

**MAESTEG TOWN COUNCIL
COUNCIL MEETING**

Minutes of a HYBRID meeting of the **EXTRAORDINARY COUNCIL** meeting held at the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Talbot Street, Maesteg and remotely via Microsoft Teams and, on **Monday, 18th December 2023**

COUNCILLORS PRESENT:

IN CHAMBER: R Martin (Mayor)

C Davies P Jenkins, C Knight, R Penhale-Thomas, L Thomas,
G Williams and I Williams

ONLINE: F Abedalkarim, AR Davies, P Davies, A James, A Le Geyt,
R Lewis and M Rowlands

APOLOGIES: Apologies were received from Cllr G Thomas.

DECLARATION OF INTEREST:

Cllrs C Davies, P Davies, P Jenkins and R Penhale-Thomas declared an interest in any items relating to Bridgend County Borough Council.

386. TO AGREE DRAFT BUDGET FOR 2024-25

Members were provided with the agreed budget as discussed in the Finance Committee meeting on 22/11/2023.

Clerk advised that for the extraordinary meeting the figures for the expected year-end were updated to include actual year end figures to the end of November and included the guaranteed income resulting in a change of the year end being £205,854.20 and not £195,855.98 as discussed in the finance committee.

At this point in the meeting many of the online members advised that the connection was not good and that they were unable to hear the meeting properly. Clerk advised all members in the council chamber to use their microphones and to speak into the microphone and not away from the microphone. Mayor asked online members if they were able to continue and all agreed.

The Clerk went through each budget line in the proposed draft budget explaining how the proposed figures were generated - the queries addressed in the meeting are noted in the comments column for each budget line.

At 18:45 Cllr F Abedalkarim advised that he could not hear the meeting and advised that he was unable to continue and left the meeting.

Deputy Clerk advised that Total Sounds were coming on 19th December to discuss any teething issues – the online connection issues will be discussed with them.

Proposed BUDGET 2024-25		Comments
CAPITAL BUDGET		
Capital projects & Maintenance	50,000.00	50K trial for bus service
Grade II* Listed Building Fees	187,853.00	hopefully all works completed in 2023-24 - still waiting on grant from BCBC
Upgrade Office IT systems	3,000.00	in 2019 new desktops etc cost ~£2,500
REVENUE BUDGET		
Car Park Toilet	50,000.00	A member queried why we were budgeting for this – clerk advised in Projects committee recommendations to go to tender to replace the car park toilet
CAT	5,000.00	
Cenotaphs	2,200.00	Clerk advised that the cenotaphs invoice had been received in December 2023 for £1,000.00 and that this hadn't changed for a few years. Members agreed to keep this as £2,200.00 in case any repairs would be needed.
Children's Playschemes	6,600.00	
Christmas Celebrations (lights & Christmas Trees)	30,000.00	Still waiting for costs from Centregreat for 2024
CMO equipment allowance	2,000.00	
Defibrillator Maintenance	1,100.00	As and when required assume another 2 this year
Dog waste bags	5,932.30	Cater for 3 purchases a year
Elections	-	If an election is called money from reserves can be used
Floral displays	12,000.00	
General Fees	5,500.00	A member queried what were considered as general fees – clerk advised that this is for audit fees / SLCC Fees / OVW fees
Insurance	3,500.00	Currently on a Long Term Agreement (LTA)
Maesteg Cemetery	1,500.00	Split into quarterly payments - a member queried why we were paying to lock and unlock the cemetery gates when none of the children's play areas are locked? Clerk and other members advised that this was agreed in 2017 as there was vandalism in the cemetery along with vehicles damaging the area
Maesteg Festival - Keeper run	15,000.00	Still hasn't been confirmed for 2024 – to be looked at in January
Maesteg Festival - Summer festival	20,000.00	This is to be looked at in January
Maesteg Festival - Christmas Parade	35,000.00	Figures based on 2023 parade, grotto, selection boxes, gifts for care homes etc.
Mayoral Office	3,300.00	
Members expenses	5,152.00	IRP Payments -need to look at this as MTC agreed to pay £1,500 to Mayor, £500 for Deputy Mayor, £500 to chair of finance + 17 x £156 = £5,152.00

