

Sandwich Town Council Extraordinary Meeting of the Council



Agenda

Chair: Cllr J Franklin
 Councillors: D Carter, P Carter, A Fox, D Friend, P Graeme, N Gray, K Heaven, D Marie, M Moorhouse, M Pennington, H Sampson, D Sivrikaya, V Tomlins, C Wiles and C Ungerson

Councillors are hereby summoned to attend a meeting of Full Council in the Council Chamber, Guildhall on Monday 16th January 2023 at 19:00 to transact the business on the agenda below.

Karen Palmer
 Responsible Finance Officer
 Date: 11th January 2023

1	Chair's opening remarks.	
2	Apologies for absence received.	
3	Declarations of interest: To receive any declarations of disclosable pecuniary interests from Members in respect of business to be transacted on the agenda.	
4	Public Participation: A 15-minute session is set aside for members of the public to make representations at the meeting in respect of the business on the agenda. Individual representations should not exceed 3 minutes. (Written notice of the desire to exercise the right to speak, together with the topic to be addressed, must be given to the Chief Executive Officer prior to 16:00 on the Friday preceding the meeting)	
5	Confidential Matters:	
(i)	Under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 (extended by s.100 of the Local Government Act 1972) the public may be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 by virtue of the paragraph specified against the item: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Information relating to a particular employee, former employee or applicant to become an employee of, or a particular officeholder, under the authority. 	
(ii)	STAFF SALARIES To receive and consider the salaries from the Responsible Finance Officer. Please note that the illustrated uplift is not a recommendation. The Finance and General Purposes Committee previously made recommendations at their meeting on 12 th December 2022. Subsequently it was resolved at full Council on the 19 th December to revisit this item.	

6	<p>Please note that the overall budget and precept cannot be calculated until salaries have been approved. Please could Councillors decide on how to proceed.</p> <p>DRAFT BUDGETS - FINANCIAL YEAR 2023/24 To receive and approve a draft budget, accompanied by a report for the 2023/24 financial year from the Responsible Finance Officer.</p> <p>The Finance and General Purposes Committee considered the budget at their meeting on 12th December 2022 and recommended acceptance of a zero % rise to Council Tax, which would remain at £135.96 (per Band D property).</p> <p>Please be aware that since this meeting Dover District Council has set the 2023/24 tax base for Sandwich as 2048.68 (an increase of 21.23). This would allow an increase of precept of £2,886.43 without increasing Council Tax.</p> <p>Please note that this budget must be approved at this meeting as Dover District Council's precept demand deadline has been set at 27th January 2023, before January's ordinary council meeting.</p>	<p>Enclosure 1</p> <p>Attach 1a & b</p>
7	<p>Date of next Full Council Meeting: Monday 30th January 2023</p>	

Report to Councillors and Members of: Sandwich Town Council

Meeting scheduled for Monday 16th January 2023

Report from: Responsible Finance Officer

Date: 11th January 2023

Subject: Update to Draft Budget

Classification: Non-confidential

Purpose of report:

To accompany the Notes to the Draft 2023/24 STC Budget and highlight any known or likely changes required to the 2023/24 Sandwich Town Council budget.

No further changes have been made to the Sandwich Town Council draft budget since it was recommended for approval by the Finance and General Purposes Committee on Monday 12th December 2022.

The budget presents a zero % rise in Council Tax. (Remaining at £135.96 per Band D Property).

Please note that the Notes to the Draft 2023/24 STC Budget (attached to this report) was written in November 2022. Although the report has not been altered, small changes should be highlighted:

- 1. The Bay Hall budget may not be required and could free up £7,000. If not required, this can be vired to another approved budget or budgets within the year.**
- 2. The 2023/24 Tax Base for Sandwich has been set at 2048.68 (an increase of 21.23) This would allow an increase in Precept of £2,886.43 without increasing Council Tax. This could be added to the Miscellaneous budget.**

Recommendations:

- 1. To approve adding the surplus budget acquired from the increased Tax Base to the Miscellaneous budget.**
- 2. To make any other required changes at this meeting and approve the budget.**

To: Sandwich Town Council Finance and General Purposes Committee

Date: 15th November 2022

From: Responsible Finance Officer

Subject: Notes for the Draft 2023/24 Sandwich Town Council budget

Classification: Not Confidential

Summary: To provide information to accompany the Excel spreadsheet STC 2023/24 Draft Budget

The draft budget has been collated by the Responsible Finance Officer, in conjunction with the Chief Executive.

