

MAGHULL TOWN COUNCIL
FULL COUNCIL
HELD 27th JANUARY 2021
VIRTUAL MEETING

PRESENT - Councillor Josh Burns (In the Chair) and Councillors (Cllrs): June Burns, Carlsen, Carragher, Desmond, Ferguson, K & T Hughes, Lloyd, McKinley, Mullen, J & Y Sayers and Sharp.

ALSO PRESENT – A. McIntyre (Town Clerk), P. Dillon (Community Services Manager), D. Healey (Finance Officer), S. Lawrence (minutes) Public viewing via YouTube.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: None.

2. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS: Dispensation awarded to all councillors attending due to a disclosable pecuniary interest in Item 5 Budget 21/22.

3. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION: Due to the Covid 19 pandemic public participation is by submission of comments or questions to the Council prior to the meeting commencing. None received.

4. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS:

RESOLVED that the minutes of Full Council held on 25th November 2020 were approved as a correct record.

5. BUDGET 20/21:

Members were informed that the Council was required to set a balanced budget for the forthcoming financial year and to notify Sefton MBC of the precept requirement so this could be added to the Council Tax demand. The notification needed to be sent by 15th February 2021.

Key Points regarding the budget:

- Budgets show projected of loss of income due to Covid-19 pandemic.
- The Council's assets were tired and in need of significant upgrade and maintenance.
- Current reserves were £546,595 with the general advice level being large town council should hold 6-9 months' worth of running costs; MTC are 7.28 months. Members were advised not to use reserves to cover revenue expenditure.
- No change to schedule of charges.
- Recommendation to increase the precept by a minimum of 2.9% (£3) to cover the increase in running costs alone of the Council.

JB

Key Points made by Cllrs:

- Recommendation to use reserves for assets and produce a plan to replenish over a few years.
- Parks Maintenance should be a priority due to lockdown for Maghull Town residents. Recommendation to take £100,000 from reserves to improve assets not just maintain. MTC to produce a plan for £100,000 to improve/replace parks equipment removed or moth balled for maintenance.
- Recommendation to invest in extra solar panels at MTH, this will be more environmental efficient, and potential save money – not viable at this time as solar panels wouldn't generate enough electricity.
- Suggestion to contact Green Sefton for any funds available for MTC.

Members considered the reports carefully based upon the recommendations and advice given by officers. It was considered that a pandemic was a point to use reserves to support the functions of the Council and reduce the tax burden on residents even if this was against officer recommendation.

RESOLVED that:

- 1. The level of precept required for the financial year 2021/22 would be £714,243;**
- 2. That Council approved the budgets as detailed in the report;**
- 3. That the schedule of charges would be agreed as included in the report;**
- 4. That Merseyside Police would be charged £12,000 rent for the forthcoming financial year;**
- 5. That commercial rents would be increased by 5% for the forthcoming financial year;**
- 6. MTC to produce Asset improvement plan for £100,000 to be funded from reserves and discussed at the April Council meeting;**
- 7. The report be noted.**

6. ANNUAL GOVERNANCE AND RETURN:

Members were informed that the External Auditor, PKF Littlejohn had produced their opinion on the Council's finances for the financial year 2019/20. This had resulted in amended figures on the return although the overall figure was unchanged. Although this was not an unqualified opinion by the Auditor the issue highlighted was merely a matter of figures appearing in the wrong box. Members confirmed the figures and agreed response.

RESOLVED that:

- 1 Members agreed amended figures and response from PKF Littlejohn;**
- 2 The report be noted.**

JB

7. INNOVATIVE RESILIENCE BID:

Members were informed that the Town Council had been contacted by Sefton MBC regarding the possibility of additional external funding to assist with some of the flooding issues within Maghull. Maghull is subject to considerable surface flooding and this is increasing. Measures to assist with the management of surface flood water would be welcomed in the community. As this project would benefit Maghull, the letter of support attached to the report would be sent in the first instance. Members to agree to send letter of support.

RESOLVED that:

1. **The Town Council agreed to support the Expression of Interest being submitted by Sefton Council by approving the letter of support sent;**
2. **The report be noted.**

8. LAND EAST OF MAGHULL – PLANNING INSPECTORATE HEARING UPDATE:

Members received an update regarding the progress of the Public Hearing relating to the Appeal for the southern site on the Land East of Maghull. The Legal Team had focused on traffic routes through Maghull and flood relief channel and their impacts on residents for the length of the build time and effect on the town. Members were informed that the Planning Inspector had conducted his site visits in January 2021. It was anticipated that the decision should be received by mid-February 2021.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

9. MINUTES FOR NOTING:

RESOLVED that the minutes of Amenities Committee held 23rd September 2020 and Community Services Committee held 19th August 2020 be noted.

10. CHRISTMAS HAMPERS:

Members were updated on the Council's expanded delivery scheme of Christmas Hampers to vulnerable residents which had increased to 100 hampers delivered by volunteers, councillors and staff commencing the week of 14th December 2020.

The response from recipients and their families had been unanimously positive with several thank you cards and many messages. In particular, families who had hampers delivered were very grateful and commented that the items included in the hamper had been carefully chosen and were exactly what was needed to help them over the holiday period. The voluntary organisations we worked with also thanked the council for doubling its supply and for broadening the range of people to be included.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

JB

11. CHAIR'S CLOSING COMMENTS:

Chair thanked all members, and extra thanks to Cllr Ken Hughes for his hardwork.

CHAIRMAN

JB