

MAESTEG TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of a **HYBRID** meeting of the **Finance committee** held remotely via Microsoft Teams and at the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Talbot Street, Maesteg, on **Thursday, 14th July 2022**.

PRESENT:

COUNCILLORS: **G Thomas (Mayor)**

F Abedalkarim, P Davies, K Edwards, C Knight, R Martin,
and L Thomas

NO APOLOGIES were received

DECLARATION OF INTEREST: None received

116. TO DISCUSS WARD SPECIFIC FUND INCREASE FORM £5K TO £10K FOR 2022-23

Members were provided with the following information:

At the June 2022 Full Council meeting it was agreed that the Finance Committee discuss raising the budget for the Ward Specific Funds from £5,000 to £10,000 for 2022-23

Clerk advised that the Ward Specific Funds was created for wards to use on fly tipping removal and to enhance their areas for the benefit of the community. The amount decided was agreed at the budget meeting.

Members queried the following:

- why only for 1 year?
Response in the meeting: General request to see if Wards could use further money
- concerns on £40K out of budget
- deviations to the budget set should be discussed by Finance Committee
- will be having an in-depth audit for 2022/23
- all spend is authorised by Council with invoices received and paid in the same way as other payments. The only difference is that the ward members have to agree to the Ward spend before any works can be carried out.

Members of the Finance Committee discussed this further with a majority opposed to the request as this could further divide the Council. Any larger projects should come before Full Council and each request discussed on its merits.

It was **agreed** to recommend to Council to oppose this request.

117. QUARTERLY REVIEW OF ACCOUNTS (APRIL – JUNE 2022)

Members were provided with all signed bank reconciliations from Q1 and a Q1 summary sheet.

Report to the finance committee on current and possible future budget Q1 results as at 1st July 2022.

Cash on hand = £786,194.32
Unpresented payments = £30.00
Available Balance = £786,164.32

Budget Position

Budget Spend for the year was set at £373,370.30 during January's Council meeting.

Position at end Q1.

Council spent £41,652.70 which is equivalent to 10.05% of the budget.

Forward View and comments.

The councils spend has been categorised as:-

- long term commitments, those being contractual spend or items committed by the council that can't easily be amended.
- Discretionary spend – short term spending that may be contractual or not but that can be varied by the council should it wish.
- Other items – items that don't fit the above categories or deserve special mention such as one-off purchases.

For each Budget line a comment is made on how much is expected to be spent on that item in the full financial year, so includes a best estimate or latest view to enable a year end position to be calculated for budget setting purpose. Appendix A shows an easy-to-read table format that shows, budget allocation, spend to date, expected spend and better/worse than budget.

Long term commitments

- £81,084.34 has been allocated to road safety schemes out of capital projects line. Members queried this as Welsh Government are due to impose a 20MPH speed limit in residential areas and whether there was still a need for the road safety scheme. The Chair of finance advised that further input from BCBC and Welsh Government was needed to answer this.
- £60,029 has been allocated to building repairs from Capital projects for the Grade II* building
- £30,000 has been committed to fund the CAT transfer Grant scheme
- £29,083.92 is expected spend on Car Park toilet (long term contract)
- £6,240 – allocated to playschemes that has not been paid to BCBC as of yet.

- £11,00.00 – Floral Displays – Annual contract
- £1,125.00 – for 3 quarters payments for cemetery closing
- £100 remaining – member expenses – however £300 needs to be reserved in case all members claim the payments, to date 12 members have claimed IRP payments, 3 have advised they do not wish to claim the £150 payment, still waiting for 2 members to advise of bank details for payment.
- £55,000.00 - Staffing Costs – CMO works April – September at 30 hours per week and October – March 20hours per week
- £3,568.50 – Telephone and IT – based on current spend per month, this may differ if pc's in office are upgraded.

Discretionary spend

- £42,000.00 - Set aside for Christmas – for the purposes of the budget I have assumed we spend it all if not on a parade, then on additional Christmas measures.
- £3,200 Dog waste bags - Expected to spend all as we have many locations throughout the boundary that help to distribute the bags.
- £20,000 – individual ward funding – to ensure money is available for individual wards I have assumed it will all be spent by year end.
- £16,988.00 Maesteg Festival – already paid 50% fees for Keeper of the colliery fun run. If no other events organised this money can be moved back to reserves.
- £2,440.00 remaining - Mayoral Office – Expected to spend as per budget especially if Civic Sunday is reinstated
- £4,297.54 remaining Office costs – due to the building still being closed to the public due to C19 the costs have been reduced, may increase to full spend as more meetings in the building.
- £7,880.71 remaining Premises costs – a vast majority of Q1 spend was to have internet cabling into the Chamber to allow for Hybrid meetings. Staff are still primarily working from home approximately 3 days per week and the boilers have been upgraded and there has not been any heating or hot water since 23rd May 2022, however still have to pay the Gas standing charges.
- £28,500.00 remaining – S137 spend – based on year-to-date spending in Q1, I expect this to be greatly under spent even with our updated policy limits.