		<p>A member queried why over £5,000 was for member expenses.</p> <p>Clerk advised:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • that the £156 is a mandatory payment to all members unless a member advises in writing they no longer wish to receive this. • Legally we have to have a minimum of 1 senior salary £500 which members agreed to pay to the Chair of Finance • Council agreed for the Mayor to receive £1,500 and Deputy Mayor to receive £500 • This is discussed at the AGM every year and members have to agree/disagree with the recommendations from IRP (Independent Remuneration Panel)
Office costs	5,500.00	
Premises running costs	22,000.00	
S.137 donations	20,000.00	Clerk advised that the S137 expenditure limit for 2024-25 = £10.81 per elector and that Council could claim £144,010.82 for S137.
Staff costs	87,558.90	This is the actual costs for salary payments + 10% extra to cover annual NALC increase and other pay increases (real living wage) – The personnel committee is to look at the CMO pay increase annually.
Telephones and IT	5,500.00	
Training	3,000.00	
Van	2,500.00	
Ward Specific - Caerau	5,000.00	
Ward Specific - Maesteg East	5,000.00	
Ward Specific - Maesteg West	5,000.00	
Ward Specific - Nantyllyllon	5,000.00	
TOTAL SPEND	610,696.20	

Capital Spend	240,853.00	
Revenue Spend	369,843.20	
Total Spend	610,696.20	
Fraud	(47,600.00)	238,000.00/5 (years) = 47,600.00 reduction per year for 5 years - this will be 2nd year reduction
brought forward	205,854.36	Expected year end position as per end of November
Expected Balance	- 404,841.84	
Total required precept	- 357,241.84	23.11.23 TAXBASE from BCBC = in 2024-25 = 5674.80
Working reserve	50,000.00	From guaranteed income £8,038.25 + estimate income from CCLA investment account and bank interest

Members wanted to place a working reserve of £50,000.00 in the budget as an estimate that includes the £8,038.25 guaranteed income from vault rental, office rental and BCBC ROW agency agreement.

Cllrs AR Davies & A James advised that they have been unable to hear the meeting fully and would abstain from any votes.

A few members were concerned that with the cost-of-living crisis they didn't want the precept to increase. Members were also concerned that for the past couple of years the council were in a good financial position and able to proceed with a number of projects; however, to continue with so many projects would have a detrimental effect on the precept requirement.

A BCBC Cllr stated that BCBC had yet to confirm their budget for 2024-25 and without this it is difficult to set our budget as we do not know what MTC would be expected to continue with. Clerk advised that this was an annual concern and that BCBC do not set their budget until after they have received the T&CC precept requirements.

A member also raised that no consultation with the residents had been completed – to which the Deputy Clerk advised that he had met with BCBC REACH team who are willing to go to tender and pay for a public consultation on behalf of Maesteg Town Council as they did with Ogmore Valley Community Council – further information will be given in January Full Council meeting.

Cllr P Davies advised that the Finance Committee had made a recommendation for the budget and that Council are scrutinising it – this makes a mockery of committee recommendations. This was supported by several members regarding committees.

Cllr AR Davies queried the legality of the meeting as those online were unable to hear the meeting completely and thus unable to contribute completely – Clerk has checked and there were 8 members in the Council Chamber which is more than 1/3 of the Council.

Cllr I Williams **proposed**, seconded by Cllr C Davies that the draft budget be accepted.

RESOLVED: Draft budget accepted for 2024-25

387. TO SET PRECEPT REQUIREMENTS 2024-25

Following the above agreed budget, the Clerk provided members with the following precept calculation:

Band D = Divide the Precept required by Tax Base
Band D = £357,241.84 / 5674.80 = £62.95

RESOLVED: Advise BCBC that the precept requirement for 2024-25 = £357,241.84

Minutes emailed to Councillors to Read on 19th December 2023

Minutes accepted at a Hybrid meeting of the Council held on 9th January 2024

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Mayor