



# Woodbridge Town Council

Shire Hall Market Hill Woodbridge Suffolk IP12 4LP

Town Clerk: Mr G E Diaper

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## To Members of the Finance Committee

Cllr Bale

Cllr Gillard

Cllr Holdcroft

Cllr Mapey

Cllr Miller

Cllr O’Nolan

Cllr Page

Cllr Sanders

Cllr Sutton

Cllr Sylvester

You are hereby summoned to attend the **meeting** of the **Finance Committee** to be held at the **Shire Hall on Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> October 2022 at 7pm**

Greg Diaper

Town Clerk

20<sup>th</sup> October 2022

### **Public Attendance**

*Members of the public and press are welcome to join this meeting. Members of the public will be invited to give their views/questions the Town Council on issues on the agenda or raise issues for consideration or inclusion at future meetings. This item will be limited to fifteen minutes duration but may be extended at the discretion of the Mayor.*

### **Agenda**

**1. Apologies**

To receive apologies for absence.

**2. To receive declaration of interest**

Members and officers are invited to make any declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary or Local Non-Pecuniary Interests that they may have in relation to items on the Agenda and are also reminded to make any declarations at any stage during the meeting if it becomes apparent that this may be required when a particular item or issue is considered.

**3. To consider request for dispensation**

Councillors with a Pecuniary Interest in an item on this Agenda, who wish to remain, speak, and/or vote during consideration of that item, may apply for a dispensation in writing to the Town Clerk prior to the meeting. Applications may also be considered at the meeting itself should the nature of the interest become apparent to a Councillor at the time of the meeting.

**4. Public Question Time**

For the public to ask questions of the Committee or raise issues for consideration at a future meeting of the Committee

5. To receive and approve the minutes of the meeting held 27<sup>th</sup> September 2022

6. To consider draft 1 of the 2023/24 budget and to discuss the Council's financial requirements.

7. To consider quotations received from the Council's Computer Maintenance contractor.

8. To consider the financial management of Council Funds.

9. Closure.

## Woodbridge Town Council

Minutes of the meeting of the **Finance Committee** held at the **John Gibbons Gallery, Tide Mill Way,** on **Tuesday 27<sup>th</sup> September 2022** at 5pm

### Councillors:

Present: S Bale, P Gillard, G Holdcroft, S Miller, E O’Nolan, C Page, R Sanders and M Sutton

Absent  
without apologies: C Mapey and M Sylvester

In Attendance: Town Clerk and no members of the public

**276. To appoint a Chair of Committee for the 2022/23 Civic Year**

Councillor Sutton was elected the Chair of the Finance Committee for the 2022/23 Civic Year.

**277. To appoint a Vice-Chair of Committee for the 2022/23 Civic Year**

Councillor Bale was elected the Vice-Chair of the Finance Committee for the 2022/23 Civic Year.

**278. Apologies for Absence**

No apologies for absence had been received.

**279. To receive Declarations of Interest**

No members made any declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary or Local Non-Pecuniary Interests in relation to items on the Agenda.

**280. To consider request for Dispensations**

There were no requests from Councillors with a pecuniary interest in an item on this Agenda for a dispensation.

**281. Public Question Time**

There were no members of the public present.

**282. To receive and approve the minutes of the meeting held 10<sup>th</sup> May 2022**

It was noted that Cllr. Miller gave apologies for the May 10<sup>th</sup> meeting.

With this amendment the Committee received and approved the signing of the minutes of the meeting held 10<sup>th</sup> May 2022 as a true record.

**283. To note this Committee's Terms of Reference**

The Committee noted the Terms of Reference.

**284. To agree a template for the Council's Committees to complete as part of the budget process**

The Committee requested that two additional columns (detailed below) should be added to the template, which was otherwise agreed.

- Anticipated yearly maintenance
- Notes

**285. To consider the preparation of the 2023/24 Woodbridge Town Council budget**

The Town Clerk was asked to:

- Confirm the details of the Council's utility bill contracts.
- Confirm whether payment has been made to Suffolk County Council for any part of the 20 mph zone.
- To include a line in the first draft of the budget for a contribution to the Community Projects EMR.

**286. Closure**

The meeting was closed at 5.35pm.

Councillor Sutton  
Chair

## Item 6

To consider draft 1 of the 2023/24 budget and to discuss the Council's financial requirements.

The Council's current budget can be summarised using the income and expenditure cost centre costs of the Council's accounting software:

<b>Cost Centre</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Income</b>	<b>Expenditure</b>
100	General Amenity	£0	£74,644
110	Elmhurst Park	£1,075	£69,978
120	Kingston Field	£10,150	£22,890
130	Fen Meadow	£0	£0
140	Other Amenity Areas	£227	£7,183
150	Shire Hall	£6,160	£21,256
160	Organisation	£21,716	£290,063
170	Partnership and Community Wellbeing	£8,000	£44,434
180	Fees and Charges	£0	£36,153
190	Committee Expenditure	£0	£21,000
200	Whisstocks and Quay	£0	£8,665
		£47,328	£596,265
	Use of earmarked reserves	<b>-£163,395</b>	
	Precept	£385,542	

The excel spreadsheet used to calculate the current budget made it difficult for Officers to allocate the correct figures to the relevant cost centres and codes when inputting the new budget to the Council's financial software. The new spreadsheet which will be presented to you and modified in the current months has been adapted to allow for a far easier movement of figures from the spreadsheet to the software.