A zero rise in precept has been illustrated although after discussions it may be decided to make an increase. Please note that Council Tax was not increased in 2022/23

The Committee and then the Council have ultimate responsibility for this information and can make any changes deemed necessary.

This document accompanies the Excel spreadsheet, STC 2023/24 Draft Budget.

In summary, excluding inflationary uplifts, the main changes to the Draft 2023/24 budget when compared to the current budget are as follows:

- Addition of election budget
- Reapportionment of Visitor Information Salaries to 60% STC (S144)
- Reduced S144 (Other Expenditure) budget due to design / printing of the town guide not being required in 2023
- Addition of Bay Hall budget
- Increase of Operating Funds Reserve
- Removal of Project Start Up budget
- Increased Contribution to STBF Guildhall budget
- Some reduced income streams (Fishing Permits / VIC souvenirs)

Explanations regarding Sandwich Town Council budgets are below:

Expenditure

Mayoral and Civic Functions

The figures in the Draft Budget are based upon previous years' budgets and expenditure, with a small overall uplift. The Mayor of the day is expected to stick within the budget, however, vire budgeting between expenses/travel/hospitality/attendant & uniform has been generally accepted by the Council in the past.

No individual Councillor (incl. the Mayor) can be awarded powers of expenditure, as such it is the Chief Executive who approves each expenditure for the Mayor.

Mayoral Expenses

This is all costs incurred by the Mayor, Mayoress and Mayor's Chauffeur attending events not organised by STC/STBF e.g. Charity Dinners held by other Mayors.

There are no set/compulsory expenses incurred with this money. A Mayor will attend the events that he/she chooses, generally they attend those of the Cinque Ports and our neighbouring towns. The Mayor will also cover costs such as updates to the Mayors' board and Christmas cards (incl. postage) from this budget.

Mayoral Travel

Mileage (at £0.45p per mile). This is the cost incurred by the Mayor travelling to the events mentioned above. Usually the Mayor's Chauffeur (Town Sergeant) incurs these costs, however, the Mayor can also drive himself and claim this expense or one of the caretakers can perform the role if the Town Sergeant is unavailable.

Mayor's Hospitality

This currently covers expenses at the following events:

- Mayor Making
- Museum and Archive Volunteers Reception
- Remembrance Sunday
- Battle of Britain Commemoration
- Civic Service & Parade
- Mayors Civic Award Ceremony
- Confirmation in Office of Mayor Deputies
- All adhoc hosting

Mayor's Attendant & Uniform

This figure has been based on the Mayor's Attendant spending 15% of his time on Mayoral Functions and 3% of other Caretaker's time. £700 has been added for uniform costs.

Cinque Port Functions & Subscription

This budget pays for all Cinque Port related events and the annual subscription, which is expected to be around £350.

Curfew Ringers Supper (not bell repairs)

This budget should cover the cost of the Curfew Ringers Supper, although is subsidised by a small contribution made by current Curfew Ringers.

Election Expenses

This is the estimated cost of the Sandwich Town Council election in May 2023.

Staffing

Office Staff

Please refer to the CONFIDENTIAL SALARIES tab on the STC 2023-24 Draft Budget Excel spreadsheet for details. An estimated uplift has been included although salary discussions will need to take place prior to the whole budget being approved. The Personnel Group should advise further as to how this budget should be set for 2023/24.

Contribution to Caretaking Staff

STC contributes 10% towards the cost of the caretaking and cleaning staff for work performed on behalf of STC (i.e. at Civic Events, the allotments, the public conveniences, council meetings). I would suggest that this arrangement continues in 2023-24.

