

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 **Tuesday, 8th May 2024**.

COUNCILLORS

IN PERSON: **G Thomas (Chair)**
 F Abedalkarim, P Davies, C Knight, A LeGeyt and
 R Martin

ONLINE: **L Thomas**

APOLOGIES: N/A all in attendance

DECLARATION OF INTEREST: None received.

595. TO REVIEW END OF YEAR ACCOUNTS TO 31ST MARCH 2024

Members were provided with updated end of year accounts to 31st March 2024, which included updated March 2024 expenditure and income and updated Receipts and Payments. Members agreed to the year end accounts.

Chair of Finance advised that Council need to think about the budgets more in the future and shouldn't overspend on budget lines. Need to be clear that any additional money spend would require money to be moved from another budget line or from reserves, a recent example was regarding the bus shelter repair in last night's full council meeting that Capitol Payments should cover this spend but at the moment there is no budget for this type of spend.

Char of Finance also advises that at the AGM he would like to recommend that Council give delegated powers to some committees to spend their budgets. The committee debated this request as this could give too much control to committees and less to Council. Chair of Finance advised that the committees would do the research / tender process and look at quotes as per the financial regulations then would bring the preferred quote to Council to approve without the need for further debate. Members queried whether or not a specific amount could be delegated like that of the Clerk? Chair of Finance advised that the committee couldn't spend the money until it had been agreed in full Council.

Cllr G Thomas **proposed** seconded by F Abedalkarim that the Finance Committee **recommend** at the AGM Committees are given delegated powers to spend their budgets and all requests would go through Council. It was also discussed which committees could be given delegated powers and it was **agreed** that Council at the AGM could decide this.

596. TO REVIEW Q4 VAT RECLAIM

Members were provided with a table containing the Q4 VAT Reclaim totalling £13,802.22.

Members agreed to **recommend** reclaiming the Q4 VAT.

597. TO REVIEW Q4 ACCOUNTS

Members were provided with all signed bank reconciliations from Q1 – Q4 and a Q4 summary sheet.

Report to the finance committee on current and possible future budget.
Q1 – Q4 results as at 31/03/2024.

Cash on hand = £413,702.79
Unpresented payments = £875.00
Unpresented income = £50.00

Budget Position

Precept for the year was set at £301,107.00 during December 2022 Extraordinary Council meeting.

In December 2022 it was set as 745,932.00

Capital spend	327,600.00
Revenue Spend	418,332.00
Total Spend	745,932.00
Fraud	(47,600.00)
brought forward	467,224.41
Expected Balance	-278,707.59
Working reserve	70,000.00
Total precept required	- 301,107.59

Following Finance recommendations to add to the budget from reserves the budget then changed to £812,499.68.

Position at end Q4

Actual budget – spend = cash available

Council spent £750,161.67 (including money transferred from Lloyds to CCLA)
actual spend minus the CCLA transfer = £500,161.67

$812,499.68 - 500,161.67 = 312,338.01 = 62\%$ of budget spent

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.

