

# HAYWARDS HEATH TOWN COUNCIL

## POLICY AND FINANCE COMMITTEE

### Minutes of the meeting held on Monday 20<sup>th</sup> January 2025

A.M Cooke (*Chairman*)  
S. Walsh (*Vice Chairman*)  
A. Bashar  
P. Lucraft  
A.M Lucraft  
A. Murray  
A. Rees

\* Absent \*\* Apologies  
Also present: Town Clerk, Committee Clerk, RFO

#### 48. Apologies

Member	Reason
None	

#### 49. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on Monday 18<sup>th</sup> November 2024 were taken as read, confirmed as a true record and duly signed by the Chair.

#### 50. Substitutes

None.

#### 51. Public Forum

There were no members of the public present.

#### 52. Members' Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of pecuniary or other interests.

#### 53. To consider Town Council Members Allowance and Staff/Members expenses for 2025/2026.

The Town Clerk presented the Town Council Members Allowance and Staff/Members expenses for 2025/2026. Without comment or amendment by Members it was agreed.

Cllr A Rees asked if the Staff Recognition Budget had been fully expended in the current year, which the Town Clerk said it had not. Cllr AM Cooke encouraged the Town Hall team to spend the remaining Staff Recognition budget, especially as new Officers have recently joined the Town Hall team, this was unanimously agreed by Members.

Members **RESOLVED** to recommend to Full Council to approve the Town Council Members Allowance and Staff/Members expenses for 2025/2026.

#### 54. To consider the Council's draft budget for 2025/2026.

The Responsible Finance Officer presented the draft budget.

Cllr Paul Lucraft moved amendments to the budget, in the face of Haywards Heath Town Council facing a changing environment in the very near future with potential development of Hurst Farm and the potential for move towards devolution, under the following headings as shown in monetary term is the resolution of this item:

- Town Initiatives
- Subscriptions
- Staff Training
- Contingencies and Sundries
- Community Projects
- Advisors Fees
- Community Transport

These additions added £18,000 to the tabled budget. This resulted in the Council Tax rising by 6%. 1% being the rise on the tax base and 5% in Council tax for the 2025/2026 Council year.

Furthermore, Cllr Paul Lucraft also asked for £28,000 to be moved from the Reserves to the Capital Fund to prepare for any opportunities presented by the potential move for devolution of services in line with the Sussex bid for a unitary authority.

These amendments were seconded by Cllr S Walsh.

**Members RESOLVED the 2025/2026 budget for recommendation to Full Council with a 6% rise totalling £922,344 and a Council Tax increase of 5% with following budget headings being increased against that presented in the budget presented by officers, this is as follows;**

- **Town Initiatives - £5,381 to £8,072**
- **Land off Hurstwood Lane - Management Costs - £0 to £2,500**
- **Subscriptions - £14,017 to £14,317**
- **Staff Training - £2,500 to £3,500**
- **Contingencies and Sundries - £1,025 to £2,025**
- **Community Projects - £10,000 to £15,000**
- **Advisors Fees - £7,750 to £10,750**
- **Addition of £2,500 for Community Transport projects.**

**In addition £28,221.35 was moved from restricted reserves to top up the capital budget totalling**

- **£14,000 from Haywards Heath Town CIC (Budget 9036) to leave reserve at £5,681.**
- **£5,649.15 from Town Development (Budget 9041) with reserve budget line deleted.**
- **£6,322.20 from CCTV (Budget 9042) with reserve budget line deleted.**
- **£2,250 from Roundabout Liabilities (Budget 9038) with reserve budget line deleted.**

**55. To consider the review of the Town Council's Health and Safety Policies.**

Without comment and in noting that Members at any time were able to come in and review specific risk assessment for services, Groundstaff work and other bespoke assessments for the Town Hall;

**Members RESOLVED to adopt the review of the Town Council's Health and Safety Policies.**

**56. Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) for the year ended 31st March 2025 — to receive, consider and note the Mid-Year Internal Audit Report 2024/2025.**

Members noted the report, which showed a clean bill of health, and extended their thanks to the RFO and Town Clerk for ensuring another clean bill of health was received.

Members **RESOLVED** the **Mid-Year Internal Audit Report for 2024/2025**.

**57. To consider applications for Town Council grants.**

The Council considered three grant applications. Members agreed to award grants to SASBAH and St Peters and St James Hospice. Members raised concerns with the grant application from Bentswood Community Partnership (BCP), in particular: Around the budget for 'volunteer' staff, the fact that BCP currently holds funds and their status with Companies House/the Charities Commission.

Members **DELEGATED** to the Town Clerk to acquire further information regarding the grant application for Bentswood Community Partnership and to present this application at the next Full Council meeting on Monday 27<sup>th</sup> January.

Members **RESOLVED** to award;

- 1. A grant of £500 to Spina Bifida and Hydrocephalus (SASBAH) to help with running costs**
- 2. A grant of £500 to St Peter and St James Hospice to help with running costs.**

**58. To receive the 2025/2026 committee timetable.**

Without comment;

Members **RESOLVED** to adopt the **2025/2026 committee timetable**.

**59. To consider the Government Standards consultation on 'Strengthening the Standards and Conduct Framework for Local Authorities in England'.**

Members welcomed the consultation and without any changes to the response tabled by the Town Clerk;

Members **RESOLVED** to **DELEGATE** to the Town Clerk to provide the **suggested responses to the Local Government Standards consultation**.

**60. Urgent business**

There was none.

**The meeting closed at 8.00pm.**