Staffing Contingency

Over the last few years there have been several long-term staff absences and the need to recruit temporary staff. I would suggest that a small staffing contingency budget is helpful – although obviously it is hoped that this is not required. This budget has been set in discussion with the Chief Executive.

Staff Recruitment

The estimated cost of job advertisements and other staff recruitment costs. This budget has been requested by the Chief Executive.

Staff Training

Ongoing training for the staff is essential for their professional development; training is approved by the Chief Executive.

Officers Travel & Parking Expenses

Mileage (45p p/mile) and parking expenses can be claimed by Councillors and officers when attending meetings and training. The cost of the office staff's parking permits is also taken from this budget.

Staff Salaries Bonus Pot

This budget was first set in 2021/22 to enable staff to receive a bonus for outstanding work. The Personnel Group should advise further as to how this budget should be set for 2023/24.

Administration

Petty Cash

I estimate that in 2023/24 £130 will be required for stamps and other small cash purchases including some cleaning and stationery products.

HR & Payroll

The monthly cost of the Peninsula Business contract is £112.67. 25% of Peninsula Business costs have been historically charged to the Guildhall Peninsula budget. Sage Payroll, which has been run in-house by the Responsible Finance Officer for the last two financial years, cost £244.80 in 2022/23. The Chief Executive has expressed a wish to move to a different HR Organisation, and an increase has been added for an increased cost.

Office Expenses (incl. telephone)

This budget includes the following costs:

- Paper recycling (Biffa and Castles Security)
- Stationery (i.e. reference books, headed paper)
- One third contribution towards Guildhall phone charges

Estimated office redecoration costs (£4,000) have been added to this budget as this has not yet taken place.

Audit Fees

Total audit fees will cost an estimated £2,875. The external audit (PKF Littlejohn) might cost around £1,500 and Internal Audit (McCabe) have quoted £1,375 for the next audit. However, this budget has been increased to £3,500 as McCabe Ford Williams charge for incidental advice given during the year.

Subscriptions & Memberships

Please see below for our likely subscriptions and memberships:

Kent County Playing Fields Association	£20.00
Guild of Mace Bearers	£36.00
Clerks and Councils Direct	£15.00
KALC	£1,600.00
The Society of Local Council Clerks	£260.00

Any other memberships and subscriptions that arise may be paid under their specific budget heading, (i.e. White Cliffs Tourism Association membership would be paid from the S144 Tourism budget).

IT Expenses (incl. Website)

This budget reflects inflated IT support costs, including the cost of a new STC website, website hosting and maintenance. A small additional amount of budget has been included for planned expenditure on live-streaming and microphones for the Council Chamber.

Photocopier (Rental & Usage)

We are currently in a three-year lease of a second-hand Konica Minolta machine just with Wade Business Services, a company based in Thanet. The contract ends in February 2023. An uplift has been included for the cost of a new contract, which will be negotiated in the new year.

Bank Charges

Our bank charges us for use of the NatWest Bankline system, and we also pay a charge per bank transaction. 50% cost shared with Guildhall Functions Bank Charges.

Health & Safety Provisions

The cost of a Health and Safety Consultant, implementing some small health and safety recommendations. This covers all land / properties owned by Sandwich Town Council and contributes to staff Health and Safety costs. Please note that Sandwich Toll Bridge Fund Guildhall Account also has a Health and Safety budget, covering Guildhall related costs.

Insurance

The main insurance renewal took place on 1st April 2021, and the lowest quote was provided by Zurich, who will continue to provide insurance for Sandwich Town Council and Toll Bridge Fund until 31st March 2024. Drill Hall insurance has now been added to this policy, but this will be paid from the Drill Hall budget. These costs should remain the same in 2023/24.

Cyber Insurance and Civic Insignia Insurance

The cost of insuring the insignia (currently insured by Aston Lark) and Cyber Insurance (BHIB).

Insurance – Public Conveniences, Boatman’s Chapel and Fishergate

Buildings insurance for these three properties.

Other Insurances (includes Public Liability)

All other insurance categories including public liability.

Public Conveniences

Quay Conveniences - Salaries

The budget requested by the Chief Executive is £8,370 for hours spent cleaning and opening / locking up these conveniences.