### A brief summary of the current budget

It was agreed to serve on East Suffolk Council a precept demand of £385,542 for 2022/23 financial year, which represents an increase of 8%, makes a band D equivalent of £119.50, an increase of £8.82 a year or 17p a week.

<b>Precept</b>	<b>£385,542</b>
Band D Equivalents	3226.36
Band D Council Tax	£119.50
Net Band D Increase	£8.82
Percentage Terms	8.0%

The final expenditure figure of £596,264.9 was offset by income of £47,328 and by a contribution from the Councils Ear Marked Reserves of £163,394.5. There were £200,130.5 of ‘new projects’ included within the budget.

### **Budget 2022/23**

Members are faced with a number of considerations as they begin the budget setting process:

- The current ‘cost of living’ crisis will impact everyone living the parish of Woodbridge.
- The current rate of inflation (at the time of writing) is 10.1% (September CPI index).
- This is the final budget for this term of the Council – there will be a new Council elected one month into the 2022/23 financial year.

At this meeting it is proposed that Members consider the line by line income forecast (more detail provided below), and discuss the Council’s future financial requirements to allow for a more detailed second draft to be presented at the November meeting. Officers have provided more detail of some the potential projects and spend to be accommodated in the budget.

### **Income**

The Financial Reports prepared for the October Town Council meeting (a, b and c) provide detail on the Council’s twenty-four income lines. For the 2021/22 budget, twenty of these (including the precept) were including in the budget preparation.

There is no forecast/ budgeted income for Other Income (1630), SCC Locality Funding Income (1860) or CIL (1870), as these amounts fluctuate from year to year and therefore are too unpredictable to forecast. There was no budget allocated to Property Re-Charges (1235).

The following provides further detail on the Council’s budgeted income, performance to date and draft 1 proposals.

<b>1100 – Hire of Elmhurst Park</b>		
Current year - £1,000	To date - £1,607.00	Proposed - £1,000
Ad-hoc hire of Elmhurst Park for events – music festivals, vintage markets etc. The three vintage markets have provided £900 of income this year – if these continue next year then £1000 will be an attainable target.		

<b>1110 – Lease of Kitchen Garden</b>		
Current year - £75	To date - £0	Proposed - £90

The Council has a lease with the Woodbridge Growers for the walled garden in Elmhurst Park, which expires on December 31<sup>st</sup> 2025. The Growers are invoiced in February, with the amount increasing each year in line with CPI – the latest invoice was for £81. Latest CPI (August) is 8.6% - it's difficult to forecast CPI in advance so an increase to £90 is proposed - £85 could be acceptable.

**1200 – Hire of Kingston Field**

Current year - £100

To date - £160

Proposed - £200

Ad-hoc hire of Kingston Field – has been low for a few years but we still have some interest each year. Likely events next year include (part of) the Regatta, Royal British Legion, and an Armed Forces event. Woodbridge Football Club has been given free use since the pandemic but will soon be charged a fee again. Woodbridge Cricket Club and Ipswich Cardinals American Football have also expressed an interest in using the field.

**1210 – Pavilion Property Income**

Current year - £7,500

To date - £8,021

Proposed - £8000

The Council has a lease with Access Community Trust for the Pavilion Café, which expires on the 28<sup>th</sup> January 2024 (mid-way through the budget being considered) – there has been no communication with ACT about extending the lease at the current time. ACT are invoiced in April, with the rent increasing each year in line with CPI – the invoice for the period April 1<sup>st</sup> 2022 – March 31<sup>st</sup> – 2023 was for £8,021. Officers could discuss with ACT whether or not they wish to extend in order to allow for an accurate figure to be included in this budget – if not a pro-rata agreement in line with the termination date may need to be agreed.

<b>1216 – Whisstocks Development Income</b>		
Current year - £5,866	To date - £135	Proposed - £1000
<p>The Council recovers Service Charges from the tenants and residents in the greater Whisstocks/ Deben Wharf area for work such as cleaning, utilities, floodgate maintenance and opening/ closure - this income code relates to the largest charge which is levied on the residents of Deben Wharf (via a property management company). The budgeted income in the current year is far greater than what will be received as the budget was set based on previous year's figures – the actual figure is lower as there was considerable hire of the Open Space in 2021 which was set off against the Council's expenditure. There has been less hire of the Open Space in 2022 therefore it is expected that the charge will increase this coming year.</p> <p>Another anomaly is that the service charge period follows the calendar year, rather than financial year.</p> <p>The Council employs an accountant to prepare its service charges and is in the process of moving this service to a new firm – Officers will endeavour to include the correct service charge in this budget as the preparation of the charge should be completed very early in the new year, therefore the budgeted figure will likely be agreed in the final draft.</p>		

Similar to the above, lines 1217 (Museum) and 1218 (Longshed), will be confirmed in the New Year.

