



GILLINGHAM TOWN COUNCIL

The Town Hall, School Road, Gillingham, Dorset SP8 4QR

FULL COUNCIL MINUTES

Minutes of the Full Council meeting held on **Monday 24th January 2022** at The Olive Bowl, Brickfields Business Park, Gillingham, commencing at 7.30pm.

Present:

Cllr Paul Harris, QGM, Mayor
Cllr Laura Ashfield
Cllr Barry von Clemens
Cllr Fiona Cullen
Cllr Rupert Evill
Cllr Alan Frith
Cllr Mick Hill

Cllr Sharon Cullingford, Deputy Mayor
Cllr John Kilcourse
Cllr Graham Poulter
Cllr Val Potheary
Cllr Mark Walden
Cllr Keith Wareham
Cllr Roger Weeks

In attendance:

Town Clerk, Julie Hawkins
RFO, Debra Edwards
Project Administrator, Serena Burgess
One member of the public

The following joined the meeting via Microsoft Teams:

Michael Streeter, Gillingham and Shaftesbury News

671. Public Participation. Please note: a period up to a maximum of fifteen minutes will be allowed for public comments and questions restricted to items listed on the following agenda.

There was no public participation.

672. To receive apologies for absence.

It was agreed and **RESOLVED** to accept the apologies for absence from Cllr Alison von Clemens, Cllr Mike Gould, and Cllr Donna Teye who were unable to join the meeting in person due to personal reasons.

673. Declarations of Interest: Members are required to comply with the requirements of Section 27 of the Localism Act 2011 disclosable pecuniary interests.

There were no disclosable pecuniary interests.

674. To approve the minutes as a true and accurate record of the last meeting of the Full Town Council held on 13th December 2021.

It was agreed and **RESOLVED** to approve the minutes of the meeting of the Full Council held on 13th December 2021. The chairman duly signed the minutes.

675. Questions.

There were no questions.

676. To receive, consider and adopt the following standing committee reports:

a) Planning Committee Interim meeting held on Monday 13th December 2021.

It was agreed and **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Planning Committee Interim meeting held on Monday 13th December 2021 are approved and adopted.

b) HR Committee meeting held on Thursday 20th January 2022.

It was agreed and **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the HR Committee meeting held on Thursday 20th January 2022 are approved and adopted.

677. To receive and note a list of decisions made under the Temporary Scheme of Delegation as agreed by Full Council on 26th April 2021 (Minute No. 472).

A report had been circulated prior to the meeting. Please refer to [Appendix A.](#)

The list of decisions made under the Temporary Scheme of Delegation were noted.

678. To approve payments of £10,000 and over.

There were no payments of £10,000 and above.

679. To approve the payments for December as agreed at the group meeting of Finance and Policy Committee members on 17th January 2022.

A list of payments had been circulated prior to the meeting. Please refer to [Appendix B.](#)

It was agreed and **RESOLVED** that the payments for December, as presented, are approved.

680. To approve and adopt the Draft Honorary Freeman Policy as recommended at the group meeting of Finance and Policy Committee members on 17th January 2022.

It was agreed and **RESOLVED** that consideration of a draft Honorary Freeman Policy is deferred until February 2022.

681. To approve the Management Accounts to 31st December 2021 as recommended at the group meeting of Finance and Policy Committee members on 17th January 2022.

A report had been circulated prior to the meeting. Please refer to [Appendix C](#).

It was agreed and **RESOLVED** that a virement of £8,084.16 (Earmarked reserves) is made from Cost Centre 12, Old Market Centre Workshops, to Cost Centre 12a, Budget line 7211 Roman Court Workshops Refurbishment, and with this amendment, the Management Accounts to 31st December 2021 are approved.

682. To receive notification from Dorset Council of the tax base for FY 2022/23.

Details of the tax base had been circulated prior to the meeting. The tax base for Gillingham of 4,194.3 was noted.

683. To consider and agree the Budget for the Financial Year 2022/23.

A report had been circulated prior to the meeting. Please refer to [Appendix D](#).

It was agreed and **RESOLVED** that the Budget for FY 2022/23 should be set at £999,956 and the Precept should therefore be set at £969,242.

It was agreed and **RESOLVED** that Budget Lines 6030, 6046 and 6047 are removed from Cost Centre No. 7, Discretionary Powers, and a new Budget Line No. 6102 is set up under Cost Centre No. 8, Grants, called Multi-year grants at £18,815.

684. To consider and agree the Precept for the Financial Year 2022/23.

It was agreed and **RESOLVED** that the band D contribution to the Gillingham Town Council Precept for FY 2022/23 should be £231.09 - an increase of 1.93%, £4.38 per year, with the other bands increased proportionally.

Cllr Potheary expressed her thanks to all staff and councillors involved with the work to reduce the increase in the precept for FY 2022/2023.

685. To receive and approve the internal auditor's report dated 18th January 2022 and the management responses.

A report had been circulated prior to the meeting. Please refer to [Appendix E](#).

It was agreed and **RESOLVED** that the Internal Auditor's report dated 18th January 2022 and the management responses, as presented, are approved.

It was agreed and **RESOLVED** that the dates on pages 339 to 354 of the Council Minutes are amended accordingly.

It was agreed and **RESOLVED** that thanks are recorded from the council to the RFO, the Town Clerk and her team.

686. To receive and note the conclusions of a Health and Safety Audit carried out on 24th November 2021.

A report had been circulated prior to the meeting. Please refer to [Appendix F](#).

The Chairman informed the meeting that the audit concluded that there have been substantial improvements with regards to health and safety, and states that the grounds maintenance risk assessments, COSHH assessments and training records are exemplary. The Chairman expressed his thanks to all those concerned.

Cllr Weeks added his thanks and stated that work has been carried out during a difficult couple of years and the conclusion of the audit is a great achievement.

The Town Clerk thanked Cllr Weeks for his continued support and guidance with health and safety matters.

687. To receive and consider a Health and Safety Report.

A report had been circulated prior to the meeting. Please refer to [Appendix G](#).

It was agreed and **RESOLVED** that Gillingham Town Council returns to face-to-face meetings.

688. To receive and consider reports from sub-committees and task and finish groups, as follows:

a) The Queen's Platinum Jubilee Task and Finish Group

A report had been circulated prior to the meeting. Please refer to [Appendix H](#).

It was agreed and **RESOLVED** that Gillingham Town Council produce a programme of events to commemorate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee at a cost not to exceed £5,000 to be funded from Budget no. 5417, Queen's Platinum Jubilee.

It was agreed and **RESOLVED** that the task and finish group is authorised to submit applications for funding on behalf of Gillingham Town Council.

