



**Minutes of a meeting of Council held on Wednesday, 15 February 2023.**

**Councillors present:**

Dilys Neill - Chair  
Stephen Andrews  
Claire Bloomer  
Ray Brassington  
Patrick Coleman  
Rachel Coxcoon  
David Cunningham  
Tony Dale  
Andrew Doherty  
Mike Evemy

Nikki Ind – Vice Chair  
Jenny Forde  
Joe Harris  
Mark Harris  
Stephen Hirst  
Roly Hughes  
Sue Jepson  
Richard Keeling  
Andrew Maclean  
Nick Maunder

Richard Morgan  
Richard Norris  
Nigel Robbins  
Gary Selwyn  
Lisa Spivey  
Tom Stowe  
Steve Trotter  
Clive Webster

**Officers present:**

Jan Britton, Managing Director - Publica  
Andrew Brown, Democratic Services Business  
Manager  
Angela Claridge, Director of Governance and  
Development (Monitoring Officer)

Caleb Harris, Democratic Services  
Robert Weaver, Chief Executive  
David Stanley, Deputy Chief Executive and  
Chief Finance Officer  
Wayne Smith, Democratic Services Officer

**1 Apologies**

Apologies had been received from Councillors Ray Theodoulou, Gina Blomefield, Tony Berry, Robin Hughes, Juliet Layton and Julia Judd.

**2 Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest from Members

There were no declarations of interest from Officers

**3 Minutes**

Council considered the Minutes of Council held 18 January 2023 and **AGREED** they were an accurate record of the meeting.

**Voting Record – For 20, Against 0, Abstentions 8, Absent 6,**

**4 Announcements from the Chair, Leader of Chief Executive (if any)**

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The Chair welcomed members of the public who were watching the proceedings in-person and on-line and described how the meeting would be conducted including the standards and courtesies that should be observed during the meeting.

The death of Clive Bennet a highly respected former councillor and Chair of the Council was announced and Councillors were invited to speak in tribute to him.

The Leader of the Council paid personal tribute to the wit and intelligence of former Councillor Clive Bennett who enjoyed a successful career as a journalist and had served the South Cerney Ward as a Councillor. The Leader also announced that the Progress Pride flag was being flown above the Council offices to recognise LGBTQ+ history month and celebrate diversity and inclusivity and the Council's commitment to creating a welcoming and accepting community for everyone.

The Deputy Leader of the Conservative Group who had served with former Councillor Bennet paid tribute to his larger than life character, intelligence and sense of humour

Councillor Roly Hughes recalled his long association with former Councillor Bennett and how much he will be missed by all those that knew him.

The Chair then called on Council to stand for a minutes silence in memory of Clive Bennett.

## **5 Public Questions**

Appendix A

## **6 Member Questions**

Appendix B

## **7 Appointment of Deputy Electoral Registration Officers**

The purpose of the report was to recommend to Council, the appointment of Two Deputy Electoral Registration Officers.

The Leader of the Council introduced the report and provided context for the recommendations to appoint two additional Deputy Electoral Registration Officers to provide additional support to the Electoral Registration Officer and Returning Officer during the election.

Council noted that the elections due to take place on 4 May 2023 would introduce Voter Identity requirements and additional complexity ensuring voting is conducted correctly.

RESOLVED: Council agreed the appointment of the Electoral Services Manager (Sarah Dalby) and Electoral Services Officer (Katrina Keylock) as Deputy Electoral Registration Officers to act in place of the Electoral Registration Officer where they are unable to act personally and delegate authority to the Council's Electoral Registration Officer to appoint Deputies to this post in future

**Voting Record – For 26, Against 0, Abstentions 2, Absent 6,**

## **8 2023/24 Revenue Budget, Capital Programme, and Medium Term Financial Strategy**

The purpose of this report is to present the budget for 2023/24.

The Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance introduced the Revenue Budget, Capital programme and Medium Term Financial Strategy and provided history, context and detailed summary of fourth and final Budget from the Liberal Democrat Administration

The Budget had been built in the aftermath of a pandemic and against a backdrop of reducing Government funding (down £2m over 10 years), increased fuel, energy and cost of living costs, instigated by the war in Ukraine, and high inflation, high interest rates, and political and public financial uncertainty following the 23 September 2022 mini-budget. Despite these challenges, the Administration's priorities to Tackle Climate Change, Deliver Social Rented Housing and Strengthen the Local Economy would be delivered through a financial approach that aimed to deliver more efficient services, improve standards, increase income to replace lost funding, and bring in money from external funding sources.

Council noted that although the Budget would require the use of Council financial reserves (£860,000), other plans to reduce Council expenditure (by £1.1m) and increase income and revenue (by £415,000) would reduce the amount of financial reserves required to balance the budget.

Council noted that both the Council, and its partners Publica and Ubico, would be expected to deliver the reduction in the Council's expenditure

Council noted that funds that had been released through the sale of the Council's Housing stock in 1997 had been used by previous administrations on a number of projects from building the Cirencester Leisure Centre to replacing the recycling collection fleet. Those funds had now come to an end and would not be available for future projects.

