

**MEETING OF THE
WITNEY TOWN COUNCIL**

Held on Wednesday, 5 January 2022

At 7.00 pm in the Main Hall, The Corn Exchange, Witney

Present:

Councillor J Aitman (Chair)

Councillors:	L Duncan	A McMahon
	T Ashby	A Prosser
	O Collins	R Smith
	D Enright	D Temple
	A D Harvey	
Officers:	Adam Clapton	Deputy Town Clerk
	Sharon Groth	Town Clerk
	Simon Wright	Democratic & Legal Services Officer
Others:	No members of the public.	

5 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Ashbourne, Bolger, Butterfield, Eaglestone, Gwatkin, Jones and King

6 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest from members or officers.

7 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was no public participation.

8 BUDGET: REVISED BUDGET 2021/22 AND ESTIMATES 2022/23

Members received and considered the report of the Town Clerk.

In response to a question clarification was given on the budget allocation for the operation of the splash park at The Leys.

A member said that the Conservative Group would like to see a more detailed Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) and thanked the Town Clerk for her hard work in preparing the budget.

In response a Labour member acknowledged the concern but emphasised the unique situation over the past 18 months that had meant income and expenditure was more difficult to predict.

It was proposed by Councillor Enright and seconded by Councillor Collins that the Precept increase should be in line with inflation and therefore be set at 4.9%.

It was highlighted that this would mean that further savings would be required and each committee would need to review priorities to meet the new budget parameters if adopted. Members indicated that the budget would need to be strictly adhered to and it was important to maintain a healthy reserve.

On being put to the vote the proposition was carried with six members voting for, one member voting against and three abstentions.

Resolved: that the report be noted and:-

1. that the revised budget for 2021/2022 as presented be adopted; and
2. that the estimated budget for 2022/23 be further scrutinised by the spending Committees during the next cycle of meetings in order to identify savings to fit the budget into the parameters now agreed on the level of Precept increase – limited to 4.9%.

9 **TO FORMALLY DECLARE THE PRECEPT FOR 2022/23**

The Council received and considered the report of the Town Clerk.

The proposal was to increase the precept by 4.9% which equated to £167.01 per annum for a band D property.

Resolved:

that the report be noted and that the Town Clerk be authorised to sign and serve a precept on the West Oxfordshire District Council, in accordance with the appropriate provisions of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended), requiring the District Council to pay the Town Council the sum of £1,829,398 in respect of Council Tax for the town during the financial year 2022/23.

10 **CLIMATE, BIODIVERSITY & PLANNING COMMITTEE - 14 DECEMBER 2021 AND 4 JANUARY 2022**

The Chair of the Committee presented the above minutes to Council and moved their acceptance.

It was reported that, at a recent District Council planning meeting, the Town Council had been commended on the quality of its responses to planning consultations. Members thanked officers for their support at meetings and expertise in dealing with planning submissions.

Resolved:

That the minutes of the Climate, Biodiversity & Planning Advisory Committee meetings held on 14 December 2021 and 4 January 2022 be received and any recommendations therein approved.

11 **FUTURE MEETINGS OF THE COUNCIL**

The Council considered whether committee meetings should be held virtually from January 2022 meaning they would revert to being advisory with delegations in place for urgent matters.

Members considered that this should be supported as it allowed members and others who could not attend 'in person' meetings to participate. It was suggested, and agreed, that the situation should be reviewed at each future Council meeting.

Resolved:

1. That, the Council's cyclical committee meetings be held virtually from January 2022 and be advisory with delegations to the Town Clerk on any other urgent matters; and
2. That, the situation regarding meetings be reviewed at each future Council meeting.

The meeting closed at: 7.31 pm

Chair