689. To receive and consider written reports from outside bodies, if available, for consideration and approval:

a) Gillingham Town Team

A report was circulated prior to the meeting. Please refer to [Appendix I](#).
There were no recommendations. The report was noted.

690. To receive and consider a report regarding CCTV in Gillingham.

A report was circulated prior to the meeting. Please refer to [Appendix J.](#)

It was agreed and **RESOLVED** that Gillingham Town Council pursue the opportunity to centralise CCTV monitoring by Dorset Council and complete and submit the required questionnaire.

691. To receive a report on the Mayor's and Deputy Mayor's civic activities.

A report was circulated prior to the meeting. Please refer to [Appendix K.](#)
There were no recommendations. The report was noted.

692. To receive and note reports from Dorset Councillors, if available.

Dorset Council agenda and minutes are available to view [here](#)

A report from Cllr Belinda Ridout was circulated prior to the meeting. Please refer to [Appendix L.](#)

693. To receive matters pertinent to this meeting. Note: Members are advised that inclusion of any item is at the Chairman's discretion and that a Council cannot lawfully decide upon any matter which is not specified in the summons (agenda).

- a) The Chairman referred to previous communications about Dorset Council's intention to align parking charges across Dorset Council car parks, on-street parking and car park permits. The Chairman informed the meeting that as part of the Parking Transformation project, Dorset Council recognise that, along with other car parking charging alignment, the policies for Blue Badge car park charging also needed to be brought into line.

Through public survey and discussion groups with Blue Badge holders, the proposed policy is designed to meet the needs of Blue Badge holders, is easy to understand and is consistent across the Dorset Council area.

The proposed policy was circulated to members prior to the meeting. The Chairman asked councillors to respond direct to parkingtransformation@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk if they had any comments. Comments must be received by Wednesday 2nd February 2022.

- b) The Chairman informed the meeting that Dorset Council has issued a Notice under Section 14 [2] of the Road Traffic Regulations Act 1984 as amended. All vehicles will be prohibited from proceeding along Common Mead Lane, Gillingham, between Common Mead Lane and Nations Road (in both directions) - a distance of approximately 55 metres. The Notice is needed in order to comply with health and safety regulations which require the provision of safe working areas and to minimise likelihood of danger to highway users.

It will come into operation on 7th February 2022 between 21:00 until 05:00 and remain in force for five days, however it is anticipated that the works will be completed by 8th February 2022. The Notice will enable Capital Traffic agents of Network Rail Infrastructure Ltd safe access to carry out a bridge inspection. The alternative route, which will be sign posted is as follows: Nations Road - Bugley Road - Westbrook Road - Kine Bush Lane.

- c) For further information about the work being undertaken, call Capital Traffic agents of Network Rail Infrastructure Ltd on 01787 237509.

To discuss the Notice, call Dorset Highways Traffic Team on 01305 221020 or email trafficteam@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk

- d) The Chairman informed members that as part of the Council's business continuity plan, The Office Manager, Mrs Jill Ezzard, has recently completed a two-year course and last week was notified that she has passed Level 3 Advanced Certificate in Book Keeping (AAT QB). The Chairman congratulated Mrs Ezzard on her achievement.

The meeting closed at 20.06

Full Council Meeting – 24 January 2022

Minute no. 677

List of decisions made under the Temporary Scheme of Delegation

Author: Julie Hawkins, Town Clerk

Item no.	Consultation Process	Decision(s) Made
1	Group Meeting of General Purposes Committee Members held on 10/01/22. Item no. 34 (d)	<p>The Workshop Task & Finish Group, having completed its role of delivering a Workshop that is fit for purpose within the overall time envelope and cost schedule, should be closed.</p> <p>The maintenance and minor development activities be treated as “business as usual” and completed under the direction of the Works Manager.</p> <p>Future projects be subject to their own Task and Finish Group(s) created at the time for the specified purpose.</p>
2	Group Meeting of Planning Committee Members held on 10/01/22. Item no. 74 (a)	<p>Recommendation of approval: Application No: P/VOC/2021/05142 Proposal: Erection of 1 no. dwelling and car port (demolish existing garage and greenhouses) (with variation of condition 1 of planning permission P/FUL/2020/00107 to amend approved plans) Location: Lockwood Farm, Shaftesbury Road, Gillingham, SP8 4LP</p>
3	Group Meeting of Planning Committee Members held on 10/01/22. Item no. 74 (b)	<p>Recommendation of refusal: Application No: P/HOU/2021/05301 Proposal: Demolition of existing and erection of replacement outbuilding for use as office, studio and additional accommodation Location: Orchard View, access to cottages off Moor Lane, Langham, Gillingham, SP8 5NX</p>

4	Group Meeting of Planning Committee Members held on 10/01/22. Item no. 74 (c)	<p>Recommendation of approval:</p> <p>Application No: P/FUL/2021/05178 (Amended Plans)</p> <p>Proposal: Change of use of former nightclub (sui generis) to gym & children's soft play (use class E). Erection of single storey side extension & internal alterations</p> <p>Location: 22 Brickfields Business Park, Gillingham, SP8 4PX</p>
5	Group Meeting of Planning Committee Members held on 10/01/22. Item no. 74 (d)	<p>Recommendation of refusal:</p> <p>Application No: P/PALH/2021/05448</p> <p>Proposal: Erection of single storey garden room extension; to extend 6 m beyond the rear wall of the original dwelling house; maximum height 2.85 m; height to eaves 2.10m</p> <p>Location: 2 Lawrence Cottages, Lawrence Walk, Gillingham SP8 4JU</p>
6	Group Meeting of Planning Committee Members held on 10/01/22. Item no. 74 (e)	<p>Recommendation of refusal:</p> <p>Application No: P/HOU/2021/05446</p> <p>Proposal: Erect single storey side extension</p> <p>Location: 8 Fairybridge Walk, Gillingham, SP8 4SE</p>
7	Group Meeting of Finance and Policy Committee Members, held on 17/01/22 Item no. 4	A recommendation is made to Full Council that the payments for December 2021, as presented, are approved.
8	Group Meeting of Finance and Policy Committee Members, held on 17/01/22 Item no. 8	The draft Honorary Freeman Policy is deferred until February 2022.
9	Group Meeting of Finance and Policy Committee Members, held on 17/01/22 Item no. 9	A recommendation is made to Full Council that a virement of £8,084 is made from Cost Centre 12, Old Market Centre Workshops to Cost Centre 12a, Roman Court Workshops.