Council noted that the Recovery Investment Strategy had been rescinded when escalating interest rates and tighter Government (investment) regulation meant it was no longer viable.

Council noted over £860,000 had been raised by reviewing fees and charges that had been previously frozen or increased below cost and £184,000 Local Government Pension Costs had been saved for each of the last three years.

Council noted over £4.25m of external funding had been brought to the Cotswolds

Council noted the creation of a new Cabinet Transformation Working Group to oversee the Councils finances and produce proposals for consideration as part of the 2024/25 budget and deliver savings in 2023/24

Council noted that a Financial Resilience Reserve of £3.3 million pounds would be created to fund the £860,000 revenue reserves required to balance the 2023/24 budget and support services while they transform their provision to meet the funds available.

Council noted that the public had been consulted on proposals to increase Council Tax increases and parking charges

Council noted that discretionary charges would increasingly be set at a level that would enable them to be funded by those that used them. Green Waste Collection charges had been increased so that the service would be funded by those that used it,

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Council noted that the funding for the replacement recycling vehicles would be required on a rolling basis as and when current vehicles were decommissioned at the end of their working life.

Council noted that the number of new homes reported in the Budget did not take into account demolitions. Had this been the case the reported figures would have been less.

Council noted that the Budget recommended that Member allowances were frozen for 2023/24, although increases for the current year 2022/23 (that had already been set and approved) would still be paid.

Council noted that details of the proposed budget had been considered by Audit Committee, Overview and Scrutiny Committee and recommended by Cabinet.

### **The Chair invited the Deputy Leader of the Conservative Group to comment on the Budget**

The Deputy Leader of the Conservative Group stated that the Conservative Group would not be proposing any amendments to the Budget

The Deputy Chair of the Conservative Group, Councillor Sue Jepson commented that Council was being asked to approve a budget that was not fit for purpose, from an Administration that keeps on putting the Council and its taxpayers into debt, borrowing for unnecessary vanity projects and cutting out democracy. The (Liberal Democrat) Administration had taken over a debt free, well run Council, and although (the Conservative Group) would not be making any budget proposals on the presented Budget, they would be making a budget proposal after 4 May 2023. Councillor Jepson stated that her side of the Chamber would be voting against the Budget in the papers before them.

Councillor Cunningham stated he believed the main reason for the Council was to help residents and he could not see anything in the proposed Budget that would do this and, in the middle of a Cost of Living Crisis, the proposed increase of Council Taxes, Green Waste Collections, Taxi Licenses, Street Food Vending Licenses, and Public Toilets would cause additional hardship.

The Deputy Leader of the Council, and Cabinet Member for Finance Mike Evely proposed, and the Cabinet member for Climate Change and Forward Planning seconded that the Budget and recommendation (a) to (i) should be **AGREED**.

### **RESOLVED: Council AGREED:**

- (a) the Medium-Term Financial Strategy set out in Annex B
- (b) the Savings and Transformation items for inclusion in the budget, set out in Annex C
- (c) the Council Tax Requirement of £6,310,795 for this Council
- (d) the Council Tax level for Cotswold District Council purposes of £148.93 for a Band D property in 2023/24 (an increase of £5)
- (e) the Capital Programme, set out in Annex D
- (F) the Annual Capital Strategy 2023/24, as set out in Annex E
- (g) the Annual Treasury Management Strategy and Non-Treasury Management Investment Strategy 2023/24, as set out in Annex F
- (h) the Strategy for the Flexible use of Capital Receipts, as set out in Annex H
- (i) the balances and reserves forecast for 2023/24 to 2026/27 as set out in Section 3 of the report.

**Recorded Vote**

For	Against	Abstain
Claire Bloomer	Stephen Andrews	
Ray Brassington	David Cunningham	
Rachel Coxcoon	Stephen Hirst	
Tony Dale	Sue Jepson	
Andrew Doherty	Richard Keeling	
Mike Evely	Richard Morgan	
Jenny Forde	Richard Norris	
Joe Harris	Tom Stowe	
Mark Harris	Steve Trotter	
Roly Hughes		
Nikki Ind		
Andrew Maclean		
Nick Maunder		
Dilys Neill		
Nigel Robbins		
Gary Selwyn		
Lisa Spivey		
Clive Webster		
18	9	0

**9 Council Tax 2023/24**

The purpose of the report was to set the Council Tax for 2023/24

The Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance introduced the report and provided details of how the precept for Band D Properties (agreed in the previous Budget) would determine Council Tax liabilities for each household in the District.

Council noted that the Council Tax consultation had revealed that many Council Tax payers did not know that it was not possible to change key features of Council Tax calculations (e.g. increase charges for larger properties, changing the percentage increments between bandings), as these were set by the Government.

Council welcomed the level of scrutiny that Council was able to give to Council Tax charging levels.

