

MINUTES of a meeting of the COALVILLE Special Expenses Working Party held in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Coalville on TUESDAY, 24 January 2023

Present: Councillor D Everitt (Chairman)

Councillors M B Wyatt, E G C Allman, A S Black, J Geary, J Legrys, J Windram and M French

In Attendance: Councillor S Sheahan

Officers: Mrs A Crouch, Mrs C Hammond, Mr P Wheatley, Mr G Hammons, Ms R Haynes and Ms S Thirkettle

24. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies received.

25. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor M Wyatt declared a registerable interest in all items as the owner of two businesses in Coalville.

Councillor J Legrys declared a registerable interest in all items as a volunteer at and Director of the Hermitage FM project.

Councillor J Geary declared a registerable interest as a supporter of Coalville Town Football Club and the Council's appointed representative on the Coalville Town Football Club Committee.

26. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

Consideration was given to the minutes of the previous meetings held on 15 December 2022 and 3 January 2023.

A member requested further information regarding the footfall at the Newmarket during the Christmas in Coalville event, and asked for confirmation that the figure was 1,700 people and requested clarification on how this figure was captured.

It was moved by Councillor J Geary, seconded by Councillor J Legrys and

RESOLVED THAT:

The minutes of the meetings held on 15 December 2022 and 3 January 2023 be confirmed as an accurate record of the proceedings.

27. 2023/24 DRAFT BUDGET AND COUNCIL TAX

The Finance Team Manager presented the report to members.

A member expressed concern regarding the amount of the subsidy paid to the Owen Street recreation ground by the working party and suggested that by reducing the amount paid, savings could be made to the working party's budget. A member asserted that Coalville Town Football Club who use the ground are a profit making organisation which would be in a financial position to contribute more of their own income in order to maintain the ground's upkeep. It was suggested that the field could be used for events and that it was unfair to subsidise a financially successful organisation so heavily and it was suggested that the land could be sold to the club for the market value.

Chairman's initials

A member responded that the football club had many young people who play and train there and that this, alongside match days, bring in good value for money and business into the town. The importance of considering what value expenditures bring back to the community was noted.

The meeting was informed that the football club pay £2,000 per annum for the use of the Scotland's playing field, and a member suggested that they could be contributing more than this amount. Officers confirmed that they had arranged to meet with Mr Rennocks, Chair of the club, in order to discuss financial arrangements.

Members queried the savings around planned preventative maintenance and were advised that some of this expenditure would be pushed back into the future financial years in order to make savings this year. Officers confirmed that the only statutory service would be for cemeteries and burials.

A member made enquiries with regards to deferring expenditure on the London Road cemetery wall and asked whether it would still be considered to be safe in a year's time. Officers responded that the wall was subject to close monitoring and that at present it would not be in imminent danger of collapse.

A member asked for clarification on the planned events and was advised that due to events planned for the King's Coronation and another significant event, Cinema in the Park would unlikely to be scheduled for 2023. It was asked how much Cinema in the Park cost, what it brought in and what the shortfall would be. Officers clarified that the income it brought in was around £14,000, the actual cost had been £41,000, £26,000 of which had been funded by Coalville Special Expenses ty and £15,000 of which had been funded from the general fund. Therefore it was clarified that the total net cost had been £27,000 of which the working party had picked up £16,000 of the cost.

It was asserted that the rental of pitches for stallholders had been relatively low however officers replied that the stallholders had a variety of options and therefore would have chosen to trade at other events which would have charged them lower rent.

A member suggested that ticket prices for this event had been low and that they had received feedback that people would be prepared to pay more to maintain the event. Officers reiterated that members had previously felt that certain events were more beneficial than others and that Picnic in the Park was valued more highly than the Cinema in the Park, therefore that it would be proposed to continue with the Picnic in the Park and the Coronation events, which would enable the preservation of the Christmas in Coalville event. Officers noted that the reserve from previous years to fund the Cinema in the Park event had been removed, as part of managing the financial position, however this did not mean that it would be cancelled as there would be the potential for the working party to choose to find the money for this event from the budget put aside for other events. It was noted that the general fund would not be in a position to subsidise this event and therefore should members wish to proceed with it, the full cost would have to be drawn from the working party budget.

Councillor Wyatt moved a motion to recommend to Cabinet that the subsidy of the grounds maintenance for Coalville Town Football Club be reduced by 30% per year over three years in order to reach a cost neutral. It was seconded by Councillor J Windram. Members voted 4 in favour and 4 against, the Chair held the casting vote and the motion failed.

The level of council tax increase or savings was discussed and a member suggested an increase of 30% in order to trigger debate at Cabinet around a potential increase and it was considered that such a large increase may be over the £5 maximum which would trigger a referendum.

Chairman's initials

A member asked what the percentage recommendation had been around the country, and officers responded that in their experience the inflationary pressures which councils were facing had forced decisions between increasing council tax or making savings, and that both of these must be considered as part of achieving a balanced budget.

A member asserted that they would be unable to support any increase in council tax at a time when people were reliant on food banks and facing difficulties in paying rent and council tax.

Councillor J Geary moved a motion to increase the precept by the maximum allowed without triggering a referendum. This was seconded by Councillor J Legrys.

A recorded vote being requested, the voting was as detailed below.

The motion PASSED

A member questioned where the information could be found on the savings made from the cancellation of the stage at the Christmas in Coalville event and it was clarified that this had been spent on other attractions for the event as opposed to being a saving. Officers also confirmed that as the cancellation of the stage and the fireworks had been made so late in the process some abortive costs had been conceded.

Members suggested that it would be beneficial to have the Corporate and Housing, Property and Customer Services Portfolio Holders present in meetings of the working party.

It was moved by Councillor J Legrys, seconded by Councillor J Geary and

RESOLVED THAT:

Comments on the draft budget (Appendix A) and feedback on the recommended level of council tax increase/savings be provided by the Coalville Special Expenses Working Party be considered by Cabinet.

RECOMMENDED TO CABINET:

That the Coalville Special Expenses precept be increased by the maximum allowed without triggering a referendum.

A motion to increase the precept by the maximum allowed without triggering a referendum. (Motion)	
Councillor David Everitt	For
Councillor Michael Wyatt	Against
Councillor Elliott Allman	For
Councillor Angela Black	Against
Councillor John Geary	For
Councillor John Legrys	For
Councillor Jake Windram	Against
Councillor Marie French	Against
Councillor David Everitt	For (Casting Vote)
Carried	

The meeting commenced at 6.30 pm

The Chairman closed the meeting at 7.52 pm

Chairman's initials