Full Council Meeting – 24 January 2022

Minute no. 679

Gillingham Town Council - Bank payments: December 2021

Row	Ref	Supplier	Date	Details	Amount paid (including VAT where applicable)
1	9234	Dorset Council	01/12/2021	Non domestic rates – Cemetery	429.00
2	9233	Dorset Council	01/12/2021	Non domestic rates – Roman Court	1,286.00
3	9232	Dorset Council	01/12/2021	Non domestic rates – Town Hall	811.00
4	9231	Dorset Council	01/12/2021	Non domestic rates - Chantry	127.00
5	9230	Dorset Council	01/12/2021	Non domestic rates – Town Bridge Office and WC	81.00
6	9229	Dorset Council	01/12/2021	Non domestic rates – Town Bridge Office and WC	26.00
7	9208	Slick Events	01/12/2021	Stage hire Festive Lights	1,200.00
8	9196	Councillor expenses	01/12/2021	Councillor expenses	19.80
9	9207	Kingston Maurward	03/12/2021	Apprenticeship fee	250.00
10	9206	Lee Holmes	03/12/2021	Machine spares & power tools	2,533.70
11	9205	Lyreco	03/12/2021	Stationery & office chairs	416.76
12	9204	M&D Gas Services	03/12/2021	Gas boiler service Town Hall	192.00
13	9203	MG Cleaning	03/12/2021	Town Hall, Weekday and Weekend street cleaning Oct 21	3,394.00
14	9202	The Olive Bowl	03/12/2021	Venue hire meeting	60.00
15	9201	Coward Contracting	03/12/2021	Hedge trimming	540.00
16	9200	Design Jam	03/12/2021	Website maintenance monthly	102.00
17	9199	Fixadoor	03/12/2021	Service roller doors Workshop	300.00
18	9198	Glasdon	03/12/2021	Bins and seats Marlott Rd	1,877.40
19	9197	J Parker	03/12/2021	Plants	1,135.20
20	9194	Aqua Cleanng	03/12/2021	Hygiene services monthly	91.00
21	9193	AR Diesels	03/12/2021	Hoses	20.42
22	9192	Ashridge Trees	03/12/2021	Bulbs	799.42
23	9191	Barcham Trees	03/12/2021	Various trees	952.80
24	9190	Gillingham Youth Club	03/12/2021	Youth leader Oct 21	700.00
25	9189	Churches Fire	03/12/2021	Fire risk assessment & extinguisher service	608.94
26	9265	Gillingham Community & Leisure Trust	06/12/2021	Emergency Grant to Riversmeet	2,569.00
27	9195	Citizens Advice	06/12/2021	Grant for 2021/22	10,000.00

28	9320	Forward Development	07/12/2021	Rent Sports & rec land Hardings Lane	850.00
29	9319	Information Commissioner	07/12/2021	GDPR Annual fee	60.00
30	9272	Stalbridge Timber	07/12/2021	Timber for path Frog hollow	269.10
31	9316	Dorset Council	08/12/2021	HMRC and Pension November 21 payroll	15,306.33
32	9315	Right Fuel	08/12/2021	Fuel Nov 21	22.80
33	9377	Tudor	10/12/2021	Uniforms and signs	816.03
34	9359	Staff expenses	10/12/2021	Staff expenses	8.50
35	9358	Staff expenses	10/12/2021	Staff expenses	30.00
36	9357	Staff expenses	10/12/2021	Staff expenses	87.36
37	9356	Staff expenses	10/12/2021	Staff expenses	26.55
38	9355	WS Cadman	10/12/2021	First Aid training	245.00
39	9354	Ward Signs	10/12/2021	Plaques for Jubilee trees	493.00
40	9353	Vale Secretarial	10/12/2021	Secretarial services	45.00
41	9352	The Up in Smoke Theatre Co	10/12/2021	Used lighting equipment Festive Lights	1,056.60
42	9351	F Baker Muralist	10/12/2021	Herbetum illustrations	1,200.00
43	9350	Youth Resource Services	10/12/2021	Outreach worker Nov & Dec 2021	883.34
44	9349	Western Workshop Supplies	10/12/2021	Space heaters and materials Oct 21	776.32
45	9348	Tower	10/12/2021	Uniform	593.20
46	9347	Tincknell Fuels	10/12/2021	Red Diesel	503.94
47	9346	T Fattorini	10/12/2021	Civic badges	586.71
48	9345	TF Builders	10/12/2021	Garden waste	54.00
49	9344	Presentation Media	10/12/2021	Service projector	178.80
50	9343	Sydenhams	10/12/2021	Gravel and materials	464.78
51	9342	Sydenhams Hire	10/12/2021	Hire of woodchipper	212.58
52	9341	Society of Local Government Clerks	10/12/2021	Membership fees	372.00
53	9340	Screwfix	10/12/2021	Uniform, materials, tools	528.23
54	9339	Rob Beale	10/12/2021	Temporary toilet hire	240.00
55	9338	R&M Media	10/12/2021	Adverts Gillingham News	105.00
56	9337	Partnership Security	10/12/2021	Alarm call out	100.80
57	9336	Mole Valley	10/12/2021	Materials	45.37
58	9335	Lee Holmes	10/12/2021	Uniform and materials	695.93
59	9334	J Parker	10/12/2021	Plants	12.00
60	9333	Employ my Ability	10/12/2021	Plants	431.24
61	9332	EG Coles	10/12/2021	Machine repairs	493.41
62	9331	DJM Forestry	10/12/2021	Christmas Trees Festive Lights	1,380.00
63	9330	Crockers	10/12/2021	Swing Bins and materials	87.67
64	9329	Gillingham Youth Club	10/12/2021	Youth leader Nov 21	700.00
65	9407	Sage	16/12/2021	Sage accounts and payroll monthly	276.60
66	9462	MG Cleaning	21/12/2021	Town Hall, Weekday and Weekend street cleaning Nov 21	3,126.00