Council noted the support that was available for Council Tax payers in receipt of certain benefits and those on the lowest incomes.

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The Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Finance, Mike Evemy propose and The Leader of the Council, Joe Harris seconded that the Council Tax recommendations 1 to 8 were agreed.

**RESOLVED:** Council **AGREED** that:

1) for the purposes of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 Section 35(2), there are no special expenses for the District Council in 2023/2

2) it be noted that, using her delegated authority, the Deputy Chief Executive calculated the Council Tax Base for 2023/24:

(a) for the whole Council area as 42,374.24 [item T in the formula in Section 31B of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, as amended (the "Act") and

(b) for dwellings in those parts of its area to which a Parish Precept relates as in the attached Schedule 1.

3) the Council Tax requirement for the Council's own purposes for 2023/24 (excluding Parish Precepts) is £148.93.

4) the following amounts be calculated for the year 2023/24 in accordance with Sections 31 to 36 of the Act:

(a) £45,096,080 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A (2) of the Act, taking in account all precepts issued to it by Parish Councils and any additional special expenses.

(b) £34,724,034 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A (3) of the Act.

(c) £10,372,046 being the amount by which the aggregate at 4(a) above exceeds the aggregate at 4(b) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 31A(4) of the Act, as its Council Tax requirement for the year (Item R in the formula in Section 31B of the Act).

(d) £244.77 being the amount at 4(c) above (Item R), all divided by Item T (1(a) above), calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 31B of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year (including Parish Precepts and Special Expenses);

(e) £4,061,250 being the aggregate amount of all special items (Parish Precepts and Special Expenses) referred to in Section 34(1) of the Act as per the attached Schedule 2.

(f) £148.93 being the amount at 4(d) above less the result given by dividing the amount at 4(e) above by Item T(2(a) above), calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 34(2) of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year for dwellings in those parts of its area to which no Parish Precept or special item relates;

(g) the amounts shown in Schedule 2 being the amounts given by adding to the amount at 4(f) above, the amounts of the special item or items relating to dwellings in those parts of the Council's area shown in Schedule 2 divided in each case by the amount at 2(b) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 34(3) of the Act, as the basic amounts of its Council Tax for the year for dwellings in those parts of its area to which one or more special items relate;

(h) the amounts shown in Schedule 3 being the amounts given by multiplying the amounts at 4(f) and 4(g) above by the number which, in the proportion set out in Section 5(1) of the Act, is applicable to dwellings listed in a particular valuation band divided by the number which in that proportion is applicable to dwellings listed in valuation Band D, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 36(1) of the Act, as the amounts to be taken into account for the year in respect of categories of dwellings listed in different valuation bands;

5) it be noted that for the year 2023/24 the Gloucestershire County Council and the Police & Crime Commissioner for Gloucestershire have issued precepts to the Council, in accordance with Section 40 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, for each category of dwellings in the Council's area as indicated below:

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Valuation Band	Gloucestershire County Council	Police and Crime Commissioner
	£	£
A	1,015.85	196.72
B	1,185.16	229.51
C	1,354.47	262.29
D	1,523.78	295.08
E	1,862.40	360.65
F	2,201.02	426.23
G	2,539.63	491.80
H	3,047.56	590.16

6) the Council, in accordance with Sections 30 and 36 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, hereby sets the aggregate amounts shown in Schedule 4 as the amounts of Council Tax for the year 2023/24 for each part of its area and for each of the categories of dwellings.

7) the Council's basic amount of Council Tax for 2023/24 is not excessive in accordance with principles approved under Section 52ZB Local Government Finance Act 1992.

8) the following Council/Public Officers: Deputy Chief Executive, Group Manager – Resident Services, Director of Governance and Development, Legal Executive, Business Manager – Operational Services, Revenues Manager, Revenues Lead and Court Officer be authorised to:  
(a) collect and recover any National Non-Domestic Rates and Council Tax; and Page 179(b)  
(b) prosecute or defend on the Council's behalf or to appear on its behalf in proceedings before a magistrate's court in respect of unpaid National Non-Domestic Rates and Council Tax.

#### Recorded Vote

For	Against	Abstain
Claire Bloomer	Stephen Andrews	
Ray Brassington	David Cunningham	
Rachel Coxcoon	Stephen Hirst	
Tony Dale	Sue Jepson	
Andrew Doherty	Richard Keeling	
Mike Evemy	Richard Morgan	
Jenny Forde	Richard Norris	
Joe Harris	Tom Stowe	
Mark Harris	Steve Trotter	
Roly Hughes		
Nikki Ind		
Andrew Maclean		

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Nick Maunder		
Dilys Neill		
Nigel Robbins		
Gary Selwyn		
Lisa Spivey		
Clive Webster		
	18	9 0

**I0 Notice of Motions**

There were no motions submitted for Council to consider.

**II Next meeting**

The next meeting of Council will be held at 2.00pm 15 March 2023

The Meeting commenced at 6.00 pm and closed at 8.10 pm

Chair

(END)