



AGENDA FOR THE MEETING OF COUNCIL MATTERS COMMITTEE MONDAY 11TH DECEMBER 2023 AT 6.30PM IN THE GUILDHALL

There are stairs to the Council Chamber but if any member of the public has mobility issues the Council can relocate to the lower Guildhall.

You are hereby SUMMONED to attend the **Council Matters Committee** on **Monday 11th December 2023 at 6.30pm** in the Guildhall for the purpose of transacting the following business:

Committee Members: Councillors B Piper (Chair), C Beavis, T Bennett, J Chinnock, J Hannam, J Hodgson, D Peters and E Price.

1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

The Chair will read out the following statement:

Welcome to everyone attending and observing the meeting.

A reminder that open proceedings of this meeting will be video recorded. If members of the public make presentations, they will be deemed to have consented to being recorded. By entering the Council Chamber attendees are also consenting to being recorded.

This meeting is limited to 90 minutes and therefore members are asked to raise their points succinctly and not repeat the same view expressed by colleagues if it does not add to the debate.

To receive apologies and to confirm that any absence has the approval of the Council.

The Committee will adjourn for the following items:

PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

A period of 15 minutes will be allowed for members of the public to ask questions or make comment regarding the work of the Committee or other items that affect Totnes.

The Committee will convene to consider the following items:

2. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

To approve the minutes of 13th November 2023 and update on any matters arising. Document attached.

3. BUDGET MONITOR

To consider the Budget Monitor including the reserves projection. Document attached.

4. DRAFT 2024/25 BUDGET

To consider an initial draft budget for financial year 2024/25. Document attached. Recommendations to Full Council needed on:

- a) Precept for 2024/25

- b) Annual budget for 2024/25
- c) Anticipated spend from Reserve in 2024/25

Please note that the budget presented has a staffing element that must be discussed in part 2 under item 10.

5. CHRISTMAS LIGHTS WASH UP

To consider the Christmas Lights project, its outcome and challenges to inform future years' planning. Document attached.

6. COUNCIL ASSETS AND PUBLIC REALM WORKING GROUP

To note the minutes of the Council Assets and Public Realm Working Group held on 21st November and consider the recommendations (items 3, 7 and 9). Document attached.

7. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

To note the date of the next meeting of the Council Matters Committee – Monday 15th January 2024 at 6.30pm in the Guildhall. No document.

*The Committee will be asked to **RESOLVE** to exclude the press and public "by reason of the confidential nature of the business" to be discussed and in accordance with the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960. (CONFIDENTIAL by virtue of relating to legal and/or commercial matters, staffing and/or the financial or business affairs of a person or persons other than the Council)*

8. BANK STATEMENTS AND RECONCILIATIONS (Standing Item)

To consider the bank statements and reconciliations for October (financial). Documents attached.

9. STAFFING BUDGET

To consider the staffing budget and information on staff roles (staffing and financial). Document to follow.

10. STAFFING UPDATE

For any general or urgent updates that required confidential sharing with Councillors (staffing). Verbal update.

Catherine Marlton
Town Clerk
6th December 2023

USE OF SOUND RECORDINGS AT COUNCIL & COMMITTEE MEETINGS

The open proceedings of this Meeting will be audio and video recorded. If members of the public make a representation, they will be deemed to have consented to being recorded. By entering the Council Chamber or Zoom meeting, attendees are also consenting to being recorded.

Televised, vision and sound recordings or live broadcastings by members of the press or public at Council or Committee debates are permitted and anyone wishing to do so is asked to inform the Chairman of the respective Committee of their intention to record proceedings.



DRAFT MINUTES FOR THE MEETING OF COUNCIL MATTERS MONDAY 13TH NOVEMBER 2023 AT 6.30PM IN THE GUILDHALL

Present: Councillors B Piper (Chair), C Beavis, T Bennett, J Chinnock, J Hannam, D Peters .

Apologies: Cllrs Hodgson and Price.

In Attendance: C Marlton (Town Clerk) and C Bewley (Finance, HR and Lettings Manager).

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

The Chair read a statement about how the meeting would be conducted and recorded. The apologies were accepted.

The Committee will adjourn for the following items:

PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were no members of the public present.

The Committee will reconvene to consider the following items:

2. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

To approve the minutes of 9th October 2023 and update on any matters arising.

The minutes were **AGREED** as an accurate record of the proceedings.

3. BUDGET MONITOR

To consider the Budget Monitor including the reserves projection and Christmas budgets.

This was considered and **AGREED**.

4. DRAFT STRATEGIC PLAN

To note any update on the draft Strategic Plan for 2023-2027 and the timeline for Council considerations.

