

PATCHWAY TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Finance committee meeting held on Tuesday 12th November 2024 at 19:00 at The Lewis Gray Boardroom, Callicroft House, Patchway.

Councillors: Cllr K Walker (Chairman), Cllr E Gordon, Cllr J James, Cllr D Lawrence, Cllr T Scott.

In attendance: S Howard (Town Clerk), J Watkins (Deputy Town Clerk & RFO), Cllr N Field, Cllr P Knight, Cllr R Loveridge, Derek Kemp (DCK Accounting Solutions).

Members of the Public: None

Absent: None

As the time was 19:00, the Chairman, Cllr K Walker called the meeting to order and informed all participants that the meeting would be recorded in line with The Openness of Local Government Regulations 2014 (SI2014/2095) and Patchway Town Council's protocol on the filming and recording of Town Council, Committee and Sub- Committee meetings.

12/11/2024 - No 1. To receive any apologies for absence.

Cllr S Scott (work commitments).

12/11/2024 - No 2. To receive any declarations of interest and to consider any requests for dispensations for this meeting.

None received.

Cllr Lawrence proposed that Standing Orders be suspended for Item 3 so Councillors in attendance not sitting on the Finance Committee could participate in Item 3 of the agenda.

RESOLVED: It was unanimously agreed that all Councillors in attendance not on Finance Committee could also participate in Item 3 of the agenda.

12/11/2024 - No 3. To receive and consider a presentation from Derek Kemp of DCK Accounting Solutions on the draft 2025/2026 budget

Derek Kemp of DCK Accounting Solutions, the Council's contract accountants presented a draft budget for 2025 / 2026 with key points:

- Draft budget proposes a small increase in the precept of 4.75%, equivalent on the 2024/2025 Council Tax Base of £10.44 per/annum, 87p p/month, 20p p/week for an average Band D property.
- Recent National Insurance (NI) increase announced by Government for employers adds 1.2% to the budget. Including the increased NI and subject to the 2025/2026 Pay Award, staff costs will rise by 4.9% and the budget has allowed for 5%.
- The Council had been budgeting for a surplus £17k in 2024/2025 though this is currently half of this. The General Reserve deficit therefore currently projected to be £22,770 for 2025/2026. DK advises this is addressed across 3-4 years.

Questions received from Councillors:

- Cllr Knight asked if the budget considered income and potential expenditure relating to the currently closed Sports and Social Club (cost centre 510). Cllr Knight questioned if the budget should state zero for 2025/2026 rental income, and should include a property maintenance figure relating to potential making good and / or maintenance costs. DK responded to say Council may expect that the building is again bringing in income within the 2025/2026 year. And there is an Asset Maintenance Ear Marked Reserve that could be used for maintenance. DK also pointed out the Council also has a £74,631 Reserve in the draft budget.
- Cllr Gordon stated the Council should consider the costs of its chargeable services for residents to ensure fair charges are levied and fair income for the Council.
- Cllr Field sought confirmation that the precept increase was based on an average Band D property. DK confirmed it was and the final 2025/2026 Tax Base (Band D) should be shared from South Gloucestershire Council by December.

- Cllr Knight asked if the potential further costs associated with the extension of the burial ground at Almondsbury through the Almondsbury Joint Burial Committee (AJBC) had been considered in the 2025/2026 budget (cost centre 220). DK responded to say that he considers the future costs can be met from within the AJBC reserves. DK also suggested that as well as the current Council representatives, the Clerk or Deputy Clerk could attend future meetings of the AJBC in order to be fully briefed as this project moves forward. Cllr Loveridge stated that a recent pack of information relating to an AJBC meeting on Thursday 14th November had been shared with the Clerk.
- Cllr Lawrence asked if the potential costs of the future stages of the burial ground extension project could mean a second Public Works Loan Board loan might be required if total costs are expected to be £60K - £90K. DK responded to say he considered the future costs could come from AJBC reserves who have sufficient resources. DK stated that he was under the understanding that the AJBC currently has around £57k of reserves relating to Patchway Town Council. Cllr Gordon requested evidence of this and asked the RFO to provide information for the Committee. DK stated this is a long term project of 3-4 years.

The Committee thanked Derek Kemp for his presentation and taking questions from Councillors.

12/11/2024 - No 4. To receive questions from the members of the public present, with respect to business on the agenda in accordance with Standing Order 4E.

None received.

12/11/2024 - No 5. To approve the minutes of the Finance Committee held on 8th October 2024 and to note there is no Clerk/RFO's report for this committee meeting as all actions are covered within the agenda.

RESOLVED: It was unanimously agreed to approve the minutes.

12/11/2024 - No 6. To receive the financial statements for October 2024.

RESOLVED: It was unanimously agreed to approve the reports.

08/10/2024 - No 7. To note that the meeting dates of the Finance Committee 2024 – 2025 will be held on:

Tuesday 14th January 2025 at 7.00pm

Tuesday 8th April 2025 at 7.00pm

The Committee noted future meeting dates.

The meeting was closed by the Chairman at 19.31.