Other items

£14,214.00 remaining - General fees – have yet to be invoiced for Audit Wales fees, Internal Auditor fees or for May 22 Elections

Income

The rent for the vault, the BCBC ROW agreements and the Llan MCC agreement. So, income is expected to continue in line with expectations. This income is not considered in the budget spend and will be added to reserves.

Q1 year latest view position.

If spend was “to budget” from existing bank balance (neglecting income due to the small value) then the council would be left with a year-end reserve of

| | £ |
|--------------------------|--------------|
| Cash at end of Q1 | 786,164.32 |
| Budget spend | - 373,370.30 |
| End of year cash in bank | 412,794.02 |

Members read the report and no other questions were raised.

118. TO DISCUSS S137 POLICY

In the June 2022 Full Council meeting members queried whether Maesteg Town Council should be requesting copies of receipts from organisations once the grant money is given. Members were provided with a copy of the current S137 Policy.

Members deliberated the policy and agreed we should be asking for proof of money spent via receipts as per the recommendation from Mr W Davies in the recent extraordinary meeting.

A member queried that we should ask for bank statements / end of year accounts and inspect the organisation as to how the grant would be spent then visit again to see how the grant has been spent. The Chair of Finance advised that policy already requests a copy of a recent bank statement / end of year accounts and that these are stored with the original application.

Other members thought the criteria of the policy was sufficient however it doesn't specify inclusions/exclusions. It was noted that the policy doesn't mention to be used for team kits and that all applications should be judged on their merits. The Chair of Finance disagreed that the grant should be used for team kits as it is ambiguous whether the kits were for individuals to keep or to be shared among the team when playing.

Cllr P Davies **proposed** and was seconded by Cllr L Thomas that the recommendations of Mr W Davies in the extraordinary meeting whereby grants are to be on the condition of the supply of copies of invoices/receipts on completion of projects / purchase of goods. Should organisations refuse to supply the requested copies of invoices / receipts then they should no longer receive council funding in the future.

There were no objections and it was **recommended** that full council add the following to the S137 policy:

Grants are to be on the condition of the supply of copies of invoices/receipts on completion of projects / purchase of goods. Should organisations refuse to supply the

requested copies of invoices / receipts then they should no longer receive council funding in the future.

119. **TO DISCUSS OUTSTANDING BUILDING WORKS**

Members were provided with the following:

Maesteg Town Council has appointed Ashley Davies Architect as our Agent for the building maintenance and repair work.

To date all emergency repairs to the chimneys have been completed along with the portico works for the CADW Grant.

Maesteg Town Council applied for the BCBC Urban Centre Enhancement grant in 2021-22, unfortunately as the works could not be completed by the end of the financial year, we were unsuccessful in obtaining the grant. Members were provided with past minutes relating to the building maintenance and repair work.

Additionally, the clerk provided members with a copy of the recent email from the Agent advising the following:

The remaining works amount to £115,186.50. Below, I summarise how much work remains in each package.

I should caveat a few items, however:

- I have allowed, in this figure, the full £17,675.00 which the tender included for 'Other Contractor Aspects'. In the earlier works, this item cost £7,616.00. I fear that we cannot set much, if any, of this against the full £17,675.00, but I will see if some of it can be. Unfortunately, I think we will be paying twice for much of this £7,616.00.*
- I fear that we cannot put any of the £18,500.00 for 'Access /Scaffolding' against the earlier work, as they will be having to do it all again, but I will try. Unfortunately, therefore, I think we will be paying twice for the cost of the scaffolding to the Portico roof and soffit.*
- Dawson Stonemasonry did a bit of the south elevation stone and brick work included in 2.0, 3.0, 4.0, 5.0, 6.0 and 7.0. It's not a large figure, but I haven't taken anything off the below, as I rather fear that, since my assessment 18 months ago, more stones may have delaminated and/or cracked, so we may need a little 'bunce' in the figures.*
- The construction industry has been hit as hard as any other by the current climate and we may have to expect that Taliesin will tell us that some of the costs they quoted for have risen since their tender from October 2021.*

Finally, to look to suggest a focus for the guaranteed £50k is difficult here, as we need the scaffolding up to do most of the work (walls, rainwater goods, roof and cupola); and, if the scaffolding is up, you would want to do it all whilst it is. The only items I

suggest could be omitted and left until another time are 21.0, 23.0, 24.0, 25.0 and 26.0, which would amount to £14,781.45, taking the full figure down to £100,405.05.