67	9461	Mole Valley	21/12/2021	Materials	235.10
68	9460	Plant World	21/12/2021	Plants	96.23
69	9459	Rob Beale	21/12/2021	Temporary toilet hire	96.00
70	9458	Screwfix	21/12/2021	Materials	55.00
71	9457	Sydenhams Hire	21/12/2021	Hire of platform	176.64
72	9456	Sydenhams	21/12/2021	Bark and materials	321.14
73	9455	Tudor	21/12/2021	Materials	120.94
74	9454	Western Workshop Supplies	21/12/2021	Materials Nov 21	228.24
75	9453	Amazon	21/12/2021	Headset	29.99
76	9452	Amberol	21/12/2021	Planters Herbetum	1,124.99
77	9451	Aqua Cleanng	21/12/2021	Hygiene services monthly	91.00
78	9450	Brunel	21/12/2021	Staff welfare	20.00
79	9449	Design Jam	21/12/2021	Website maintenance monthly	102.00
80	9447	DAPTC	21/12/2021	Councillor training	35.00
81	9446	Francis & Cull	21/12/2021	Instal tap workshop & repair toilet	714.00
82	9445	Lyreco	21/12/2021	Stationery	157.24
83	9444	Staff expenses	21/12/2021	Staff expenses	165.60
84	9443	Staff expenses	21/12/2021	Staff expenses	270.00
85	9463	Councillor expenses	22/12/2021	Councillor expenses	196.64
86	9478	Lloyds Bank	23/12/2021	Lloyds BACS set up fee	150.00
87	9465	British Gas	23/12/2021	Elect CCTV Hardings Lane	31.85
88	9464	Vodafone	23/12/2021	Internet Town Bridge office	9.99
89	9466	Opus	29/12/2021	Electricity various buildings	247.69
90	9469	Talk Talk	30/12/2021	Internet Chantry & Roman Court	58.74
91	9484	Payroll Dec 2021	31/12/2021	Net pay	29,068.92
TOTAL					97,689.57

Full Council Meeting – 24 January 2022

Minute no. 681

Gillingham Town Council

Management Accounts for the 9 month period - 1/4/2021 to 31/12/2021

FY2021/22

Author: Debra Edwards, RFO

Summary Report

Income (Page 1)

Total received £972,838

Precept - The full amount of £943,000 for 2021/22 has been received.

Other income amounting to £29,838 has been received which includes payments from Dorset Council for Street cleaning and Verges totalling £12,929, a Grant from First MTR SW Trains of £6,000 for the Herbetum project, £1,500 from the Education and Skills Fund Agency, £1,150 Sponsorship for Christmas Trees, and £384 for trees.

Expenditure (Page 1a)

Total Actual expenditure £640,824

(62% of the budget has been spent at 31/12/21)

Net Surplus at 31/12/2021 £332,014

Virements for Quarter 3 are shown on Page 2 of the Accounts –those highlighted are proposed at this meeting.

The detailed reports for each Cost Centre are on Pages 4 to 21 of the Accounts.

Balance Sheet (Page 3)

General Reserves at 31/12/21 £599,906.08

Earmarked Reserves at 31/12/2021 £289,255.66 (see page 3a)

Total Reserves at 31/12/2021 £889,161.44

Full Council Minutes 24/01/2022 Signed 28/02/22

Full Council Meeting – 24 January 2022

Minute no. 683 and 684

Gillingham Town Council

Budget and Precept FY 2022/23

Author: Town Clerk / RFO

Proposed reduction to Payroll Costs

At the Full Council Budget meeting held on 6th December 2021 (Minute no. 649) it was agreed and resolved that the total figure of £1,012,986 for Income/Expenditure in the draft budget for FY 2022/23 was approved in principle.

On Thursday 20th January 2022 the HR Committee agreed and resolved that a proposed new staffing structure is implemented with effect from 1 April 2022 and that the Staffing Budget for FY 2022/23 is reduced by £13,030.

The reduction of £13,030 will result in a total budget expenditure of £999,956 for FY2022/23 and will reduce the draft expenditure increase on the previous year from 3.27% (as approved on 6th December 2021) to 2.78%.

This will result in a Band D equivalent increase of £4.38 on last year, an increase of 1.93%.

Proposed change to Budget Lines

Following a discussion with the Internal Auditor on 18th January 2022 regarding the proposed 2022/23 Budgets for Grant payments it is recommended to remove the following Budget lines from Cost Centre 7 Discretionary Powers:

Budget Line: 6030 £5,415

Budget Line: 6046 £5,000

Budget Line: 6047 £8,400

Total £18,815

And consolidate and transfer this amount to Cost Centre 8 Grants Paid to a new Budget line:

Account 6102 Grants Multi-year £18,815.

Resulting in:

Revised Total Cost centre 7: Discretionary Powers £49,779

Revised Total Cost centre 8: Grants paid £31,315

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Agenda Item no. 13:

- That the Budget for FY 2022/23 should be set at £999,956 and the Precept should therefore be set at £969,242.
- That Budget Lines 6030, 6046 and 6047 are removed from Cost Centre No. 7, Discretionary Powers, and a new Budget Line No. 6102 is set up under Cost Centre No. 8, Grants, called Multi-year grants at £18,815.

Agenda Item no. 14:

- That the Band D contribution to the Gillingham Town Council Precept for FY 2022/23 should be £231.09 an increase of 1.93%, £4.38 per year, with the other bands increased proportionally.

Full Council Meeting – 24 January 2022**Minute no. 686**

Gillingham Town Council**Internal Audit Report****Report author: R Darkin-Miller****Introduction**

This report contains a note of the audit recommendations made to Gillingham Town Council following the carrying out of internal audit testing on site on the 18th January 2022.

The audit work has been carried out in accordance with the 2014 Appendix 9 of the 'Governance and Accountability for Local Councils: A Practitioners' Guide', as amended by the 2018/19 and 2019/20 IA sections of the AGAR.

An internal audit covers the review of the operation of the Council's internal control environment. It is not designed to review and give full assurance over every transaction carried out by the Council. Instead it enables the auditor, following the sample testing of a number of different types of transaction, to give an opinion as to whether or not the control objectives are being achieved across a range of financial and governance systems.

Audit Opinion

As this audit report is an interim one, no audit opinion is offered at this stage.

The report issued after the final visit for 2021/22 (which will be in May or June 2022) will contain the audit opinion for the year.

The following areas were reviewed during this audit visit:

1. Proper Book-keeping
2. Payments
3. Risk Management
4. Exemption (confirmed not covered)
5. Transparency (confirmed n/a)
6. Public Rights
7. Publication

Audit Recommendations

Recommendations made during the audit are shown in appendix one to this report.

Recommendations are graded as follows:

Rating	Significance
High	Either a critical business risk is not being adequately addressed or there is substantial non-conformity with regulations and accepted standards.
Medium	Either a key business risk is not being adequately addressed or there is a degree of non-conformity with regulations and accepted standards.
Low	Either minor non-conformity with procedure or opportunity to improve working practices further.

The number of recommendations made at this audit visit, and their priority, are summarised in the following table:

Rating	Number
High	0
Medium	0
Low	1
Information	0
TOTAL	1

I would like to thank Julie Hawkins, Town Clerk; and Debra Edwards, Responsible Financial Officer for their assistance during this audit.