To RECOMMEND to Full Council that the timeline for the Strategic Plan and Budget setting is amended as follows:

- Monday 4th December – Draft Strategic Objectives are sent to the Clerk for consideration and they are built into the draft budget.
- Wednesday 6th December – Council Matters Committee agenda and papers are sent out to include a draft budget and draft Strategic Objectives (instead of the wider overall plan due to time constraints).
- Monday 11th December – Council Matters Committee makes recommendations to the January 2024 Full Council on Strategic Objectives, the financial year 2024/25 budget and 2024/25 precept amount.
- Monday 8th January – Full Council sets the Strategic Objectives, budget and precept.
- During January – Task and Finish meetings continue to embed the Strategic Objectives in a wider Strategic Plan.

- February Council Matters – draft Strategic Plan is considered.
- March Full Council – Strategic Plan is considered for adoption.

5. INITIAL DRAFT 2024/25 BUDGET

To consider an initial draft budget for financial year 2024/25.

The draft financial year 2024/25 budget was noted.

6. PAYMENT CONTRARY TO THE CIVIC BUDGET AND MAYORAL ALLOWANCE POLICY

To consider the suspension of the Civic Budget Policy as set out in section b) for the payment of a gift for the recent Vire visit.

It was **AGREED** to pay the expense claim contrary to policy.

7. RISK REGISTER

To consider a draft Town Council risk register

The Risk Register was reviewed and unanimously **AGREED**.

8. BUSINESS CONTINUITY PLAN

To consider a draft Town Council business continuity plan.

The Business Continuity Plan was reviewed and unanimously **AGREED**.

9. INCREDIBLE EDIBLES MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING REVIEW

To review the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Incredible Edibles for the fruit and nut trees in Totnes Cemetery.

The Incredible Edibles MoU was reviewed and unanimously **AGREED**.

10. ARTS AND EVENTS WORKING GROUP

To note the minutes of the Council Assets and Public Realm Working Group held on 19th September.

Noted. It was **AGREED** that:

- Items 1 and 2 - £15,000 for Totnes Festival 2024 and £9,000 for the Bridgetown Community Festival be considered as part of the 2024/25 budget setting process. In order to be able to consider this request a full breakdown of the expected event costs is needed, in particular how the Council's funding would be allocated and other confirmed sources of income/grant funding.
- Item 8 - the graffiti patch on the Civic Hall is painted and colour matched on the one side of the gable affected to minimise costs.

11. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

To note the date of the next meeting of the Council Matters Committee – Monday 11th December 2023 at 6.30pm in the Guildhall.

Noted.

*The Committee will be asked to **RESOLVE** to exclude the press and public "by reason of the confidential nature of the business" to be discussed and in accordance with the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960. (CONFIDENTIAL by virtue of relating to legal and/or commercial matters, staffing and/or the financial or business affairs of a person or persons other than the Council)*

12. BANK STATEMENTS AND RECONCILIATIONS (Standing Item)

To consider the bank statements and reconciliations for September (financial).

These were reviewed and unanimously **AGREED**.

13. STAFF RECRUITMENT

To consider the recruitment timeline for the green travel coordinator vacancy (staffing).

It was unanimously **AGREED** to defer the recruitment of the Sustainability/Green Travel Officer until the Strategic Objectives and financial year 2024/25 budget is set in January 2024.

14. STAFFING BUDGET

To consider the staffing budget and information on staff roles (staffing and financial).

The following points were noted:

- The 23 24 pay award and update of the staffing budget accordingly was noted.
- The current projected underspend on financial year 2023/24 staffing due to the resignation of the Sustainability/Green Travel Officer and the vacant role of Community Fundraiser.

The detailed information on possible savings on the staffing budget from financial year 2024/25 onwards was noted. It was **AGREED** to consider this detail at December Council Matters Committee and make a recommendation to Full Council in January when the overall budget will be set.

15. STAFFING UPDATE

For any general or urgent updates that required confidential sharing with Councillors (staffing).

- a. To consider an officer request for a loan.**

The request for a staff loan to buy a parking permit was **AGREED**, subject to the signing of a repayment agreement.

