

F 4826 **RESOLVED: that the Councillors' Audit Certificate for July, August, and September 2022 and responses by the RFO, be noted.**

F 4827 **Interim Audit for 2022/23**

RESOLVED: that the arrangements for the first internal audit for 2022/23 with Mulberry & Co. be noted.

F 4828 **Financial Matters**

RESOLVED: that the following reports for April, May, June, July, August, and September 2022, be approved:

**April, May, June, July, August, and September 2022 Bank Reconciliations
April, May, June, July, August, and September 2022 Receipts
April, May, June, July, August, and September 2022 Payments
September 2022 Summary of Accounts**

Town Council Charges 2023/24

The revised draft scale of charges were reviewed and following a full discussion the following recommendations were made to Full Council in respect of all charges.

F 4829 **RESOLVED: that the following increases be recommended to Full Council for approval.**

- (i) 10% increase be applied to the scale of charges for Pitch Hire at Court Lodge playing fields**
- (ii) 10% increase be applied to the scale of charges for Allotments Tenancies and Advertisement Banner Displays**
- (iii) 10% increase be applied to the scale of charges for Community Hall Hire (Edmonds Hall)- subject to officer discretion.**

F 4830 **RESOLVED: to recommend to Full Council for approval that the Land Hire by Event Operators Scale of Charges be used as a basis for accepting bookings to be ratified by Leisure & Amenities Cttee and subject to the provision of full risk assessment.**

F 4831 **Horley Town Council Precept**

The RFO gave an overview of the aims and context for the 2023/24 Precept Setting and offered 3 models, lower, medium, and higher, for consideration. These had been set out in the draft Briefing Paper she had prepared with the Town Clerk which was circulated to Members before the meeting.

The Town Council budgets form the basis of the Precept and had been thoroughly reviewed by the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Finance Committee along with the Town Clerk and RFO, prior to the meeting. The benchmark inflation rate of CPI for September 2022 is 10.10% and 10% was added to the modelled budgets to account for inflation. Whilst aiming to keep the rise in Council Tax for Horley residents as low as possible, the 10% inflation rate would have a significant impact on the Council's running costs. The RFO highlighted other budgets where there was a significant change beyond the recommended inflationary increase to cover increased costs.

General maintenance budgets had been increased to address increased costs arising from ageing infrastructure at all sites. Additionally, the grounds maintenance budget had been increased as the new contract would be in place from January 2024 (cost as yet unknown, but likely to be significantly above current contract cost). The Tree Surgery budget had been

F 4831) increased to allow for the mandatory 3-year tree survey in 2023, and the Council's Combined Insurance budget had been raised to allow for the known increased cost of the premium. As suggested by the Town Clerk, the Horley in Bloom budget was renamed to 'Community Events' budget to cover all events supported by HTC and this would be increased. The Staff Costs budget had been increased to allow for annual staff increments. In addition, arrangements for succession planning together with an uplift to the professional fees budget had been factored in to acquire the correct level of expertise to get new capital projects off the ground.

Members had requested extra funds for accessible play equipment to be added to the Parks & Playgrounds Earmarked Fund. Additionally, funds needed to be added to the Election Expenses Contingency Earmarked Fund in case all the Town Wards are contested in the local elections due to be held in May 2023 and the Commercial Hub Earmarked Fund (of 5K) should be released back into General Reserve. The aim should also be to keep the level of General Reserve as close to 50% mark as possible and to build back reserve further in future years.

As part of the discussions, Members considered how they could best prioritise and progress some of the following Town Plan projects:

- Demolition of Michael Crescent Centenary Park and development of MUGA
- New accessible equipment in play areas (all sites to be considered)
- Replace ageing infrastructure in parks and open spaces. e.g., wooden fencing subject to routine repairs arising from weather damage and occasional vandalism.
- Electric Vehicle Charging Points at Town Council sites.
- Increase office accommodation space
- Carry out essential maintenance of hall and offices

Members also considered the following pressures which face the Town Council including:

- Double Taxation Agreement – ends March 2024 (under review by RBBC).
- Staffing Resources and budget for future projects.
- New Grounds Maintenance Contract estimated cost
- Ongoing maintenance of current assets – impact on budget setting.
- Requirements for new Council Administration in May 2023.