Number	Detail	Priority (Low/ Medium/ High)	Management Response	Responsible Officer	Due Date
3.1 – Minutes amendments and signing	<p>I reviewed the Council minutes and noted the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Council minutes - there is a note at the bottom of each page of the date of the Council meeting to which the minutes relate, and the date of the meeting at which they were approved. Page numbers 339-354 have the wrong dates on them. 2. Planning - there is a duplicate set of minutes for the meeting of 08/11/21. The sequential page numbering follows on from the first set of minutes of 08/11/21. 3. The Town Clerk noted that the minutes of the HR Committee meetings held in October, November, and December 2021 had not been signed. The next agenda contains an agenda item to sign the minutes off. <p>I recommend that the HR Committee minutes are signed as planned, that the duplicate set of Planning minutes are removed (with page numbering amended where required), and that Council considers whether amendments are needed in respect of the dates on pp339-354.</p>	L	The HR Committee minutes will be signed as planned at the next committee meeting.	Town Clerk	20.01.22
			The duplicate set of Planning minutes will be removed from the Minute file (with page numbering amended where required).	Town Clerk	24.01.22
			The Council will consider whether amendments are needed in respect of the dates on pp339-354	Town Clerk	24.01.22

Full Council Meeting – 24 January 2022

Minute no. 686

Gillingham Town Council

Health and Safety Audit Report

Author: Julie Hawkins, Town Clerk

On Wednesday 24th November 2021 a Health and Safety Audit was carried out by Michelle Mitcham, Health and Safety Consultant for Worknest who has submitted the following report via the Council's Health and Safety Portal:

Scope:

This General Risk Assessment covers the significant health and safety issues noted and identifies areas for improvement to meet compliance. The information on which this assessment is based, was obtained from discussions with Town Council staff.

Summary:

Gillingham Town Council employs approximately 14 staff covering administrative duties and the grounds and maintenance staff who maintain the land and buildings owned by The Town Council; namely the Town Hall, Cemetery, Chapel, Garden of Remembrance, The Old Mortuary (Old Workshop), allotments, play areas, Chantry Community Office and Town Bridge Office (previously the town conveniences). Chantry and Town Bridge Offices are currently un-let and used on ad-hoc basis.

Further to this, the Council is also responsible for the maintenance and upkeep of public open spaces, some of which is informal grassland running alongside the Rivers Stour, Lodden and Shreen. The council also has land adjacent to the allotments behind the Old Workshop where there is 1 greenhouse and 3 poly tunnels where flowers are grown for hanging baskets etc.

Since the last audit the council workshops have moved to Roman Court where the council occupies and owns 7 units in a standalone industrial complex. The workshop has been entirely refurbished so suit the needs for the ground maintenance operatives and council machinery. Save for a few minor details noted in this report, the workshop was found to be well laid out and suitable for its use.

There have been substantial improvements with regards to health and safety and the grounds maintenance risk assessments and COSHH assessments, training records are exemplary.

During this visit, I was able to view the Town Hall and visited other premises on previous visits.

Attendees: Julie Hawkins Town Clerk, Simon Dobie Works Manager, Michelle Mitcham Health and Safety Consultant

Non-conformances

	Open	Closed	Due
Medium	21	-	24/02/2022
High	-	-	01/01/0001
Critical	-	-	01/01/0001

1. CORE TOPICS

WORKPLACE - PEST CONTROL

Action: Safety data sheets not obtained from contractor

Safety data sheets should be obtained for any hazardous substances used for pest control

Priority: Medium **Updated:** 26 Nov 2021

Action: Log book not maintained

Priority: Medium **Updated:** 26 Nov 2021

Ensure a pest control log book includes a floor plan showing the location of all pest control devices when pest control is required.

WORKPLACE - OTHER

Workplace - Additional observation 1

Priority: Medium **Updated:** 26 Nov 2021

Consider providing a more permanent cost-effective solution for heating at Roman Court.

GAS - CONTROLS

Action: Leakage procedure required

Priority: Medium **Updated:** 26 Nov 2021

Prepare a gas leakage procedure to identify what needs to be done in the event of a leak or emergency situation.

2. COMMON TOPICS

FUEL OIL/OIL STORAGE- CONTROLS 2

Action: Emergency information displayed on signage

Priority: Medium **Updated:** 26 Nov 2021

Ensure that signage includes details of what to do in emergency and who to contact.

3. AGRICULTURE & OUTSIDE WORK

GROUNDS MAINTENANCE- REFUELLING

Action: Drivers should complete & staff fuel awareness training

Priority: Medium **Updated:** 26 Nov 2021

Grounds staff should be provided with fire awareness training in particular with fighting liquid fuel fires.

OUTSIDE WORK- WATER (RESCUE)

Action: Emergency response not tested/documented

Priority: Medium Updated: 26 Nov 2021

Test the emergency response procedure and equipment to determine if it is effective and record the findings of the exercise.

OUTSIDE WORK- WATER (BUOYANCY AIDS)

Action: Pre-use checks not completed/recorded

Priority: Medium Updated: 26 Nov 2021

Ensure that all personnel have completed the pre-use checks, and all checks are recorded.

Action: Buoyancy aids not inspected/maintained

Priority: Medium Updated: 26 Nov 2021

Regularly Inflate automatic life jackets manually and leave for 24 hours to ensure the jacket remains inflated and record. Should the jacket deflate within 24 hours, then the jacket should be replaced. Check the webbing and the stitching that holds the webbing together and check the CO2 bottle and ensure it has not become loose.

4. HAZARDOUS SUBSTANCES & AGENTS

LEGIONELLA MANAGEMENT - GENERAL CONTROLS

Action: Temperature of stored hot water inadequate

Priority: Medium Updated: 26 Nov 2021

Check boiler settings to ensure that water is being heated for distribution to taps and showers to 60°C.

Action: Shower heads not cleaned/descaled

Priority: Medium Updated: 26 Nov 2021

When the showers at Roman Road are commissioned, arrange for shower heads to be cleaned and descaled on a quarterly basis to prevent the growth of

Legionella bacteria.

Action: Outbreak procedure required

Priority: Medium Updated: 26 Nov 2021

Develop procedures for dealing with a potential outbreak situation

Legionella - Additional observation 1

Priority: Medium Updated: 26 Nov 2021

Identify outlets at the allotment and Roman Road not deemed suitable for drinking water with "not drinking water" signage.

5. TRANSPORT, MOVEMENT & STORAGE

MOTOR VEHICLE REPAIR- TYRE CHANGING

Action: Clip on chucks/adequate hose length not provided

Priority: Medium **Updated:** 26 Nov 2021

Airlines should be fitted with a clip-on chuck and at least 2 to 3 metres of hose to enable personnel to stand clear when inflating tyres. Where this is not possible 45 degrees from the edge of the tyre should be maintained whilst inflating tyres utilising the use of the quick release couplings on the hose.