Cattle Market Conveniences - Salaries

The budget requested by the Chief Executive is £8,370 for hours spent cleaning and opening / locking up these conveniences.

Quay Conveniences – Other Expenditure

This budget is to cover utilities and cleaning stock. An increase for electricity has been included. Business Rates for public Conveniences are no longer charged. Some electricity costs are recharged to the P22 boat each year as their circuit is connected to the Quay Convenience building.

Cattle Market Conveniences

This budget covers cleaning stock and ad-hoc repairs only.

S144 Expenditure (Visitor Information Centre & Tourism)

S144 Expenditure Salaries

This budget covers Visitor Information staff time. The calculation for 2023/24 includes opening weekdays all year, 34 weekends (Spring – Autumn), and bank holidays. This budget has been requested by the Chief Executive to cover expected working hours.

S144 (Other Expenditure)

This budget covers IT, a contribution towards phone charges, office expenses and stock purchases.

Sandwich Open Spaces / Other Properties

Black Lane / Sandown Road Allotments

This allotment budget needs to cover water bills, two skip hires and the possible purchase of beehives.

Boatman’s Hill Chapel Water Rates & Maintenance

This budget should cover water rates and small incidental repairs. If unexpected larger costs occur, these could be allocated to the Miscellaneous budget.

Cow Leas Meadow

Cow Leas now requires maintenance (mowing etc) twice a year.

Donkey Paddock Water Rates & Maintenance

This budget is to cover the purchase of trees, planting of wild-flowers and mowing.

Flowers, cleaning & maintenance of the War Memorial

There is an agreement in place that several local organisations share the cost of providing flowers for the war memorial. Therefore, Sandwich Town Council's contribution now remains at £250 per year. £2,150 has been added to this budget in order to progress requested maintenance.

Drill Hall / Quayside Market

The budget here covers the Public Works loan repayment (£16,173.50) the annual insurance – (£1,270) and £1,000 for any unexpected matters or Solicitors fees. There is also a Drill Hall Reserve for any planned maintenance.

Fishergate

A budget of £7,000 has been set to cover utilities and repair works to Fishergate. Repair works are planned in 2022/23 but some may fall into 2023/24.

Play Areas

This is a contribution paid to Dover District Council for maintenance of play areas at Bulwarks and Poulders Gardens. The 2022/23 invoice has not yet been received.

Telephone Boxes

Some maintenance and alterations are planned to the telephone boxes, including turning one into a book-exchange.

Bay Hall

This property, which was recently acquired, has estimated costs of £7,000, which includes council tax, insurance, utilities, grounds maintenance and legal fees.

Reserves – Ring-fenced

Monks Wall Nature Reserve

The funds relating to the Reserve are solely for use by the Reserve and cannot be vire budgeted for use elsewhere. As the balance brought forward from 2022-23 is unknown, all Monks Wall Nature Reserve budgets have been removed from this spreadsheet.

£20,000 was moved from the MWNR budget to balance the budget in 2019/20. It may be possible to put this back into the MWNR budget in 2023/24 if the year-end balance allows. This could help with a grant funded project proposed by the Warden, which would require STC's initial outlay before the grant claim can be made from the Rural Payments Agency.

IT Reserve

This is a ring-fenced reserve kept aside to replace / upgrade computer hardware. 2023/24 is the third year of this reserve.

Highways Improvement Plan (H.I.P.'s)

This budget has been set to build on the 2023-24 budget, to fund a Traffic Regulation Order. A total of around £10,000 budget should be allocated over a 4-year period. Any underspend should be rolled over to the next financial year.

Drill Hall Reserve

This budget has been set up to cover any repairs and maintenance that Sandwich Town Council are liable for at the Drill Hall. Again, underspends will be rolled forward.

Reserves – General

Operating Funds to be kept in Reserve

I would aim to put in a budget of at least £40,000 here, to top up the balance brought forward. It is recommended that the Council aims to keep at least this amount in reserve for this purpose or emergency actions (i.e. if the Emergency Plan was called into use).

