

CONGLETON TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Finance and Policy Committee Meeting held on Thursday 19th September

For the papers discussed at the meeting, [please see the Finance & Policy Committee Agenda – 19th September 2024](#)

PRESENT Committee members: Cllr Robert Douglas (Chair)
Cllr Russell Chadwick
Cllr Liz Wardlaw

Ex- Officio Cllr K Wesley -Mayor
Cllr R Brittain -Deputy Mayor

Non-Committee Members Cllr Suzy Firkin

Also present:

Congleton Town Council Officers David McGifford- Chief Officer
Serena Van Schepdael - RFO
5 members of the public (Grant applicants)

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies received from Cllrs: Booth, Akers Smith, Edwardson, Pearce and Moreton

2. Minutes of Previous Meetings

FAP/25/2425 RESOLVED To approve and [sign the minutes of the Finance and Policy Committee held on 6th June](#)

FAP/26/2425 RESOLVED To approve and [sign the minutes of the Finance and Policy Committee held on 15th August 2024](#)

3. Declarations of Interest

- Cllr Douglas declared a Pecuniary interest in item 11.3 as the independent examiner for the Trust, and left the room during that item.
- Cllr Wardlaw and Chadwick declared an interest in any CEC matters
- Cllr Wesley declared an interest (at the time of the item due to further information from applicant) in item 11.6 as secretary of Bromley Farm Hub Group where some sessions have taken place, and did not vote.

4. Outstanding Actions

There were none.

5. Questions from Members of the Public

I am led to believe Congleton Council have over 1 million pounds in cash reserves held mainly in an account with "Cambridge & Counties" and two others , where did this money come from, why do you need some much in reserves and why don't they show in various council accounts ?

Our Response:

The £ 1 million Reserves in this question relate to both Earmarked Reserves and General Reserves and bank balances. We must keep 3 months of revenue expenditure as our General Reserves and this totals £ 287,000. This is kept in the investments which are with Cambridge & Counties and C.C.L.A.

Our Earmarked reserves balance is £ 477,806. We do have very substantial capital commitments and the Capital Contingency, Equipment and Property Maintenance Funds total £ 284,295, which is 59.5% of our total Earmarked Reserves.

Total Reserves stand at approximately £ 764,000.

In April and September, when Cheshire East Council transfer across to us six months' worth of our Precept, our bank balances may increase to over £ 1 million, but this decreases over the following six-month period as the Precept is our main source of income used for day-to-day operations.

Both the savings balances and details of the reserves are presented at every meeting of the Finance and Policy Committee and are regularly reviewed.

Reserves and cash balances are also part of the Annual Governance Report we complete and make public every year.

6. Presentations to the Committee

There were none.

7. Urgent Items

There were none raised.

8. Minutes of Working Groups

FAP/27/2425 Resolved to receive the minutes of the Regeneration working group on 1st March & 3rd June 24.

9. Committee Items Relating to Working Groups

There were none.

10. Grant Approvals and Commitments

FAP/28/2425 RESOLVED to receive a statement showing the current position as at 31st July 2024.

11. New Applications for Financial Assistance

FAP/29/2425 RESOLVED to approve the grants:

11.1- Congleton and District Horticultural Society: £500

11.2- Trinity Methodist Church: £1,000

Cllr Douglas left the room at 7.18pm and Cllr Wesley took over as chair for item

11.3.

11.3- Mossley Old School Trust: £500

Cllr Douglas returned to chair the meeting.

11.4- Congleton Harriers: £750, subject to receiving a grant activities monitoring form in respect of an earlier grant

11.5- Havannah PTA: £810

11.6- Wild Salt CIC: £1,000

11.7-St Peter's Church: £305

12. New Grant Activities Monitoring Forms

FAP/30/2425 RESOLVED to receive the grant monitoring forms:

12.1- The Old Saw Mill

12.2- Congleton Harriers

12.3- Friends For Leisure

12.4- Congleton Building Preservation Trust

Action: Officers to look at promoting the Grants Scheme

13. Management Accounts (Enclosed)

FAP/31/2425 RESOLVED to receive the management accounts to 31st July 2024.

14. Bank Reconciliation

FAP/32/2425 RESOLVED to receive and consider the bank reconciliation as at 31st July 2024.

15. Savings Account Balances

FAP/33/2425 RESOLVED to receive the Savings Account balances as at 31st July 2024.

16. List of Payments

FAP/34/2425 RESOLVED to receive and approve the List of payments from 1st April 2024 to 31st July 2024

17. Petty Cash Verification

FAP/35/2425 RESOLVED to note Petty Cash Verification on 4th September 2024 for balance up to 31st July 2024.

18. Standing Orders for Contracts (Tender Process) Policy Review

FAP/36/2425 RESOLVED to approve the updated Standing Orders for Contracts Policy and Standing Orders and recommend to Council for approval and adoption into the Constitution.

19. Financial Regulations Review

FAP/37/2425 RESOLVED To approve the updated Financial Regulations and the Updated Procurement Policy and recommend both to Council for approval and adoption into the Constitution, with the following amendments:

1.6: to add Council delegates that authority to Finance and Policy Committee as long as the sum written off does not exceed £ 150.