Catherine Marlton
Town Clerk
October 2023

| Budget Monitor - November 2023 | | 20/21 YEAR END | 21/22 YEAR END | 22/23 YEAR END | 2023/24 | | | Comments |
|---|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------|---|
| | Actual 31st March 2021 YEAR END | Actual 31st March 2022 YEAR END | Actual 31st March 2023 YEAR END | Original Budget | Current Agreed budget | Actual as of 30th November 2023 | Expected year end | |
| Administration | 246894 | 294138 | 350889 | 411865 | 412023 | 267702 | 386000 | ITEM 3 Expected year end based on a suspension of advertising vacant roles at the moment, circa £26k saving. |
| Salaries and pensions for all staff | | | | | | | | |
| Staff Training, Travel and Expenses | 2287 | 4244 | 2988 | 3500 | 3500 | 3708 | 3500 | |
| Staff Recruitment | 2575 | 1930 | 984 | 2750 | 2750 | 0 | 2750 | Underspend likely |
| Phone and Broadband | 2343 | 2932 | 2984 | 3500 | 3500 | 1700 | 3500 | |
| Office Supplies & Hospitality | 1564 | 1100 | 1370 | 2300 | 2300 | 125 | 2300 | |
| Photocopier | 1496 | 1536 | 1575 | 1600 | 1600 | 1056 | 1600 | |
| Subscriptions | | 4463 | 4191 | 4400 | 4400 | 3554 | 4400 | |
| Professional Fees | | 53812 | 15062 | 10000 | 10000 | 3395 | 10000 | Underspend likely |
| Insurance | 7431 | 7514 | 26105 | 29000 | 29000 | 19007 | 30902 | |
| Website and IT | | 3696 | 4618 | 7500 | 7500 | 2210 | 7500 | |
| Office Equipment | 5082 | 1999 | 1412 | 15000 | 15000 | 2571 | 10000 | Underspend likely |
| Van Maintenance | | 258 | 207 | 1325 | 1325 | 436 | 1325 | |
| TMO Tools and Consumables | | 1322 | 1162 | 1650 | 1650 | 972 | 1650 | |
| Miscellaneous income | | -40 | -180 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 100 | |
| SUB TOTAL | 269672 | 378904 | 413367 | 494390 | 494548 | 315751 | 465327 | |
| Civic and Democratic | Actual 31st March 2021 YEAR END | Actual 31st March 2022 YEAR END | Actual 31st March 2023 YEAR END | Original Budget | Current Agreed budget | Actual as of 30th November 2023 | Expected year end | |
| Mayoral Allowance | 0 | 557 | 0 | 450 | 450 | 0 | 450 | |
| Civic and Mayoral Events (expenditure) | 743 | 959 | 3014 | 5750 | 5750 | 3354 | 5750 | Underspend likely |
| Civic Events (income) | 0 | 0 | -717 | 0 | 0 | 567 | 567 | |
| Civic Regalia | 0 | 110 | 212 | 220 | 220 | 95 | 220 | |
| Mayoral Travel | 0 | 7 | 185 | 300 | 300 | 271 | 300 | |
| Councillor IT equipment | 2069 | 356 | 14 | 2500 | 2500 | 82 | 2500 | Underspend likely |
| Councillor Training and Travel | 1085 | 210 | 514 | 1120 | 1120 | 499 | 1120 | |
| Elections | 0 | 9524 | 0 | 12000 | 12000 | 0 | 12000 | |
| Councillor Allowances | 3152 | 2644 | 1970 | 7200 | 7200 | 0 | 7200 | Underspend likely |
| MOVED TO COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT Community Outreach/Christmas | 2436 | 4747 | 6165 | | | | | |
| MOVED TO ADMIN Professional Fees | 11032 | | | | | | | |
| MOVED TO ADMIN Subscriptions | 3009 | | | | | | | |
| MOVED TO ADMIN Website and IT | 293 | | | | | | | |
| SUB TOTAL | 23819 | 19114 | 11357 | 29540 | 29540 | 3327 | 28873 | |
| Tourism | Actual 31st March 2021 YEAR END | Actual 31st March 2022 YEAR END | Actual 31st March 2023 YEAR END | Original Budget | Current Agreed budget | Actual as of 30th November 2023 | Expected year end | |
| Visit Tothnes Marketing and event sponsorship | 6108 | 18966 | 20595 | 29500 | 29500 | 11607 | 29500 | |
| Other TIC expenditure (Post/Phone/Uniform/etc) | 275 | 306 | 220 | 275 | 275 | 959 | 959 | Includes £680 backdated TIC rent |
| Bank Charges/Paypal fees | 0 | 33 | 4 | 50 | 50 | 0 | 50 | |
| Visit Tothnes Guide and Website | 3135 | 12308 | 9056 | 6200 | 6200 | 577 | 6200 | |
| Tothnes Guide and Website Income | -468 | -12283 | -10990 | -6500 | -6500 | -2597 | -6500 | |
| Advertising | | -3289 | -1750 | -500 | -500 | 3183 | -3633 | |
| SUB TOTAL | 9050 | 16041 | 17135 | 29025 | 29025 | 3966 | 26576 | |
| Guidhall | Actual 31st March 2021 YEAR END | Actual 31st March 2022 YEAR END | Actual 31st March 2023 YEAR END | Original Budget | Current Agreed budget | Actual as of 30th November 2023 | Expected year end | |
| Cleaning | 2456 | 2644 | 2581 | 6500 | 6500 | 2525 | 6500 | Underspend likely |
| Building Maintenance | 191 | 6554 | 5226 | 10000 | 10000 | 14367 | 14500 | Overspend due to CCTV installation of £4530 |
| Business Rates | 6113 | 6113 | 6469 | 10000 | 10000 | 6018 | 10000 | Increase in 23/24 to include Flat |
| Water | 333 | 269 | 331 | 500 | 500 | 271 | 500 | |
| Utilities | 3894 | 4801 | 11603 | 25000 | 25000 | 1738 | 25000 | Possible underspend - but some bills to date are based on estimated readings |

| | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|--|
| Equipment Maintenance | 1291 | 5996 | 2669 | 1320 | 1320 | 1320 | 2309 | 2309 | Overspend due to heating maintenance work |
| Wedding Licence renewals and marketing | 0 | 2434 | 690 | 1000 | 1000 | 1000 | 1000 | 1000 | |
| Admissions income | 0 | 0 | -2699 | -3000 | -3000 | -3000 | -3000 | -3000 | Increase in visitor numbers and donations |
| Weddings & Hire Income | -832 | -4478 | -3550 | -3000 | -3000 | -3000 | -3000 | -3000 | |
| SUB TOTAL | 13446 | 24333 | 23320 | 48320 | 48320 | 48320 | 52079 | 52079 | |
| Civic Hall | Actual 31st March 2021 YEAR END | Actual 31st March 2022 YEAR END | Actual 31st March 2023 YEAR END | Original Budget | Current Agreed budget | Expected Year End | Expected Year End | Expected Year End | |
| Cleaning and supplies | 1226 | 4605 | 3835 | 5500 | 5500 | 5500 | 5500 | 5500 | |
| Feed in Tariff | 2762 | 2501 | 3081 | 2700 | 2700 | 2700 | 2700 | 2700 | |
| Water | 1361 | 1055 | 1156 | 1500 | 1500 | 1500 | 1500 | 1500 | |
| Utilities | 1762 | 3044 | 6012 | 12000 | 12000 | 12000 | 12000 | 12000 | Possible underspend - but some bills to date are based on estimated readings |
| Building Maintenance | 2969 | 13955 | 6917 | 60000 | 60000 | 60000 | 60000 | 60000 | Expected underspend as roof repairs delayed to next year |
| Licences | 70 | 70 | 70 | 70 | 70 | 70 | 70 | 70 | |
| Misc & Marketing Civic Hall | 0 | 26 | 567 | 750 | 750 | 750 | 750 | 750 | Possible underspend - but new boiler is still to be paid. |
| Equipment Maintenance | 3320 | 4299 | 2026 | 20000 | 20000 | 20000 | 20000 | 20000 | |
| Paige Adams Grant towards Caretaking, Cleaning and Management costs | -7500 | -30000 | -33500 | -33500 | -33500 | -33500 | -33500 | -33500 | |
| Feed in tariff income and Water refund income | -6728 | -6304 | -7161 | -6800 | -6800 | -6800 | -6800 | -6800 | No shop water income since 22/23 due to shop closing down |
| Equipment sales | | -1000 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | |
| SUB TOTAL | -758 | -7749 | -16997 | 62220 | 62220 | 62220 | 62220 | 62220 | |
| Property Maintenance | Actual 31st March 2021 YEAR END | Actual 31st March 2022 YEAR END | Actual 31st March 2023 YEAR END | Original Budget | Current Agreed budget | Expected Year End | Expected Year End | Expected Year End | |
| Guildhall Cottage Maintenance | 361 | 588 | 341 | 1000 | 1000 | 1000 | 1000 | 1000 | |
| Flat 5a Loan repay | 9148 | 9148 | 43159 | | | | | | PWLB loan paid off in 22/23 |
| Flat 5a Maintenance | 275 | 1853 | 1805 | | | | | | Included in Guildhall Maintenance from 23/24 |
| Guildhall Office Maintenance | 309 | 13 | | | | | | | |
| Rental Property Management Fees | 2089 | 2001 | 1774 | 1140 | 1140 | 1140 | 1140 | 1140 | |
| Town Clocks | 3127 | 1437 | 1599 | 400 | 400 | 400 | 400 | 400 | |
| Museum Maintenance | -3230 | 198 | 139 | 5500 | 5500 | 5500 | 5500 | 5500 | New £600 lease from Sept 23 |
| Museum Rent income | -1 | -1 | -1 | -1 | -1 | -1 | -1 | -1 | Possible underspend - but contingency in there for emergencies |
| Eastgate Clock Rental | -3 | -3 | 0 | -3 | -3 | -3 | -3 | -3 | |
| Guildhall Cottage Income(£975 a month) | -10200 | -10756 | -11700 | -12000 | -12000 | -12000 | -12000 | -12000 | Sub-lessees covering cost of new lease |
| Flat 5a Rental Income | -8340 | -8660 | -7103 | | | | | | |
| SUB TOTAL | -6465 | -4182 | 30013 | -3964 | -3964 | -3964 | -3964 | -3964 | Ceased in 22/23 |
| Cemetery | Actual 31st March 2021 YEAR END | Actual 31st March 2022 YEAR END | Actual 31st March 2023 YEAR END | Original Budget | Current Agreed budget | Expected Year End | Expected Year End | Expected Year End | |
| Business Rates | 4441 | 4441 | 4441 | 4441 | 4441 | 4441 | 4441 | 4441 | |
| Water | 144 | 173 | 167 | 175 | 175 | 175 | 175 | 175 | |
| Waste collection | | 706 | 329 | 350 | 350 | 350 | 350 | 350 | |
| Grounds Maintenance (Grass cutting and tree work) | 18009 | 20613 | 14516 | 25000 | 25000 | 25000 | 25000 | 25000 | |
| Works and Maintenance (Memorials, Paths, Fences) | 1357 | -32 | 0 | 500 | 500 | 500 | 500 | 500 | |
| Chapel | 150 | 0 | 0 | 20000 | 20000 | 20000 | 20000 | 20000 | Possible underspend but a contingency for the Chapel roof and emergency repairs. |
| Cemetery Fees Income | -11435 | -12000 | -17250 | -10000 | -10000 | -10000 | -10000 | -10000 | |
| SUB TOTAL | 12666 | 13901 | 2203 | 40466 | 40466 | 40466 | 40466 | 40466 | |
| Open Spaces | Actual 31st March 2021 YEAR END | Actual 31st March 2022 YEAR END | Actual 31st March 2023 YEAR END | Original Budget | Current Agreed budget | Expected Year End | Expected Year End | Expected Year End | |
| General Maintenance | 80 | 162 | 502 | 550 | 550 | 550 | 550 | 550 | |
| St Marys Churchyard (Walls and trees) | 322 | 857 | 5868 | 3000 | 3000 | 3000 | 3000 | 3000 | Possible underspend - but emergency contingency required. |
| Castle Meadow Maintenance and Water | 800 | 108 | 45 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | |
| Castle Meadow and allotments income | -208 | -200 | -200 | -200 | -200 | -200 | -200 | -200 | |
| SUB TOTAL | 994 | 927 | 6215 | 3450 | 3450 | 3450 | 3450 | 3450 | |

