considered

Members need to decide what level of income and expenditure they wish for financial year 2008/2009.

Implications & Risks

Financial and Resource Implications

The budget reflects the Council's ability to fund its financial and resource needs for financial year 2009/2010.

Legal Implications and Legislative Powers

In accordance with section 50 of the Local Government Finance act 1992, the Council must calculate its budget requirement, being the difference between its income and expenditure. This will allow the Town Council to set a precept in accordance with Section 41, of the Local Government Finance act 1992.

Environmental Implications

Officers are not aware of any environmental implications associated with this decision.

Risk Assessment

Not setting a budget would leave the Council open to a challenge by the auditors for financial mismanagement. In addition, the Council will not be able to set a precept and therefore will have its precept imposed by the District Council.

Crime and Disorder

Officers are not aware of any implications Under Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder act 1998.

9. TO PASS THE FOLLOWING SEALING RESOLUTION

THAT the Common Seal of the Council be affixed to or the Town Clerk do sign on behalf of the Council where appropriate any Orders, Deeds or Documents necessary to give effect to any of the matters and recommendations contained in the reports received and adopted at this meeting or other decisions of the Council thereat.

10. QUESTION TIME

At the Town Mayor's discretion members will be allowed a short period in which to put Questions on matters of concern to the Council which are not contained in the reports of matters formally considered by the Council at this meeting.

11. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

At the Chairman's discretion, members of the public attending the meeting will be allowed to ask questions addressed to the Chairman concerning the administration, function or responsibilities of the Council or upon a matter, which was the subject of debate at the meeting.

A person may also be permitted to make a statement or address the Council upon a matter of concern to that person which is relevant to local government, or to the Council's administration or upon a subject, which may be of general interest to the Council. A time limit of 5 minutes per person will be permitted, but this may be extended at the Chairman's discretion and a maximum period of 20 minutes has been allocated by the Council for this item of business.

Deputy Town Clerk