EXPENDITURE ANALYSIS	Budget	Budget Remaining	Spend to Date	% Budget Spent	
CAPITAL PROJECTS					
<i>Capital Projects (Traffic scheme, Maesteg Park memorial & trial bus service)</i>	<i>95,000.00</i>	<i>87,665.51</i>	<i>7,334.49</i>	<i>7.72</i>	
<i>Capital Projctcs Grade II* listed building</i>	<i>231,338.91</i>	<i>180,086.62</i>	<i>51,252.29</i>	<i>22.15</i>	
<i>Capital Projects - Chamber audio upgrade</i>	<i>31,349.00</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>31,349.00</i>	<i>100.00</i>	
<i>Capital Projects - Bus Shelters</i>	<i>12,717.00</i>	<i>-757.25</i>	<i>13,474.25</i>	<i>105.95</i>	
<i>Capital Projects - CAT of Blaencaerau Play area</i>	<i>5,000.00</i>	<i>5,000.00</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>-</i>	
<i>Capital Project - Graffiti Murals</i>	<i>12,390.00</i>	<i>12,390.00</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>-</i>	
REVENUE BUDGET					
<i>Car park toilet</i>	<i>40,000.00</i>	<i>24,649.76</i>	<i>15,350.24</i>	<i>38.38</i>	
<i>CAT</i>	<i>15,000.00</i>	<i>10,000.00</i>	<i>5,000.00</i>	<i>33.33</i>	
<i>Cenotaphs</i>	<i>2,200.00</i>	<i>1,200.00</i>	<i>1,000.00</i>	<i>45.45</i>	
<i>Children's Playschemes</i>	<i>6,600.00</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>6,600.00</i>	<i>100.00</i>	
<i>Christmas lighting</i>	<i>54,502.00</i>	<i>919.36</i>	<i>53,582.64</i>	<i>98.31</i>	
<i>CMO equipment allowance</i>	<i>2,000.00</i>	<i>276.57</i>	<i>1,723.43</i>	<i>86.17</i>	
<i>Defibrillator Maintenance</i>	<i>1,000.00</i>	<i>486.25</i>	<i>513.75</i>	<i>51.38</i>	
<i>Dog waste bags</i>	<i>5,393.00</i>	<i>1,698.40</i>	<i>3,694.60</i>	<i>68.51</i>	
<i>Elections</i>		<i>-</i>	<i>-</i>		
<i>Floral displays</i>	<i>12,000.00</i>		<i>13,435.00</i>	<i>111.96</i>	
<i>General Fees</i>	<i>5,000.00</i>		<i>27,099.80</i>	<i>542.00</i>	
<i>Insurance</i>	<i>3,500.00</i>	<i>79.85</i>	<i>3,420.15</i>	<i>97.72</i>	
<i>Maesteg Cemetery</i>	<i>1,500.00</i>	<i>-375.00</i>	<i>1,875</i>	<i>125.00</i>	<i>Includes £375 from 2022-23</i>
<i>Maesteg Festival - Keeper Run</i>	<i>15,000.00</i>	<i>2,687.49</i>	<i>12,312.51</i>	<i>82.08</i>	

<i>Maesteg Festival - Summer Festival</i>	20,000.00	14,927.22	5,072.78	25.36	
<i>Maesteg Festival - Christmas grotto & parade</i>	34,930.61	-2470.74	37,401.35	107.07	
<i>Mayoral Office</i>	3,358.16	-	3,358.16	100.00	
<i>Members expenses</i>	5,152.00	312.00	4,840.00	93.94	
<i>Office costs</i>	5,500.00	736.11	4,763.89	86.62	
<i>Premises running costs</i>	20,000.00	337.47	19,662.53	98.31	
<i>S.137 donations</i>	30,000.00	10,965.78	19,034.22	63.45	
<i>School litter bin project</i>	5,000.00	5,000.00	-	-	
<i>Staff costs</i>	79,599.00	-12,328.68	91,927.68	115.49	
<i>Street Cleansing</i>	25,000.00	25,000.00	-	-	
<i>Telephones and IT</i>	5,500.00	-2254.02	6,328.06	115.06	
<i>Training</i>	3,000.00	1,408.01	1,591.99	53.07	
<i>Van</i>	2,500.00	1,138.95	1,361.05	54.44	
<i>Ward Specific - Caerau</i>	6,470.00	3,346.91	3,123.09	48.27	
<i>Ward Specific - Maesteg East</i>	5,000.00	1,795.18	3,204.82	64.10	
<i>Ward Specific - Maesteg West</i>	5,000.00	4,235.86	764.14	15.28	
<i>Ward Specific - Nantyffyllon</i>	5,000.00	5,000.00	-	-	
	812,499.68	312,338.01	500,161.67	61.55	

N.B. the spend to date figure does not include the VAT or the £250,000.00 transfer to CCLA account.

Income

Income comprises of the following:

Income Analysis 2023/24

	TOTAL
<i>Bank Interest</i>	594.18
<i>BCBC - CAT Grant Reclaim</i>	2,000.00
<i>BCBC - Christmas Grant</i>	4,000.00
<i>BCBC - Precept</i>	301,107.00
<i>BCBC - ROW Agency Agreement reclaim</i>	3,938.25
<i>Cash Deposit - Ring doorbell</i>	30.00
<i>Cash Deposit - donation from street hawkers</i>	60.00
<i>Cash Deposit - unspent S137 grant from Harlequins RFC</i>	10.00
<i>CCLA Redemption</i>	375,000.00
<i>Cheques / payments written back</i>	484.00
<i>HMRC VAT</i>	47,642.50
<i>Llan Middle - Chamber hire</i>	50.00
<i>Llan Middle - Office Rental</i>	2,600.00
<i>Llan Middle - Poop scoop bags</i>	66.62
<i>Llan Middle - Selection Boxes</i>	325.00
<i>OGI</i>	250.00
<i>Public Sector Depository (Investment Dividends)</i>	26,164.87