MOTOR VEHICLE REPAIR - TWO POST HYDRAULIC LIFTS

Action: Automatic arm lock not checked daily

Priority: Medium

Updated: 26 Nov 2021

Automatic arm locks should be checked daily to ensure it is operational and records are retained.

Action: Locking device not checked when lift unloaded

Priority: Medium **Updated:** 26 Nov 2021

The lift should be operated whilst unloaded to a point sufficient to operate locking device and check it is functional.

Action: Faults not rectified/recorded

Priority: Medium **Updated:** 26 Nov 2021

All faults identified should be rectified and recorded before use.

MOTOR VEHICLE REPAIR - EXAMINATION OF LIFTING EQUIPMENT

Action: Thorough examination of lifting equipment required

Priority: Medium **Updated:** 26 Nov 2021

Lifting equipment should be thoroughly examined at least annually or at frequency determined by the competent person.

Action: Thorough examination of lifting accessories required

Priority: Medium **Updated:** 26 Nov 2021

Lifting accessories should be thoroughly examined and tested every six months.

Action: Records not retained

Priority: Medium **Updated:** 26 Nov 2021

Records should be retained of all examinations and testing

Recommendation:

- **That all recommendations of the Health and Safety Audit are actioned**

Full Council Meeting – 24 January 2022

Minute no. 687

Gillingham Town Council

Health and Safety Report January 2022

Author: Julie Hawkins

COVID-19 Restrictions

On 19 January 2022, the prime minister confirmed the Plan B measures in place in England will come to an end. The end of the government advice on home working has immediate effect and Town Council staff have now returned to work at the Town Hall.

It is recommended that the Council return to face-to-face meetings at the Town Hall. Gillingham Town Council will continue to update risk assessments in accordance with government guidelines and will continue to ensure that any physical meetings take place safely. Councillors, members of the public and the press will be offered the option to join meetings via MS Teams; however, in accordance with legislation, councillors attending meetings via MS Teams will not be permitted to vote.

Recommendation:

- **That Gillingham Town Council returns to face-to-face meetings.**

Full Council Meeting – 24 January 2022

Minute no. 688a

Gillingham Town Council

The Queen's Platinum Jubilee Task and Finish Group Report

Author: Cllr Donna Toye

Plans are beginning to take shape and have been split into those organised by Gillingham Town Council and those organised by outside organisations.

1. Organised by Gillingham Town Council

1.1 Civic Parade and Service – Friday 3rd June 2022

The Mayor's Executive Assistant is organising the Civic Parade on behalf of Gillingham Town Council.

Road closure information

A road closure application has been submitted for the following times:

School Lane and High Street closed between School Lane and the Parish Church of St Mary the Virgin 10.30am – 11.30am

From the Parish Church of St Mary the Virgin to School Lane 12.00pm – 12:45pm

Invitations will be sent to parade participants in the next couple of weeks.

1.2 Programme

Like previous occasions in the town it is hoped to be able to deliver a souvenir programme for every household in Gillingham, currently 4,800 houses and allowing for businesses, (put in waiting rooms etc) we would advise that quotes are sought for 5,500 booklets. Timescales will be tight, and it is recommended that this is a project that Gillingham Town Council owns in order to be able to control content. Full Council would need to approve the final copy (expected to be March Full Council). It is proposed that the Task and Finish group administer the programme due to tight timescales – tender process to be completed in accordance with the town council's Financial Regulations.

2. Programme of Events

2.1 Outline programme plan

It is proposed that the programme will be a 20 page document which will include the following:

- Pictures - 1952 pictures of Queen's visit to Gillingham, pictures of coronation celebrations in Gillingham 1953, further appropriate images to be sought (relevant to the town specifically where possible).
- Advertising space or List of sponsors
- Programme of events (both national and local)

Quotations would need to be sought urgently in order to hit completion in time to distribute.

2.2 Funding – programme

It is proposed to fund the production of the programme through a combination of adverts and sponsorship – with the aim of not using funds from the council's budget.

3. Legacy

3.1 Queens Green Canopy (QGC)

At the General Purposes Committee meeting held on 1st November 2021 (Minute no. 223b) it was agreed that one tree is planted at each of the following sites: Ham Farm, Jubilee Fields, Rolls Bridge and Shiresgate and once planted each tree will be photographed and uploaded on to the QGC map. Trees and plaques have been ordered and once they have been delivered, the Mayor's Executive Assistant will be inviting the Lord Lieutenant of Dorset and one representative from each Gillingham School to a tree planting ceremony with the Mayor.

3.2 Commemorative Stone

The Task and Finish group would like to explore options of a small (stone or similar) commemoration, as a permanent structure with minimal ongoing maintenance costs. It is important that this should not be a liability to future generations in the town and should be sited with care.

4. Organised by outside groups and organisations

- The Big Lunch
- 1950s display (Museum and Library)
- 1950s themed high street
- Spot the oddity competition
- Children's decorate a crown competition
- Beacon - We are still exploring options with outside organisations to see if Gillingham can match this part of the national schedule
- Music festival at the football club
- Other events still under discussion and being finalised

5. Funding

The Arts Council Lottery fund is now open – the Task and Finish group cannot submit an application due to the Town Council being a statutory body. The group will explore other opportunities for grant funding and circulate information to other groups and organisations in the town. For reference the links are below:

<https://platinumjubilee.gov.uk/funding/>

[Let's Create Jubilee Fund | Arts Council England](#) – deadline is 28 February

[National Lottery Awards for All England | The National Lottery Community Fund \(tnlcommunityfund.org.uk\)](#) – no deadline given as yet

6. General

The proposed (not fully confirmed or final) Timetable remains as follows:

Thursday 2nd June 2022 – Crown Competition, Beacon at dusk

Friday 3rd June 2022 – Civic Parade, social events (tbc but in planning)

Saturday 4th June 2022 – Music event

Sunday 5th June 2022 – Big Lunch

National information is found [here](#) although timings are still unspecified.

Thursday 2nd June 2022 – Trooping the colour, Beacon at dusk

Friday 3rd June 2022 – Service of Thanksgiving

Saturday 4th June 2022 – Derby and Platinum Party at the Palace

Sunday 5th June 2022 – Big Lunch and Platinum Jubilee Pageant

General – Green Canopy and Pudding competition

7. Date of next meeting:

- 25 January 2022 7pm Teams Meeting

Of Note - We are still looking for a piper for 21:15 on Thursday 2nd June.