| Precept and Income | Actual 31st March 2021 YEAR END | Actual 31st March 2022 YEAR END | Actual 31st March 2023 YEAR END | Original Budget | Current Agreed budget | AGU Actuals 30th November 2023 | Expected year end | |
|--|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|-----------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|----------------------|---|
| Bank Charges | 98 | 104 | 189 | 250 | 250 | 194 | 250 | |
| Precept and Income | | | | | | | | |
| Council Tax Grant (only guaranteed until 19/20) | -535280 | -545986 | -545986 | -610253 | -610253 | -610253 | -610253 | |
| Investment Income | -10020 | | | -1500 | -1500 | -5247 | -8000 | Increase in interest rates |
| Charity of Paige Adams RATE ABATEMENT | 0 | 0 | 0 | -100000 | -100000 | 0 | -100000 | |
| SUB TOTAL | -545202 | -545882 | -546510 | -711503 | -711503 | -605359 | -718003 | |
| Community Development | | | | | | | | |
| Community Outreach/Christmas | | | | Original Budget | Current Agreed budget | AGU Actuals 30th November 2023 | Expected year end | |
| Community Grants (incl. \$137 Funding) | 44168 | 52508 | 49770 | 35000 | 35000 | 47023 | 57306 | See breakdown below - expected overspend already agreed |
| Community Projects | 0 | 0 | 13200 | 50000 | 25000 | 74955 | 24953 | An overspend may happen but would be funded from the salary of the community fundraiser role. |
| Neighbourhood Plan | see below | 3720 | 3234 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 502 | Covered by grant funding income (see below) |
| Arts and Culture and Events | see below | 9500 | 31806 | 26000 | 21000 | 2348 | 21050 | See breakdown below - expected overspend covered by GWR grant |
| Public Realm and Community Assets Projects | see below | see below | 75980 | 73700 | 13700 | 7207 | 10136 | See breakdown below - expected underspend |
| Climate Change/Green Travel | 3986 | 2312 | 9139 | 10000 | 10000 | 5627 | 10000 | |
| Public Toilets | | 0 | | | | | | |
| Caring Town/Totnes Caring services | | 0 | | | | | | |
| Citizens Advice Service | | 0 | | | | | | |
| Neighbourhood Plan/Planning | 71413 | see above | | | | | | |
| Community projects SHARED SPACE and public realm | | 22938 | | | | | | |
| Community Grants Scheme/COVID 19 | | 0 | | | | | | |
| Arts and Culture and Events | | see above | | | | | | |
| Heritage Support | 0 | 0 | | | | | | |
| Grant Funding/Projects Income | -84500 | -34370 | -32705 | | 0 | 3210 | -3210 | £500 PA grant for Easter Festival & £2710 GWR grant for Xmas Festival |
| SUB TOTAL | £35,067 | £56,608 | £150,424 | £194,700 | £104,700 | £78,536 | £120,737 | |
| TOTAL EXPENDITURE OVER INCOME | -£187,710 | -£47,985 | £90,527 | £186,644 | £96,802 | -£164,397 | £52,584 | £44218 expected underspend against agreed |

