

CLEVEDON TOWN COUNCIL

Public Session

Village Hall

A member of the public enquired as to the current position on the Village Hall building and refurbishment programme.

Cllr Everitt, a member of the Village Hall Working Group confirmed that there is a group of five Councillors who have met to discuss next steps. A survey of the building needs to be completed, and following the survey on no.42 Old Street, which the Council owns, it has been identified that a more extensive survey needs to be completed for the Village Hall building. More details to be discussed at the Working Party meeting on the 2nd February 2024. The vision for the hall is to create an educational facility in the town.

Response to email

Another member of the public (MOP) asked the Chairman of Council as to when he would receive a response to his email to the Chairman dated 18th January 2024. The MOP queried why responses to queries raised are being 'muddled' and it's not clear as to what the Council is trying to achieve. How the Council can hold a budget meeting when it hasn't signed off the accounts, and yet as of 5.00pm tonight there are documents on the Town Council website that show the AGAR for 2022/23 have been approved. The MOP stated that the initial response that has been received from the Chairman of Council now contradicts what is being said in the meeting tonight. The public have the right of access to accounts information and what is going on. The discussion between the MOP and the Chairman of Council became heated and personal and the Chairman of Council provided verbal responses to the MOP's email received.

Cllrs A & D Shopland arrived at 7.40pm.

7.41pm The Chairman moved the meeting into formal session

Minutes

Minutes of a Budget Meeting (commenced at 7.30pm) of **Clevedon Town Council** held at the **Council Offices 44 Old Street Clevedon** on Wednesday **24th January 2024** when the following business was transacted.

PRESENT Chairman of the Council – Cllr T Morgan together with Councillors - N Barton, C Blades, B Culblait, A Everitt, C Francis-Pester, A Gardner, A Goodliffe, C Lord, K O'Brien, A Shopland (7.40pm), D Shopland (7.40pm), R Westwood & H Young.
Members of the Public – 4

1667 To receive and approve apologies for absence

No apologies for absence were received from Councillors.

The Council Clerk announced that Cllr Eric Holdsworth has resigned from the Council with immediate effect.

1668 To receive declarations of interest for items on the agenda

There were no declarations of interest for items on the agenda

Minutes to be ratified at Full Council on 7th February 2024

The Council must adhere to insurance policy endorsement regulation number – FG02 – Specific Person Exception, policy wide, Section 5, Fidelity Guarantee, Exclusions & Section 8, Officials Indemnity, Exclusions: A & B.

1669 To agree the Council budget for the Financial Year 2024/25 for a recommendation to the Precept meeting on the 7th February 2024

Cllr Francis-Pester stated that as the Council does not have the audited accounts information to back up and support tonight's meeting then he was not happy to put a budget together without knowing 'actuals'. This statement was seconded by Cllr Chris Blades.

The Chairman of Council stated that Councillors had discussed the budget at previous Council meetings and that a suggestion of increasing the budget by the rate of inflation had been discussed and agreed.

The Chairman also stated that he and the Council Clerk have received an email from NSC stating that a precept figure, even if it's the same amount as last year's amount of £414,330.00, must be given to the District Council by the 2nd February 2024.

The Chairman of Council also reiterated the difficulties the Council has had with the accounts since 2021.

Some Council members stated that it is a legal requirement to have the accounts up to date before the budget can be discussed and agreed.

The Council Clerk indicated that advice had been sought, and stated that the Council could set the budget for 2024/25 without seeing sight of the accounts from previous years. There is money in the bank account and all contractors and staff have been paid up to date.

The meeting continued with much debate, but as it did so it became heated between Council members. Queries were raised as to how long it would be to resolve the accounts currently being looked into by the Locum Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) and Rialtas.

The Council Clerk confirmed that to date Rialtas have visited the office twice and will be in again next Monday to continue to work through the accounts for 2022/23. That there is still a substantial amount of work to do, including work on the current financial year.

The Chairman of Council declared that the purpose of the meeting was to set the budget with an increase for inflation and include those matters already agreed at previous meetings, i.e., dog bin contract from twice to three times a week.

It was then reiterated by the majority of Council members who stated that they are not willing to vote or support the budget request without sight of the audited accounts, as it is not a legal process.

RESOLVED that Cllr Francis Pester's motion which was reiterated as being; that members are not prepared to agree to a budget for the 2024/25 accounts without the previous year's accounts being up to date. A vote of 8 in favour, with 5 against and 1 abstained.

The meeting closed at 8.27pm

CHAIRMAN DATE

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