4.3: to update to: forecast for the following one financial year

20. Investment Policy and Strategy Review

FAP/38/2425 RESOLVED To approve the updated Investment Policy and Investment Strategy and recommend both to Council for approval and adoption into the Constitution, with the following amendment to the third resolution:

To approve the renewal and reinvestment for 12 months of the Cambridge and Counties 1 year investment subject to any three of the five authorised individuals, the Chief Officer, the R.F.O, the Chair, Vice-Chair of Finance and Mayor, being satisfied that the rate on offer is reasonably competitive. In the event that the rate on offer not being considered to be reasonably competitive, the matured funds to be reinvested at the best rate on offer in the instant access account with the CCLA or R.B.S. and for Council to be provided with a proposal on the best options available to reinvest these matured sums.

**Meeting closed at 8.21pm
Cllr Robert Douglas
(Chair)**

Town Hall Assets and Services Committee		ANNUAL BUDGET	BUDGET TO M4	ACTUAL SPEND TO M4	£ VARIANCE OF M4 BUDGETS	% SPENT AGAINST M4 BUDGETS	% SPENT OF ANNUAL BUDGET	% VARIANCE AGAINST M4 EXPECTED	NOTES
201	Paddling Pool	54,394	18,131	14,676	3455	80.94%	27.0%	-6.32%	See separate account sheet
221	Town Hall								
	Town Hall - Expenditure	230,529	76,843	75,727	1116	98.55%	32.8%	-0.45%	See separate account sheet
	Town Hall - Income	-119,750	-39,917	-55,084	15167	138.00%	46.0%	12.70%	
	Net Expenditure over Income	110,779	36,926	20,643	16283	55.90%	18.6%	-14.67%	
225	Congleton Information Centre								
	CI - Expenditure	164,101	54,700	46,923	7777	85.78%	28.6%	-4.71%	See separate account sheet
	CI - Income	-83,210	-29,570	-17,906	-11574	60.86%	20.3%	-13.01%	
	Net Expenditure over income	75,391	25,130	28,927	-3797	115.11%	38.4%	5.07%	
263	Public Toilets	7,150	2,383	1,204	1179	50.52%	16.8%	-16.46%	
270	Benotash	319	106	83	23	78.06%	26.0%	-7.28%	
280	Streetscape								
	Streetscape Expenditure	787,095	262,365	278,493	-16128	106.15%	35.4%	2.08%	See separate account sheet
	Streetscape - Income CEC	-419,256	-139,752	-209,628	69876	150.00%	50.0%	16.70%	
	Streetscape - External work income	-15,000	-5,000	-3,134	-1866	62.68%	20.9%	-12.41%	
	Streetscape - Other	-12,000	-4,000	-36	-3964	0.00%	0.0%	-33.30%	
	Streetscape - Misc. Income	900	300	250	50	83.33%	27.8%	-5.52%	
	S/S Income	-447,156	-149,052	-213,048	63996	142.94%	47.6%	14.35%	
	Net Expenditure over Income	339,939	113,313	65,445	47868	57.76%	19.3%	-14.05%	
	THAS Income	-655,616	-218,539	-286,128	67,589	130.93%	43.6%	10.34%	
	THAS Expenditure	1,243,588	414,529	417,106	-2,577	100.62%	33.5%	0.24%	Full Committee Summary
	Total Income	-1,874,027	-624,676	-933,595	940,432	149.45%	49.8%	16.52%	Overall summary includes mayor summary figures not on this sheet
	Total Expenditure	1,874,027	620,867	614,265	-1,259,762	98.94%	32.8%	-0.52%	
	Net Income /Expenditure			-319,334	-319,330			-33.30%	
	Personnel								
	Staff Costs	1,141,489	380,496	359,592	20904	94.51%	31.5%	-1.80%	
	Personnel with Pav Award for reference								
	Permanent Staff Costs - Included budget pay award *1	1,057,591	352,530	377,572	-25041	107.10%	35.7%	2.40%	
	*1 Budgeted pay award (5%)			17,980					

Congleton Town Council							
Management Accounts 2024-25							
Jul-24							
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				01/04/2024	In	Out	Balance
Reserves as at 31st July 2024				CF Balance			45,504
310	General Reserve			287,256			287,256
Bar Marked Reserves							
318	Capital Equipment Fund			-	5,000	4,390	610
320	Capital Contingency Fund			104,421	20,000	3,204	121,217
321	EMR Elections			20,000			20,000
322	EMR Business Recovery Fund			3,204			3,204
324	EMR Crime Prevention/Traffic calming			4,357			4,357
326	EMR Congleton Partnership			10,000			10,000
327	EMR Covid/Crisis			3,333			3,333
330	EMR Ancient Treasures			3,000			3,000
331	EMR Website			30,151		274	29,877
333	EMR Training			6,000			6,000
334	EMR Town Centre (UKSPF)			1,688			1,688
337	EMR Toilets			24,012			24,012
339	EMR Public Realm			8,153			8,153
340	EMR Legal Fees			46,406		4,758	41,648
342	EMR Tourism			2,555			2,555
343	EMR Marketing			5,000			5,000
344	EMR Congleton Neighbourhood Plan			832		832	-
346	EMR Rotary Bonfire			5,000			5,000
348	EMR Civic			1,000			1,000
349	EMR CIL			21,684			21,684
354	EMR Carbon Offsetting			3,000			3,000
NEW	EMR Property Maintenance			162,468			162,468
EMR TOTALS				466,264	25,000	13,458	477,806