Other Services

Green Garden Waste Bags

This would buy around 400 bags from Dover District Council to be sold at the Visitor Information Centre.

Disability Access Strategy

This was a new budget in 2022/23 and another budget has been added for 2023/24. This is for any changes necessary to improve disabled access in the town.

Miscellaneous / Unexpected Expenditure

It has proved to be very useful to have a miscellaneous budget that can be vire - budgeted for unexpected costs. A small uplift has been applied to this and so a budget of £4,302.10 has been added here, which serves as the balancing item on this budget (therefore not a rounded figure).

Guildhall and Forecourt

Heating, Lighting, Water & Rates

STC makes an annual contribution of 25% to the running costs of the Guildhall at the end of the financial year.

Contribution towards the Guildhall

A contribution of £113,750 to the running of the Guildhall has been added here, as the 2020-21 precept rise indicated a promise to relieve the pressure from the Sandwich Toll Bridge Fund investments. Therefore, the proposed total contribution in the budget towards the Guildhall is £128,370.

Guildhall Forecourt Project

Thursday Market Manager

This is the budget for the management fee (paid monthly) to the manager of the Thursday Market.

Loan Repayment

The repayment of the loan for the Guildhall Forecourt Project to the Public Works Loan Board, which will be £12,033.48 annually for 50 years.

Income

Precept

The balancing figure required from the tax payer.

Outside Sources

Black Lane Allotment Rents & Water Contribution

There are 58 chargeable allotment plots at Black Lane. The rent charge has been calculated to recharge plot holders for new fencing (third year of three), membership of the National Allotment Association, skip hire, staffing contribution and water charges.

Sandown Road Allotment

It is hoped that this income could be achievable in 2023/24, although ongoing access issues will need to be solved.

Quay Conveniences

Frequent problems with vandalism and faulty door mechanisms have reduced the income and therefore no increase has been suggested to this budget for 2023/24.

Green Waste Bags

This service has been successfully taken on by the Visitor Information Centre, and bags are currently purchased from Dover District Council at cost of £3 each and sold at £5.

Cow Leas Lease

Income may be received from rent of Cow Leas Meadow during 2023/24.

Drill Hall

Rent for the Drill Hall currently remains at £60 per day, and therefore £21,900 will be due in 2023/24. The contract / rental agreement should be reviewed soon.

P22 Electricity Charge

The expected annual electricity charge to reclaim from the P22.

Refunded From Functions

Deputies Supper Donations

All guests, excluding the Mayor Deputies, their partners, the Lord Warden (if attending), the Mayor's Speaker and his/her guest, the Town Sergeant and his/her guest pay a contribution towards the cost of this event.

Curfew Ringers Supper

Current Curfew Bell Ringers pay a contribution towards this event.

Internal Transfers / Adhoc Income

Museum payment for stock from Visitor Information Centre

Occasionally the Museum requires stock that the Visitor Information Centre has purchased. An 'Internal Transfer' is made between accounts in the NatWest Bankline system to pay for this. All internal transfers of this nature are put onto the payment schedule.

Refund from Photocopying

The Sandwich Toll Bridge Fund makes a contribution at year end for photocopying. Also, very occasionally visitor / hirers request photocopying, which can be chargeable.

Monks Wall Nature Reserve

Funds to be used solely in relation to the MWNR

The funds relating to the Reserve are solely for use by the Reserve and cannot be vire budgeted for use elsewhere. This amount has been excluded, to indicate that is ring-fenced for Monks Wall Nature Reserve.

S144 (Visitor Information Centre & Tourism)

Visitor Information Centre

The income estimate will remain the same as this year's budget, as it is hoped that this income can be achieved.

Sandwich Chamber of Commerce – contribution towards Town Guides

Currently there is no Chamber of Commerce so no charge can be made.

Guildhall Square Income (to be used for repayment of loan and other maintenance of the Forecourt)

Current Markets

Income from hire of the forecourt from the Thursday Market and any other sources during the year. This income stream will be affected by the renovation of the Guildhall Forecourt if this work is delayed into 2023/24.