The £115,186.50 figure is made up of:

| | |
|---|------------|
| 1) Rubble Stonework Pointing | £20,475.00 |
| 2) Stone Delamination | £1,651.14 |
| 3) Stone Repairs | £333.83 |
| 4) Repair Cracked Window Cills | £259.61 |
| 5) Repair Cracked Window Lintols | £3,629.35 |
| 6) Repair Cracked Bricks | £585.00 |
| 7) Repair Cracking Brickwork | £1,699.05 |
| 8) Brickwork Re-Pointing | £2,156.76 |
| 9) North Parapet Upstand | £14,136.15 |
| 10) Roof Slates | £740.37 |
| 11) Ridge Tiles | £715.28 |
| 12) Timber Cupola & Leaded Dome | £5,662.50 |
| 16) Rainwater Goods & SVPs | £4,972.72 |
| 17) Fascias & Soffits | £1,371.65 |
| 18) East Chimney | £3,471.64 |
| 20) Clean Masonry | £2,370.00 |
| 21) External Timber Door | £395.90 |
| 23) Replace Damaged Internal Plaster (£12,405.90 - £1,081.25 hacking off done) | £11,324.65 |
| 24) Repair Cracks in Internal Plaster | £1,610.00 |
| 25) Internal Timber Elements (One item not done) | £450.90 |
| 26) Roof Void Insulation | £1,000.00 |
| 29) Access /Scaffolding | £18,500.00 |
| 30) Other Contractor Aspects (Previous work - £7,616.00) | £17,675.00 |

Members discussed the email contents and the Chair of Finance advised that it is the responsibility of the Council to maintain and repair the building due to the current cash balance the committee should **recommend** to Council to fund the whole amount to complete the outstanding works whilst continuing to seek grant funding.

A member queried what the grant funding would cover and the clerk advised that we are looking at 70% funding. This equates to £80,630.55 (70% grant) and £34,555.95 (30% MTC).

120. TO DISCUSS CIVIC SUNDAY

Clerk advised that following Full Council this was being arranged with the Mayor and the Clerk and should there be insufficient funds the Finance Committee / Full Council would have to agree the increase into the budget for part B

121. TO DISCUSS ADDITIONAL ITEMS FROM FULL COUNCIL

- **Minute 75 - Outstanding Grant Money**

The Chair of Finance advised that BCBC had finally agreed to a meeting to be held next Tuesday 19th July 2022, following this meeting the Chair of Finance will update the committee and full council.

- **Minute 102 – Caerau Welfare Bowls Club application**

Members discussed this application and as Council had agreed to a different bowls club application for kit then this application should be granted.

Cllr L Thomas **proposed** and was seconded by Cllr K Edwards that the committee recommend to full council that the application is granted. The Chair of Finance was the only member to object to this and requested his objections be minuted.

122. TO GO INTO COMMITTEE TO DISCUSS A CONFIDENTIAL ITEM

Given the nature of the business and the discussion on recruitment processes it was decided to exclude the public from the meeting as per

RESOLVED: THAT THE COUNCIL GO INTO COMMITTEE

Pursuant to section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 and Local Government Act 1972, ss100 & 102 ‘Members of the public/press can be excluded by resolution if publicity would prejudice the public interest by reason of confidential nature of the business and arising out of the business to be transacted’

126. RESOLVED: THAT THE COUNCIL COME OUT OF COMMITTEE

127. RECCOMENDATIONS

1. Council to oppose the request to raise Ward Funds to £10K and keep the ward fund to £5K
2. Council adds the following to the S137 policy:
Grants are to be on the condition of the supply of copies of invoices/receipts on completion of projects / purchase of goods. Should organisations refuse to supply the requested copies of invoices / receipts then they should no longer receive council funding in the future.
3. Council to agree to fund the whole amount to complete the outstanding works whilst continuing to seek grant funding
4. S137 Grant application to Caerau Welfare Bowling Club is granted

5. For the Finance Committee to write a new Tender for the provision of an internal auditor for a 1-year contract with an option to extend.
6. To note the 2019 Draft Audit Wales report and to await the new report once Court Case has concluded.
7. For Full Council to respond to the FOI request.

Minutes emailed to all Councillors to Read on 15th July 2022

**Minutes accepted at a remote meeting of the Council
held on 2nd August 2022**

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Mayor