| Reserves impact | |
|---|----------|
| Total actual general reserves as start of 2023/24 | £614,781 |
| Based on the current projected 2023/24 budget, year end reserve estimate. | £562,197 |

| 2023/24 - proposed | BUDGET | EXPECTED | NOTES |
|--|--------|----------|---|
| PUBLIC REALM and COMMUNITY ASSETS PROJECTS: | 13700 | 13700 | Annual total allocation |
| Creditor figure B/F from 22/23 | 0 | 19254 | |
| Wayfinding phase 2 | 0 | -14681 | Paid from 22/23 budget above |
| Misc spend | 0 | -136 | Metal paint, town sign maintenance, festoon lighting Civic Square |
| Totnes Gardens | -2500 | -2500 | |
| External sockets Market Square | 0 | -595 | |
| Bunting | 0 | -278 | |

| | | | | |
|--|--------|----------|--------|---|
| Replacement plants and repairs to planters over the year | -1200 | -1200 | -1200 | Possible saving if not progressed - currently have about £750 earmarked for Welcome signage |
| Public Seating and benches | -5000 | -5000 | -5000 | Possible saving if not progressed |
| Planting of flowers/beds/new planters | -5000 | -5000 | -5000 | Expected underspend year end |
| TOTAL | 0 | 3564 | 3564 | NOTES |
| 2023/24 - proposed | BUDGET | EXPECTED | | |
| ARTS AND CULTURE | 21000 | 21000 | 21000 | Annual total allocation |
| Christmas late nights | -13000 | -13693 | -13693 | Small overspend but more than covered by GWR grant |
| Public art | -5000 | -5000 | -5000 | Pillars artwork done to date. Possible underspend if no further projects are carried out in 23/24 |
| Christmas light switch on | -3000 | -2357 | -2357 | Small expected underspend |
| TOTAL | 0 | -50 | -50 | Small expected overspend covered by GWR grant - £2.5k |
| 2023/24 - proposed | BUDGET | EXPECTED | | NOTES |
| COMMUNITY OUTREACH | 35000 | 35000 | 35000 | Annual total allocation (overspend for lights already agreed) |
| Town meeting room hire | -59 | -58 | -58 | |
| Civic Square Lights and Trees | -3000 | -3000 | -3000 | Only the tree paid to date |
| Christmas lighting | -45000 | -47760 | -47760 | Additional costs around infrastructure and repairs |
| Christmas shop front competition | -675 | -675 | -675 | |
| Totnes Directory Updates | -2000 | -2000 | -2000 | |
| Defibrillator Pads/Serviceing | -500 | -500 | -500 | |
| Facebook/Comms | -500 | -500 | -500 | |
| Community Consultation | -4630 | -2813 | -2813 | Underspend due to lower cost for mail drop |
| TOTAL | -21364 | -22306 | -22306 | Overspend already agreed for Christmas lights |

ITEM 5 - CHRISTMAS LIGHTS WASH UP - NOTES

Contracted Lighting Specialist

General Comment – Moving away from the festoon lighting to illuminating specific areas of the town has largely been well received. The chosen tender provider had a great vision and design to decorate assets in the town and now that the scheme is in place and functioning, this should make the installation of lights in future years much simpler. Also, the new lighting scheme will be much smaller to store.

Challenges - The chosen tender provider presented a good design but there were challenges around providing power sources to illuminate the areas and the permissions required on listed buildings which were left to the Council to resolve.