Recommendations

- **That Gillingham Town Council produce a programme of events to commemorate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee at a cost not to exceed £5,000 to be funded from Budget no. 5417, Queen's Platinum Jubilee.**
- **That the task and finish group is authorised to submit applications for funding on behalf of Gillingham Town Council.**

Full Council Meeting – 24 January 2022

Minute no. 689a

Gillingham Town Council

Gillingham Town Team Report

Author – Ian Day, Chairman

- **Cinema Group.** The Old Co-op site in the High Street has been removed as an option due to the unaffordable costs. At the same time a new site plus one existing available site in the Town Centre is now under consideration.
- **Business Improvement District (BID).** BID feasibility work (surveys and meetings) are to be resumed in January and February. Early survey results show a good majority (c70%) in favour of proceeding.
- **White Hart Market.** A meeting is in the diary (Feb 13th) with the management to discuss fresh initiatives to increase interest from stall holders and footfall from citizens. Any ideas are very welcome from Councillors.
- **Gillingham Station.** We are now acting as liaison between Friends of Gillingham Station (FOGS) (Ann Tobin) and Blackmore Vale Partnership regarding joint activity and funding.

Full Council Meeting – 24 January 2022

Minute no. 690

Gillingham Town Council

CCTV in Gillingham

Author: Serena Burgess, Project Administrator

Background

Currently Gillingham Town Council own and fund the CCTV cameras that are monitored by Gillingham Police. The Council are classed as the data controllers under the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR), although the Council do not have access to the data.

The Dorset Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) has a desire to support Town and Parish Councils to centralise CCTV monitoring within Dorset Council – Dorset Council have received Government funding for the expansion of their control room to provide 24/7 monitoring.

Costs

The PCC has indicated a willingness to consider one-off contributions towards the capital costs for connecting parish or town council owned CCTV schemes to the Dorset Council CCTV Control Room, on a case-by-case basis. The PCC is open to costed solutions that would benefit the community by having their CCTV system centrally monitored and potentially able to be accessed for investigation/evidence by police officers.

Prior to any approach to the PCC for funding, Parish and Town Councils must have already financially committed to the programme of work and have had an open dialogue with John Newcombe, Dorset Council Service Manager Licensing and Community Safety Operations, to ensure all costs and resources associated with achieving connectivity have been considered.

Gillingham Town Council would need to contribute towards the ongoing cost of monitoring and maintenance. The current available funds for CCTV as of 19/1/22 is as follows -

NL6042 CCTV repairs Earmarked Reserves available = £9,915

NL6044 CCTV Cameras and ANPR - Budget unspent available 2021/22 = £12,500

Total available CCTV repairs and new cameras/ANPR 21/22 = £22,415

Progress to Date

Meetings have taken place involving John Newcombe (as referred to above), Debbie Oldfield (Dorset Police Crime Prevention Advisor) and Tony Gleason (BCP Council's CCTV Manager and Chairman of the National Public CCTV Manager Association). A survey of existing cameras and locations has also been carried out.

An improved monitoring service would be of great benefit to Gillingham.

Next Steps

In order to move towards centralisation, the next step is to complete a questionnaire by 18 February 2022. Potential costs of upgrades, transmission to Dorchester and any costs/implications of the town centre CCTV system being monitored pro-actively by operators at Dorchester will then be determined.

Recommendation:

- **That Gillingham Town Council pursue the opportunity to centralise CCTV monitoring by Dorset Council and complete and submit the required questionnaire.**

Full Council Meeting – 24 January 2022

Minute no. 691

Gillingham Town Council

Mayor's Report January 2022

Author: Cllr Paul Harris QGM, Mayor of Gillingham

This report covers the period 14th December 2021 to 22 January 2022. It has been quiet, covering the Christmas period and the start of the new year.

19th December – Civic Carol Service, St Mary the Virgin Parish Church, Gillingham

The annual carol service this year was a smaller and shorter than usual event with a limited number of Carols and readings. I welcomed the Chair of Dorset Council and her consort plus an external civic representative and his consort. The event was supported by Councillors and the public. The choir sang beautifully throughout the service and we were treated to a wonderful solo from a young choir member. I had the honour of making one of the Readings during the service.

Sincere thanks go to the clergy, choir and all attendees for creating a delightful event.

January 2022 – Civic Chain Refurbishment

Anticipating a quiet civic period in January, we took the opportunity to have the Mayor's chain refurbished by having it regilded by a specialist jeweller.

Full Council Meeting – 24 January 2022

Minute no. 692

Gillingham Ward Monthly Report

Cllr Belinda Ridout – January 2021

I wish everyone a Happy New Year!! Let's hope it's a better year all round. Personally I cannot wait for Spring to arrive - there are already some signs! Council wise it looks like it's going to be another busy year and challenging year.

Dorset Vaccination Programme – as at 31st December 2021:

- Every adult in Dorset has been offered a COVID-19 booster jab to boost their immunity against the Omicron variant.
- 450,780 booster jabs have been given to eligible people in the county. Out of those eligible, 82% take-up achieved, exceeding 80% target.
- Since the start of COVID-19 vaccination programme in December 2020, there have been more than 1.5 million jabs in arms in Dorset.
- A renewed call for young people to complete their COVID-19 vaccination jabs as early as they can in this New Year.

Dorset Council continues to encourage people to come forward, including those who haven't yet had their first or second jabs.

Local Waste Recycling Record - recently published figures from the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs show that Dorset Council's recycling rate hit a record high last year, the pandemic probably having a large part to do with the increase. More people at home obviously resulted in more waste being collected at the kerbside and residents 'putting the right stuff in the right bin' has contributed to the great success of the 'Recycle for Dorset Kerbside Collection' scheme. During 2020/21, the amount of waste the Dorset Council sent for recycling, reuse or composting has risen from 58.9% to 60.1%. Out of 330 councils nationwide, this makes Dorset the 8th best performing council in England and 3rd top performing unitary council. Recycle for Dorset kerbside collection scheme.

Dorset Health Walks - a health walk is a free, short and regular guided walk that lasts between ten to ninety minutes for people of all abilities. The perfect way to get more active and to meet new people. Specially trained volunteer health walk leaders provide encouragement and support. Dorset Health Walks are an accredited scheme run in partnership with The Ramblers Wellbeing Walks. Details of Gillingham walks:

- Meet Gillingham Library, Monday's, 2.30pm. walk provided by Gillingham Walkers. (No dogs except assistance dogs). Contact Penny: 01747 823774.
- Meet Gillingham Town Meadow, SP8 4AA on Tuesday's, 2.30pm. Contact Debbie: 01747 853006,

Or go along to the meeting point ten minutes before start time to be registered. Walks take place whatever the weather. Dogs are generally welcome but must be kept on a lead.

