

KESGRAVE TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Finance and Governance Committee meeting, held on 14 October 2024 at the Town Council office

Councillors present:

Cllr N Beecroft-Smith
Cllr A Comber
Cllr R Gibson
Cllr G Lynch
Cllr J Ogden (Chair)
Cllr A Skinner

Officers present:

J Abbott – Town Clerk
A Dougall - Responsible Financial Officer (RFO)

1. **Welcome and Apologies for Absence** – Cllr Ogden welcomed all those present, no apologies.
2. **Declaration of Interests** – None.
3. **Minutes of the last Meeting** held on the 2 September 2024, the Committee received, considered and agreed following the vote.
4. **Clerks/Officer Report/Update** –
J Abbott asked the Chair to include an additional grant request under agenda item 12 and a street lighting update under agenda item 13, this was agreed.
5. **Members of the Public** – none present.
6. **Bank Reconciliation for September 2024** – These were received, considered and agreed following the vote.
7. **Receipts and Payments for September 2024** – These were received, considered and agreed following the vote.
8. **Detailed Income and Expenditure to 30 September 2024** – The report was received and agreed.
9. **2024/25 Comparison of Parish Precepts** – Cllr Gibson presented a report comparing the Kesgrave precept with other towns/parishes across Suffolk. It highlights that Kesgrave receives one of the lowest precepts, offering value for money as the 5th lowest out of the 28 parishes and well below the average. This is a useful report to show residents and support the decisions taken during the budget process. The Committee reviewed and noted the report.
10. **Investment Policy and Strategy 2024/25** – A Dougall presented the revised policy with highlighted amendments. All agreed, following the vote, to adopt the revised policy with immediate effect.

11. **2025/26 Draft Budget** – Pending the first draft, the Council discussed the following for consideration: -
- Land maintenance and management – this may require a revised staffing structure to manage new areas/responsibilities, new equipment purchase, consideration of using inhouse or external suppliers for works.
 - Deposit interest – consider earned interest. The requirement to keep 6 months general reserves available was agreed. Cllr Ogden suggested a review of the Flagstone instant access interest rates to consider transferring further funds from the low interest Barclays accounts to a higher interest instant access account with Flagstone. All agreed for A Dougall to investigate.
 - Building improvements – MJH to have a full redecoration (primarily the Jubilee Hall) by an external supplier. Office/storage considerations for additional staff and equipment, if required.
 - Additional vehicles – continue to build the EMR for a larger vehicle.
 - MJH car park – consider CIL to part fund additional spaces. To consider the provision for storage by laying a concrete base at the same time.
 - Oak Meadow play equipment – ageing equipment to be replaced.
 - Tree works – the recent tree survey shows 2 trees needing immediate attention. More trees to consider with an increase in land adoptions.
 - A new EMR to be set up to allow for future land adoptions and associated costs.
12. **Grant Request** –
- a. Communities Together East Anglia – Following discussion, J Abbott will contact the group for further details to confirm the need in Kesgrave, whether the service is offered to other parishes in East Suffolk (e.g. Martlesham, Rushmere), drivers have the correct insurance/ vehicle MOT, the environmental impact of the service and to suggest other avenues for funding (SPARK, East Suffolk Council, Community Action Suffolk). It was agreed, following the vote, to defer a decision to the next meeting noting that the befriending service offered is not required. If successful, the Council may consider a budget grant rather than S137.
 - b. Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal Donation – All agreed, following the vote, to donate £200 as in previous years.
 - c. Kesgrave Friendship Club (new item for inclusion) – The committee reviewed the grant application. Cllr Gibson proposed, seconded by Cllr Ogden, to award a grant of £150, all in favour.
13. **Other/Urgent Communications** – J Abbott confirmed that a site survey had been completed with Cllr Comber to review existing KTC owned street lights to confirm the need for further lights following the request from a Dobbs Lane resident for an additional column. SCC Street Lighting confirmed that all 9 locations were possible, except Cambridge Road as the column cannot be linked to a power supply. Approximate costs are £2k per column excluding possible traffic management costs (maybe further £2k). This may be part-funded by the £15k held in EMR324 Street Lighting Upgrades. All agreed, following the vote, to complete a pilot exercise in Dobbs Lane. J Abbott to contact residents near the proposed column for views, if no objections, to confirm costs with Highways, ready for installation of 2 new columns.
14. **Date of Next Meeting** – Monday 11 November 2024 at 7.15pm in the Council Chamber, Town Council Offices.
15. **Agenda Items for Next Meeting** – Forward funding requests for the 2025/26 Budget to A Dougall.
16. **Resolution to exclude the Public under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960** – none present.

Agenda items 17 and 18 were then discussed in the CONFIDENTIAL part of this meeting.

This part of the meeting finished at 8.27pm

Chairman.....

Date.....