Cllr Saunders said that the Town Council had a responsibility to minimise the increases imposed on residents, bearing in mind the cost-of-living crisis. He proposed that the General Reserve remained at its current level and that the increase for residents be kept as low as possible. Cllr Baird felt that although the percentage figure was concerning, Councillors needed to promote to residents the reason for the increase. Whilst she did recognise the impact the cost-of-living crisis was presenting, the weekly increase was small in real terms. She also felt that the Town Council would need to show that something was being delivered for use of public money and thought that the Michael Crescent project might be achievable as a phased programme. She added that smaller projects which the Council might achieve, should also be publicised for information. Cllr Avery added that the Town Council is an ambitious local authority in what it wants to achieve for residents while being realistic about costs.

F 4831) Following a vote, it was agreed to recommend the maximum modelled rise in Precept (Option 3), for Full Council for approval.

RESOLVED: to recommend to Full Council for approval the draft option 3 of the draft 2023/24 Precept with the maximum modelled rise. To increase the level of General Reserve as much as possible, to enable more delivery of services and to fund some new community projects, it is recommended to precept the highest modelled increase which equates to a rise in tax of £6.25 of 15.07%.

F 4832 Surrey Association of Local Councils (SALC) and National Association of Local Councils (NALC)

The Town Clerk reported that the latest newsletter from the association, featuring Cllr Mike George as a welcomed addition to the Surrey ALC Board, had been circulated for information. Additionally, a summary of the association's AGM in October was provided which included presentations from SCC on the Environment, Infrastructure & Transport along with an overview of the '20's Plenty for Surrey' speed limits initiative; and update from the Surrey Fire & Rescue Service Area Commander on their work and new community services to assist householders with concerns about rising energy costs. The association was also working on a 'New Councillors Pack' to support candidates following the Local Elections due to be held in May. More information would be shared in due course for event planning to marks the King's Coronation in May and what powers may be used by local councils to support their events, including expenditure.

RESOLVED: noted.

F 4833 RESOLVED: that the Town Council's subscriptions to Surrey ALC and NALC for 2022/23 is £3,212.65 (Surrey ALC: £1,750.00, NALC: £1,462.65 be ratified.

F 4834 Environment Sub-Committee

The Chairman of the Environment Sub-Committee gave an overview of the meeting held prior to the Finance Meeting ([draft Minutes available on the HTC website](#)).

RESOLVED: Noted.

HTC Operational Matters

F 4835 RESOLVED: that completion of the Town Council's upgrade to the new digital telephone system, in the sum of £620.00 plus VAT, and the annual Maintenance Charge, in the sum of £275.00 plus VAT, be noted.

F 4836 Members considered a proposal for the Town Council's printer requirements and lease arrangements from its existing provider which was due for renewal shortly. Cllr Saunders and Cllr Marr felt that the contract remained very expensive and that there might be better value alternatives available elsewhere. Cllr Saunders offered to assist on sourcing a better arrangement and it was agreed that consultation with the Chairman, in conjunction with the Town Clerk, would suffice for a final decision to be made.

RESOLVED: that following further investigation on the Town Council's printer requirements, that consultation by Cllr Saunders with the Chairman, in conjunction with the Town Clerk, to make a final decision, be approved.

Letters Received

F 4837 The Town Clerk reported that a letter had been received regarding the New Boundary Review Consultation of the proposed Dorking and Horley Parliamentary Constituency. It was noted that HTC had nothing further to add to their previous response.

RESOLVED: noted.

F 4838 Diary Dates

9 November – Rededication of the Memorial Gardens
11 November – National Two Minute Silence

- F 4838)** 13 November – Remembrance Parade
14 November – HTMG
22 November – Access Group
22 November – Planning Committee
6 December – Full Council (Precept Setting)
10 December – Councillor Hospitality.
31 January 23 – Mayors Charity Dinner

RESOLVED: noted.

Meeting closed at 20:45 pm

Date of Next Meeting – 17 January 2023