<i>Refund from EDF</i>	<i>1,759.73</i>
<i>Room Hire</i>	<i>15.00</i>
<i>SSE Refund</i>	<i>441.18</i>
<i>Vault Rental</i>	<i>1,500.00</i>
WELSH GOVERNMENT - CADW GRANT	
	<u><u>768,038.33</u></u>

Income is expected to continue in line with expectations. This income is not considered in the budget spend and will be added to reserves.

End of Year Bank Reconciliation

<i>Bank balances as at 31/03/24</i>	<i>39,527.79</i>
<i>Unpresented expenditure</i>	<i>-875.00</i>
<i>Unpresented Income</i>	<i>50.00</i>
	38,702.79
<i>CCLA Investment Account</i>	<i>375,000.00</i>
	<u><u>413,702.79</u></u>

Unpresented expenditure

R Martin	375.00
Llynfi Valley 11-24 project	<u>500.00</u>
TOTAL	<u><u>875.00</u></u>

Unpresented income

	£
Llan Middle CC Chamber hire	<u>50.00</u>
TOTAL	<u><u>50.00</u></u>

Members went through the above and the following was raised:

- The CCLA Redemption is shown in the income is this correct?
Clerk advised that it is shown on the income as it comes into our current account, however this is not included on the annual return as it is a transfer of money from the CCLA into our current account.
- During the precept meeting the income was queried and how it is recorded?
Chair of Finance advised that the income is not guaranteed, however the committee could start looking at the income in Q1 or Q2 and see if it is more than expected and that this additional reserves could be released to Council for additional projects.

- A member queried the EDF refund
Clerk advised that previously for the car park toilet and the building the contracts were for a set monthly Direct Debit. Then when the meter readings were given, it was apparent that MTC hadn't used all the energy as paid for and EDF made the necessary refunds. In addition to this the car park toilet was removed and then this was refunded. Currently the utilities suppliers are with different providers who ask for monthly meter readings and MTC are billed accordingly.
- A member raised the dog waste bags budget as BCBC have now removed this service to residents and no longer provide dog waste bags on tikspak posts. Members discussed that this was a good provision for the area as the topic of non-collection of dog waste was high amongst residents, the bags are in high demand and that there was no current proposal to remove this facility/provision.
- Chair of Finance advised we have a good budget and have been granted a grant from BCBC for the grade II* building works, however we need to be mindful of not moving budgets around until we have received the grant.
- A member raised the issue of the lift as MTC currently not compliant with the act would we need to upgrade the lift?
Members discussed that this was not currently budgeted for, Clerk advised that our current maintenance and servicing contractor is still waiting on the part from America and that it has previously been agreed that the property committee should invite the lift maintenance contractor to meet with them to discuss the lift moving forward.
- Street Cleansing was in the 2023-24 budget and was unspent due to BCBC, could we look into getting insurance to cover the work done on street cleansing?
Chair of Finance advised that this has not been budgeted for 2024-25 as MTC do not have the power to do this on the highway.

Cllr L Thomas **proposed**, seconded by G Thomas to **recommend** that MTC write to OVW for clarity on the legal power and duty to cleanse the public highway.

598. TO REVIEW THE BUDGET SET FOR 2024-25

Members were provided with the budget as agreed in the Extraordinary Meeting 14/12/2023 along with the updated costs for Christmas lighting for 2024.