Infrastructure – Work has been required to install:

- The Plains - 2 x power sources with individual meters from two businesses on The Plains (which will ensure that they can be accurately reimbursed for the electricity used). Without the co-operation and help of Fonehouse and Inspired Buys there would be no illumination of these trees.
- Eastgate - power out onto the roof area and a residual circuit breaker installed.
- Civic Hall – 5 x new commando sockets onto the exterior of the building to power the lights around the Civic Square.
- Rotherfold – a safe, lockable connection from the electric riser.
- Timers for lights – timers have been installed for the lighting of the trees on The Plains (the most expensive to run) and the Civic Square to be lit from 3pm to midnight. However, during dull days the relatively low power input required by the Civic Square lights means that it has been decided to put them on permanently to cheer this area up and so that more people walking through the area can enjoy them, particularly on market days.

Permissions – Tracking down property owners has in some cases been complex – and this was only for five potential points in town. These permissions have been obtained for this calendar year to use: the existing fixing points in the Rotherfold for the lighting cables and pipe to protect the cables to the electrical source (no additional fixes were needed in the end); attaching a cable to Birdwood House; fixing of the catenary wires at lower Fore Street; power supplies on The Plains.

Install – The installation of the lights was conducted in two phases: early October which included a road closure for the wrapping of trees on The Plains, Shady Garden, Civic Square and Rotherfold and these will remain in place, and testing of fixing and replacing the catenary wires on lower Fore Street; and mid November for icicle lights in the trees, cross-street 'Welcome To Totnes' sign installed, lighting on Eastgate (cherry picker parked in South Street so no road closure required), decoration of the Civic Square and testing of all lights. The team who carried out this work were well organised and accommodating to Council requests.

To do/longer term considerations

- Quotes for on-street, unmetered power supplies for The Plains – depending on business owners we may not be able to rely on the goodwill of the current businesses going forward.
- Install – tendering for the installation of the lights in Civic Square, Eastgate, cross-street Sign and icicles into trees.
- Future lighting – given the efforts to find the owners of five properties and obtaining permissions to potentially work on their buildings, the idea of the Council looking at cross street festoon lighting is fraught with potential complications and will be onerously labour intensive in terms of officer time required to get permissions, cost for any listed building

consent applications for remedial works on buildings, not to mention installation and ongoing maintenance checks. Such a scheme could also detract from the 'feature' elements now installed and lit. Officer recommendation: to focus on maintaining and erecting what has been purchased this year, and refurbishment of the cross-street silhouette sign (see below).

- Lights on timers – consider whether to light up The Plains and Civic Square 24/7 (as is the case with the Shady Garden and Rotherfold Trees and Eastgate) or from 8am to midnight.

Cross-Street Sign

An in-house repair was carried out to the letters and areas that were not illuminated last year. However, the rope lighting colour isn't an ideal match, the product is not low energy, it has attracted some public criticism. Going forward Councillors may wish to consider the following options:

| Replacement Signs | Refurbishment of Existing Signs | |
|---|---|---|
| <p>Bespoke</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quoted around £7K for signs to replace existing in 2023 • Other quotes could be obtained | <p>External Company</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professionally completed • Guarantee on workmanship • Easy access to low power lighting components | <p>In House</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No guarantee of workmanship • Cost of materials – LED rope lighting 3 x cost of that used in repair. Any errors would be costly • Length of time to complete the task removes individual from other tasks • Cheapest option |
| <p>Generic Signage</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many are not as large as existing • Loses the personal touch | | |

Switch On Event

This year's event went well and Councillor support to help at the craft and refreshment tables and clearing up was very welcome. Building on the points taken on board in 2022, the main points to consider for 2024 are:

- Signage to make people aware that this is a Town Council run event.
- Name badges for Councillors and Staff.
- Donations bucket/card reader for people to make a donation to the Mayor's charities.

Christmas Markets

At the time of compiling this note it is too early to comment on the Christmas markets. Budget details are below.

Budgets

A summary of the Christmas budget spend is included in the budget forecast. Figures for electricity costs have been estimated based on the power consumption of the lighting used and the Council will receive an invoice from National Grid for the unmetered supplies. Overall they are underspent by £1.2K. This breaks down to:

- Around 2.5 percent overspent for the Christmas Lights Installation and associated costs including tree purchase and erection (although this is an estimate until electricity costs are confirmed).
- Approximately 20 percent underspent for Christmas Lights Switch On.
- Christmas Markets – would have been over budget by approximately 5 percent, but the GWR grant to help with travel will bring it under budget by just under 12 percent.

COUNCIL ASSETS & PUBLIC REALM WORKING GROUP

Notes

TUESDAY 21 November 2023, 12PM

Working Group: Cllrs Auletta, Presswell (Chair) & Price

Officers: Governance and Projects Manager, Town Maintenance Officer, Mayoral PA (notes)

1. Note minutes of last meeting

Noted

2. Leechwell Gardens

- **Receive feedback of Cllr Presswell's meeting about the Leechwells with Rob Sekula and Sue Holmes**

Sue will retire from managing Leechwell gardens in Spring 2024.

