

EAST GRINSTEAD TOWN COUNCIL

FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE – 12TH JANUARY 2023 at 7.08pm

Committee Members: Cllr Woodgate (Chairman)
Cllr Mrs Farren (Vice Chairman)
Cllr Peacock (Town Mayor)
Cllr Visser (Deputy Town Mayor)*
Cllrs: Amos, Mrs Belsey, Matthews, Osborne & Sweatman*

Others present: Town Clerk, Cllrs: Dabell, Favor, Mrs Mainstone

*= absent

227. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There were no public present

228. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were accepted from:

Cllr Sweatman	Personal Commitment
Cllr Visser	Personal Commitment

229. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no new declarations.

230. TO CONSIDER THE DRAFT BUDGET BOOK FOR 2023/2024

The Chairman introduced the item and advised that the considerations that Members will need to undertake at the meeting will ultimately culminate in a formal recommendation to Council.

It was asked if the law changes to allow attendance by remote means would this mean that the councillor allowance would be reconsidered as expenses for mileage or babysitting for example would not be incurred by the councillor. It was stated that if and when the law changed it would be appropriate to consider the Cllrs allowance at that time.

It was then stated that the budget included elements which were harmful to the community as they were not necessarily supported by those whom may wish to have the money in their own pocket and not support organisations such as the theatre or community groups. £78,000 of the proposed budget was supporting organisations that should stand alone or fail depending on the value placed on them by the community, not be supported by the Council. In response it was said that the Council is here to support the community and its richness of diversity. The public give good feedback for the various initiatives and support that the council gives to public services and groups.

A motion to go to the vote was made, but the Chairman determined that there had not yet been sufficient discussion and allowed more speakers. Other Councillors spoke in favour of

the charities and specifically chequer mead theatre in receiving support from the Council. It was stated that the budget represented many weeks of work and discussion from officers and members and had been subject to much scrutiny. It was now ready to be approved.

RESOLVED::

- A. To accept the recommendations from the Planning, Public Services and Amenities and Tourism committees regarding their budgetary requirements.
- B. To Approve the budget for cost centres under Finance and General Purposes Committee control, as laid out in the draft Budget Booklet 2023/24 comprising:
 - Democratic representation (cost centre 100),
 - Corporate management (cost centre 200),
 - Community support (cost centre 400) including the grants to community organisations, Central administration and support (cost centre 1100), and
 - Charities (cost centre 1000)

231. TO FORMERLY RECOMMEND THE BUDGET FOR 2023/24

The chairman introduced the item and once proposed and seconded he then opened the overall budget for discussion:

It was stated as a budget of over £1m it should be discussed at length at this time, regardless as to any working groups, officer meetings and group discussion. It was stated the cultural loss of the theatre should it fail if the grant were removed would be felt by some but not by the majority, who if they valued it would use it therefore ensuring its continuation. It should be the choice of the taxpayer whether to support such ventures. It is clear that many of the groups are not supported by the community, or they would have sufficient income and not need to approach the council. It was accepted that the council value feedback but argued that it is not of net value to the community to continue to support groups that cannot stand on their own.

It was countered that the support of youth groups could yield opportunities at the highest level, sporting performance for talented individuals to discover and then hone that talent may be undiscovered if the local groups are not available for the first taters. This had been illustrated recently at the Youth Sports Grants awards where youngsters from the area had continued to compete at regional or higher levels.

RESOLVED To recommend to Council:

- 1) That the revenue estimates 2023/2024 as set out in the draft budget booklet as previously circulated to members, be approved by Council on 30th Jan to become the Town Council's budget for 2023/2024 financial year;
- 2) That the Town Council's capital programme for 2023/2024 be as set down in the draft budget booklet;
- 3) That the Town Council's estimate payments of £1,459,903 (one million four hundred and fifty-nine thousand, nine hundred and three pounds) and estimated income of £356,009 (three hundred and fifty-six thousand, and nine pounds) in the 2023/2024 financial year be approved, resulting in a net cost to the Town Council of £1,103,894 (1 million and one hundred and three thousand, eight hundred and ninety-four pounds)
- 4) That Council, on 30th January 2023, be requested to approve an actual precept for the 2023/2024 financial year, which the Committee recommends should be set

at £1,103,894 (1 million one hundred and three thousand, eight hundred and ninety-four pounds) (representing an annual council tax, increase of 1% at £93.26 per Band D property) based on the known tax base of 11,836.90

The chairman advised that the next full meeting of the Committee will be held on **THURSDAY 16TH MARCH 2023** at 7.00pm. He ended the meeting at 7.34pm

SIGNED:

CHAIRMAN