

BRACKLA COMMUNITY COUNCIL



Minutes of the Finance Committee meeting
held on a remote basis in accordance with the provisions of
The Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021
at 6:30pm on Monday, 13th December 2021

Present: Committee Members – Cllrs K Hughes (Chair), K Rowlands, J Spanswick, T Walsh
Absent: Committee Members – Cllr J Chohan

Officers: Ms J van Tonder (Clerk)
Mr Phil Ley (RFO)

Presiding: Cllr K Hughes

1. Apologies for Absence

No apologies for absence had been received.

2. Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were made.

3. On-line hosting of Rialtas accounting and booking systems

The Clerk elaborated on the report circulated with the agenda and explained the problems that were being experienced by the staff with the current IT set up.

There followed a lengthy discussion on the way the Council's IT had previously been managed as well as the issues encountered with the Microsoft subscriptions. The Clerk was asked to continue efforts to get to the bottom of the problems and seek advice from BCBC in the first instance and professional assistance thereafter, if necessary.

During discussions, the Clerk outlined the roll-out of the Council's previously-purchased Rialtas booking system. She presented the costs associated with on-line hosting of the Rialtas software that would allow for remote access as well as ensure the data was stored safely and automatically backed up.

Members continued to discuss the Clerk's recommendation to enter into a three-year contract for the online hosting of the Rialtas system and potentially include full IT support as part of the package.

Cllr K Hughes proposed, Cllr K Rowlands seconded and it was

Resolved: To defer a decision on this matter until such time as the Clerk could conduct further research into this for presentation at a full council meeting.

The Clerk was asked to report back on what software other councils were making use of for their accounts.

4. Matters pertaining to Draft Budget 2022/23

a. Community Centre Budget 2022/23

The RFO presented the draft Community Centre budget. He went on to explain that separate budgets for the Community Centre were not routinely prepared in the past as surpluses or shortfalls would be added to or taken from reserves.

The RFO presented both a best-case scenario where room and party hire ran at optimum capacity with an overall budget excess of £8,218, and a conservative estimate where party and non-nursery hire income was projected at 60% to allow for the impact of covid. This latter budget predicted a shortfall of £1,163.

Members discussed the budget further and felt the best-case scenario was most likely. In response to a question posed to him, the RFO reported that previous years had seen the following outcomes for the Community Centre:

2019/20	- surplus of £6k
2020/21	- shortfall of £11k
2021/22	- anticipated to break even

As the Centre was deemed a vital Council asset, it was accepted that any shortfalls would be covered by reserves.

Members discussed the risks posed should the Centre's primary hirer cease to make use of the facility. It was noted space at the venue was oversubscribed and the majority of slots would be readily filled.

b. Expenditure Budget 2022/23

The RFO presented the draft budget and outlined the reasoning behind some of the proposed increases over this and previous years' expenditure.

Members considered the impact of this draft budget on the precept and Cllr K Hughes suggested the residents of Brackla would not look favourably on an increase in council tax.

Cllr J Spanswick suggested the grants budget could be increased and it was agreed any underspend on other budgetary items as well as surpluses generated from the Community Centre could be vired across to bolster the grants budget through the year.

Members discussed the staffing budget. When asked, the Clerk confirmed no overtime had been built into the salary projections and advised that, should members be minded to remove the provision for an administrative assistant, additional hours would need to be considered for the Clerk and RFO. The RFO advised a shortfall in the staffing budget could be covered from general reserves.

Members considered the Council's other sources of income and the RFO advised that roundabout advertising income was not taken into account for budgeting purposes as it was not guaranteed.

It was noted the anticipated level of general reserves at the start of 2022/23 would represent 32% of total annual expenditure and members were generally in agreement that the budget should be aligned so as to ensure 0% impact on precept (when taking into account the increase in tax base).

Following discussion, it was agreed to reduce the Staffing, IT and miscellaneous Centre expenditure budgets by £11,195, £1,000 and £3,374 respectively.

Cllr K Hughes proposed, Cllr T Walsh seconded and it was

Resolved: To recommend that Full Council adopts the Expenditure Budget 2022/23 as amended with expenditure totalling £169,744.

5. Precept requirement 2022/23

Cllr K Hughes proposed, Cllr T Walsh seconded and it was

Resolved: To recommend that Full Council resolves to request a Precept in the amount of £169,744 for the financial year 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023.

8:02 – 8:05pm – Cllr K Hughes temporarily left the meeting.

6. Date of the next meeting

Date of the next meeting: Tuesday, 8th February 2022

The meeting concluded at 8:10pm.