Housing Need Figures for Dorset – As part of the development of the Dorset Council Local Plan, members heard that independent consultants have carried out an assessment of the housing needs of specific groups such as the elderly, those with disabilities and those who cannot afford market housing. The consultants also considered whether there are grounds to plan for alternative housing need figures in the Dorset and BCP Council areas. The study uses a different methodology to the standard Government approach and suggests that the numbers for BCP might be significantly reduced due to assumptions about international migration to Bournemouth.

The Dorset Council area is not affected in this way and the same methodology results in an increase in Dorset Council's housing need. Dorset Council is considering this evidence and all responses to the local plan consultation and councillors will decide on revisions to the plan next year. The consultation document, published in 2021, suggested that Dorset Council would use the Government's standard methodology to determine the local housing need.

The timeline for the Dorset Local Plan

Stage 1

Initial evidence gathering, review of former district/borough local plans, consultation on-going. We are currently at this stage.

Stage 2

Publication of the draft local plan for comment, including Sustainability Appraisal & Environmental Report, May 2022.

Stage 3

Submission of the Dorset Local Plan, including comments made and supporting evidence to the Planning Inspectorate, October 2022.

Stage 4

Examination in public, where soundness and legal compliance is tested. Inspector writes report suggesting possible modifications. Spring 2023.

Stage 5

Adoption of the local plan if found sound, becoming part of the development plan. Sustainability Appraisal adoption statement produced. **Adoption Winter 2023.**

New Dorset Education Advice Line for parents, carers and professionals who support children who may have special educational needs and/or a disability (SEND). Freephone 0800 14 040 41. Lines open Monday to Friday, 10am to 4pm, term time only.

Blue Badge Car Park Charging Policy – As part of Dorset Council's Parking Transformation project to align parking charges across DC car parks, on-street parking and car park permits, policies for Blue Badge car park charging also need to be brought into line. Through public survey and discussion groups with Blue Badge holders, the proposed policy is designed to meet the needs of Blue Badge holders, is easy to understand and is consistent across the Dorset Council area.

Dorset's Hospital Crisis – an urgent appeal to relatives who can play a key part in helping loved ones to leave hospital, as the NHS and social care enters an extremely difficult time and the demand for hospital beds is very high.

The support of relatives is highly valued and can be a key part in enabling patients who are medically ready to leave hospital, so they can be more comfortable and recover more quickly at home. This could include providing some personal care for relatives in their home, including looking after them during the initial period after they have left hospital; support with shopping, administering medication, changing dressings, meal preparation, checking on their welfare and wellbeing by regular contact, particularly following discharge from hospital.

Friends and neighbours can also play a valued role in supporting people in the local community. Relatives can find resources to help assist them in this role at: <https://www.mylifemycare.com/article/6307/Leaving-hospital> [dorsethealthcare.nhs.uk](https://www.dorsethealthcare.nhs.uk), Home First, discharge from hospital and recovery at home.

Bus Back Better – Last year I reported on the need for Dorset Council to submit a Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) as required by government under the national 'Bus Back Better' strategy for England (launched 15th March 2021), which aims to rejuvenate local bus services.

Each local authority has to produce a BSIP, which is a long-term strategic plan to coordinate services and future investment through an Enhanced Partnership (EP) approach. Following extensive evidence gathering and wide stakeholder consultation, the finalised BSIP was submitted to government on 28th October, requesting £92m over 3 years to deliver very comprehensive improvements across all forms of public transport, including cycle/pedestrian ways and to sustain these improvements going forward.

To date there has been no response from the Department for Transport, but officers remain hopeful as the submission is very robust and very deliverable. In the meantime, work has been concentrated on developing the required Enhanced Partnership (an approach which makes perfect sense to me and should be taken forward regardless of funding). This principally means working with all local bus operators. A formal Enhanced Partnership Plan and Scheme is required in place and effective from 1st April 2022. This is the means by which the BSIP will be delivered.

Formal consultations are ongoing with bus operators and wider stakeholders, including organisations representing local transport passengers. The EP Plan is a high-level vision and objectives for bus services in the local area, closely following the BSIP and the Scheme sets out the precise detail of how the BSIP vision and objectives will be achieved. A 28 day formal consultee exercise is required by legislation to ensure that wider stakeholders are also content with the approach being taken and the initial EP Plan and Scheme document prepared.

The formal consultee exercise will commence after stakeholder briefing events set for the 19th and 20th January 2022. All parish councils will be contacted again regarding the consultation exercise and the briefing events. Formal consultees include all operators of local bus services; organisations that represent local passengers (transport advisory and action groups); other local authorities that would be affected by the proposals; Traffic

Commissioners; Chief of Police of each area and any relevant organisations that have not participated in consultations to date.

The EP will be governed by a two-tier structure: The EP Board, made up of 3 Council heads (Planning, Highways and Transport), 4 operator representatives and 1 community transport operator, will oversee the delivery of The Plan and Scheme, and the EP Forum, made up of all bus operators, community transport operators, the Council, neighbouring Local Transport Authorities, train operators and Network Rail, express coach operators and the chair of the Bus User and Stakeholder (BUS) Group plus other groups/stakeholders invited as and when required. The Forum will support the Board as an advisory group.

A supporting Bus User and Stakeholder (BUS) Group will represent the wider group of representatives including bus passengers, business groups, tourism, education, health and disability and access groups, reporting the views of passengers and third parties on the performance of bus services locally and ideas on how to improve bus services in the BSIP's area.

Chaired by the Council Cabinet Lead Member for Environment, Travel & Harbours, will ensure that views of passengers, the wider public and stakeholders can be regularly fed into the Forum to consider and propose recommendations on how issues can be addressed through the EP Scheme.

Dorset Council Budget 2022/23 – I reported last month that Dorset Council faces a budget gap of just under £36.1m in 2022-23 and that the proposed balanced budget will close this gap to £4.5m by applying a wide range of savings. The council proposes to increase council tax next year by just under 2% and to levy the adult social care precept of 1% - in line with the Government's Spending Review. This is equivalent to £1.02 extra per week for a Band D property. At the time it was anticipated that the remaining shortfall of £4.5m will be closed when the Government announces the final allocation of funding in late December.

I can report that the budget settlement from Government for the next financial year, 2022-23 was a welcome bit of good news. The settlement was more than anticipated, meaning Dorset Council is on track for a balanced budget next year. Draft balanced budget proposal for 2022-23 will go to Cabinet on 18th January and to Full Council on 15th February 2022.

Nominate your volunteer hero – as reported last month, the closing date is **31st January 2022**. Nomination forms can be found online (Dorset Volunteer Heroes) and in the winter edition of the Dorset Council magazine.

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