	<i>Agreed</i>	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
Capitol Projects Bus Shelter - Commercial Street		
Upgrade Office IT systems	3,000.00	in 2019 new desktops etc cost ~£2,500
	-	
REVENUE BUDGET	-	
Car Park Toilet	50,000.00	
CAT	5,000.00	Earmarked Reserves - wrote to the 3 clubs with a deadline of end of 2023-24 - 2 clubs did not respond - earmarked reserves for Caerau All Whites only - agreed that if they do not complete by the end of March 2025 then money not carried over
Cenotaphs	2,200.00	Continue
Children's Playschemes	6,600.00	Continue playscheme
Christmas Celebrations (lighting)	30,000.00	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 not 2 ? + 10% inflation
Elections	-	
Floral displays	12,000.00	
General Fees	5,500.00	
Insurance	3,500.00	
Maesteg Cemetery	1,500.00	Split into quarterly payments
Maesteg Festival - Keeper run	15,000.00	
Maesteg Festival - Summer festival	20,000.00	
Maesteg Festival - Christmas Parade	35,000.00	
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
Office costs	5,500.00	
Premises running costs	22,000.00	
S.137 donations	20,000.00	
Staff costs	87,558.90	Increase by 10% whilst waiting for actual figures ? N.B new real living wage for E'OB increase to £12 per hour = + £1.10 per hour. NALC pay increase for ST & MT to be agreed in Dec See next tab for salary payments - n.b. this does not include a pay increase for CMO
Telephones and IT	5,500.00	

Training	3,000.00	
Van	2,500.00	
Ward Specific - Caerau	5,000.00	keep the same
Ward Specific - Maesteg East	5,000.00	keep the same
Ward Specific - Maesteg West	5,000.00	keep the same
Ward Specific - Nantyffyllon	5,000.00	keep the same
	610,696.20	

Capital spend	240,853.00	
Revenue		
Spend	369,843.20	
Total Spend	610,696.20	
Fraud brought forward	(47,600.00)	238,000.00/5 (years) = 47,600.00 reduction per year for 5 years - this will be 2nd year reduction
Expected	-	Expected year end position as per end of November
Balance Working reserve	404,841.84	
Total required	-	
	357,241.84	23.11.23 TAXBASE from BCBC = in 2024-25 = 5674.80

Christmas Lighting

	Existing	New	
Commercial St / Talbot Street lights & wall mounted trees	£26,111.00		
Castle St incl. ASDA lights	£1,420.00		
Market Square lights	£580.00	£980.00	Need to choose to use existing or new
Nantyffyllon lights & tree	£2,340.00		
Caerau lights & tree	£2,050.00		
Maesteg Park lights & tree	£1,725.00		
Garth lights & tree	£1,725.00		
TOTAL	£35,951.00	£36,351.00	

Members discussed the budget and **agreed to recommend** to move £6,351.00 from reserves into Christmas Lighting to allow for the updated costs and new lights for the market square.

With regards to utilising the old Christmas lights whereby we have been quoted £215.00 to supply, install and conversion of appropriate steel columns per column, it was **agreed to recommend** that Wards look at locations for these old Christmas lights and that Ward Funds are used for this purpose.

Clerk advised that current contracts with ITCS were sent to members on 07/02/24 and noted in March Full Council with the following:

MINUTE 484

LIST OF PAYMENTS FOR THE MONTH OF JANUARY 2024

07/02/24 ITCS emailed to ask for contract details.

07/02/24 **Response:** forwarded to all Cllrs

Please find the attached contracts that Maesteg Town Council hold with ITCS.

The Contract end dates are as follows;

IT Support	December 2024
Office 365	December 2024
Disaster Recovery Service (DRS)	February 2025
Website monthly package	May 2025

It would be great if we could arrange a meeting so I can pop out and perform a review meeting based on your services you have with ourselves.

Members agreed that the Communications committee should discuss this more in the summer.

RESOLVED: To note the information

Clerk advised that ITCS are currently in the process of changing the DRS provider that is cheaper than the current provider. Clerk advised that they have agreed to change MTC to the new provider and keep the same contract end details as above. The new contract will be £75 per month instead of £79.93 a saving of £4.93 per month. It was **agreed** that the Communications Committee is to meet with ITCS to discuss contracts and to look into other companies for comparisons.

599. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. To agree End of Year accounts
2. At the AGM Committees are given delegated powers to spend their budgets and all requests would go through Council.

3. Committees with delegated powers to be determined at the AGM.
4. To reclaim Q4 VAT.
5. MTC write to OVW for clarity on the legal power and duty to cleanse the public highway
6. To accept the Christmas lighting quote to include new lights for market square and to move £6,351.00 from reserves into Christmas Lighting budget
7. Wards to look for locations and fund the installation costs of utilising the old Christmas lights.
8. Communications Committee to meet with ITCS to discuss contracts and to look at other companies for comparisons.

Minutes emailed to all Councillors to Read on 13th May 2024

Minutes accepted at a remote meeting of the Council held on 4th June 2024

Mayor