SHDC will take on the management of the gardens but given grounds people constraints, they will make it lower maintenance.

Action: Governance and Projects Manager to ask Incredible Edibles if they would be interested to take on the gardens at the Lamb.

Action: TTC to publicise the change and see if any interested groups come forward to take on the planting in Leechwell Gardens and Heath Garden.

Cllr Presswell has been in touch with English Heritage to find out how assets such as the Leechwells are managed in other parts of the country.

There is still concern that in the summer the water level was very low and a green algae formed which became very smelly.

Action: Cllr Presswell to report back the information from English Heritage at the next meeting.

Action: Governance and Projects Manager to carry out a Land Registry search to find out who owns the land where the actual spring surfaces.

3. Civic Hall

- **Discuss parking on/in front of the Civic Hall Ramp**

There has been an ongoing issue with members of the public parking on the Market Square near the bottom of the ramp. This causes a health and safety issue for those using the Civic Hall and takes up officer time when they are unable to access the ramp. The area is not a public car park and not part of a public highway so it is hard to enforce any parking charges or fines. There are a number of raiser bollards located in the area but they are all incredibly heavy. The Town Maintenance Officer

is due to meet with an officer from South Hams District Council (SHDC) next week to discuss the bollards.

Action: Town Maintenance Officer to raise the issue of the equality act to the SHDC officer because the bollards are unusable for the majority of staff who would need to use them.

Action: To **RECOMMEND** to Council Matters that TTC purchase a wheel clamp and put up signs to warn people that clamping is in operation. Cars can be released if a fine is paid.

4. Castle Meadow

There haven't been any recent complaints of anti-social behaviour at Castle Meadow.

5. Guildhall

- **Receive verbal update from Town Maintenance Officer on improvement works.**

Squirrel damage to the wiring for the intruder and fire alarm cables in the loft has caused problems with the systems tripping. The Town Maintenance Officer has put trunking around all the cables to protect them. The hearing loop company is also going to repair their cables next week and these will also be contained in the trunking to prevent further damage.

Through the winter, repairs will also be made to the windowsills in the Guildhall. The Town Maintenance Officer has taken advice on how to do this correctly to ensure the requirements of a listed building are met.

6. Totnes Museum

- **Note any update on the actions from the fire and health and safety inspections of Totnes Museum.**

The last risk assessment of the museum highlighted a number of issues which needed addressing. There were 6 action points for the museum to take responsibility for and these have now been completed.

7. St Mary's Churchyard

- **To consider repainting and tidy up of flagpole at Garden of Remembrance**

The Town Maintenance Officer has discussed this with the Chair of the Royal British Legion (RBL).

Action – to **RECOMMEND** to Council Matters that 1 day of officer time can be allocated to doing this work.

8. Discuss cutting the grass on Coronation Road.

The requirements for cutting the grass in this area have changed on several occasions throughout the year due to the wildflower planting by Totnes Gardens. This has meant that additional officer time has been spent on this task beyond what is manageable.

Action - Governance and Projects Manager to draw a map of the site and mark the areas which TTC will mow in future. Town Clerk to write to Totnes Gardens to explain the situation and share the map.

9. Cemetery

- **Review grounds maintenance specification (annual review)**

It was agreed that the specification for grounds maintenance at the cemetery does not need to change however, the current grounds maintenance contractors have been inconsistent with the maintenance they have done this year.

Action – to clarify in the specification that it is only cuttings which need blowing off paths and monuments not fallen leaves.

Action – To **RECOMMEND** to Council Matters that cemetery grounds maintenance is put out to tender to start in April 2024. This should include getting a costed proposal for employing a member of staff and the equipment needed to carry out the grounds maintenance in house.

- **Review of the Churchyard and Cemetery section of the Council's Open Space, Sports, Recreation and Wellbeing (OSSRW) Policy**

Action – Governance and Projects Manager to populate the form as a starting point for discussion at the next meeting.

Action – Have exemplar OSSRW policies to refer to at the next meeting.

Cllr Auletta suggested that part of the review should also consider creating green walkways that link the Follaton Arboretum with the cemetery.

10. Cemetery visit (weather permitting) - Postponed

Any Other Business

- Cllr Auletta requested that there is a review of all the signage in town to see which finger posts or maps could be removed as a result of the more recent wayfinding project.

Action – To put this on the next agenda and to refer to the inventory of street furniture which was gathered before the wayfinding project took place.

Date of Next Meeting – Wednesday 21 February 2024 @ 12PM