<b>1220 – Tennis Court income</b>		
Current year - £2,050	To date - £0	Proposed - £2,165
<p>The Council has a lease with the Woodbridge Tennis Club for the tennis courts on Kingston Field, which expires in 2042. The recent fifth anniversary of the lease saw a rent review and increase of the base rent to £2162.75 – the rent remains in place until the next review in five years' time (based on CPI).</p>		

<b>1230 – Allotment rents</b>		
Current year - £500	To date - £643	Proposed - £525
<p>The Council has ten plots currently split between nineteen tenants, the calculated income for which is £525.</p>		

**1400 – Theatre Street wayleave**

Current year - £227

To date - £0

Proposed - £250

Historic way-leave for the Galley Restaurant to access the rear of its property across the Council's land at Theatre Street (transferred to WTC from ESC). Increases each year with CPI – the current invoice is based on a 9.9% increase at a cost of £250.

**1500 – Hire of the Shire Hall**

Current year - £500

To date - £358

Proposed - £500

Ad-hoc hire of the Shire Hall for events and meetings, excluding wedding bookings. Rated for VAT. Current regular hirers include yoga sessions and the Woodbridge Society. The Woodbridge Quakers are considering a return. This Committee will consider the scheme of rental of charges for 2023 at it's next meeting and may consider an increase to the hourly rates on offer to hirers.

**1505 – Hire of the Shire Hall (Market Square)**

Current year - £500

To date - £1,518

Proposed - £1,000

Ad-hoc hire of the Market Square – not rated for VAT. Increase in income this year due to the hire by the Strawberry Café at set rate – hope/ expectancy that this will continue in the summer of 2023.

**1510 – Shire Hall (1<sup>st</sup> floor) rental income**

Current year - £5,160

To date - £2,598

Proposed - £5,200

The Council has a lease with the Seckford Foundation for the use of the 1<sup>st</sup> floor of the Shire Hall which expires on June 22<sup>nd</sup> 2025. The foundation are charged four quarterly payments @ £1,299.20 +10 % of water charges (Average of £1300 per quarter).

**1520 – Hire of Whisstocks Place**

Current year - £2,150

To date - £561

Proposed - £1,000

Ad-hoc hire of Whisstocks Place for outdoor events – markets, maritime themed events, seasonal events etc. The use of the space has decreased since the pandemic, therefore it is unlikely the current years target will be achieved (the loss of the Vintage Market to Elmhurst Park equates to almost £1000 of income for this area). The proposed £1,000 could be too high.

<b>1620 – Wedding income</b>		
Current year - £8,500	To date - £20,283.00	Proposed - £8,500
<p>Hire of the Shire Hall for wedding ceremonies – rated for VAT so the above income figure is the ex VAT amount. Income this year is skewed as the number of bookings are higher than normal to compensate for the backlog of ceremonies cancelled during the pandemic. Current bookings for next year are looking thin on the ground, therefore retaining the forecast income amount is reasonable, but may not be reached.</p>		

<b>1690 – Interest received</b>		
Current year - £3,000	To date - £52	Proposed - £2,000
<p>The Council receives a small interest from HSBC for it's Current and Money Manager accounts), and a more significant amount from the Suffolk Building Society where it's main finances are secured. Interest from the Suffolk Building Society is received in November, and last year this equalled £1,141.75 – a similar amount will be expected this year therefore the proposed amount of income should be reduced. This can be altered upon the receipt of this year's payment.</p>		

<b>1700 – Market rents received</b>		
Current year - £5,000	To date - £3,010	Proposed - £5,500
<p>The Thursday market continues to be popular with residents and at the current time we have six stalls. Should all six remain then the calculated income for a year equals £6334.20. In the expectancy that the number of stall holders can fluctuate throughout the year, then a proposed figure of £5,500 seems reasonable.</p>		

<b>1720 – Art Club rent</b>		
Current year - £1,500	To date - £888	Proposed - £1,850
<p>The Council has a lease with the Woodbridge Art Club, which has recently been extended to March 31<sup>st</sup> 2024. In line with the lease the current years rent is £1,850, and this amount is proposed as the rent for the extended period.</p>		

<b>1871 – Tide Mill Quay income</b>		
Current year - £1,500	To date - £287	Proposed - £650
<p>Ad-hoc hire of the Tide Mill Quay including the moorings on the Quay and use of the space beside the Tide Mill. There are very few mooring enquiries however the Council has on-going agreement with a coffee vendor for the use of the space, charges at £55 per month.</p>		

**Members are asked to consider the proposed income proposals for the 2023/24 budget.**

## Expenditure

Whilst the line by line consideration of the expenditure forecast will be undertaken at the next meeting of the Committee, the following provides some further detail on the major items to potential be included in the budget.

### Grounds Maintenance

The Councils Ground Maintenance Contract with East Suffolk Norse expires on March 31<sup>st</sup> 2023 – the final day of the current budget and financial year.

The Amenities Committee are currently considering two options – to appoint a contractor to a new three year contract or to bring the Council’s maintenance back in house – both have significant implications to this budget as currently the maintenance of the Council’s estate is the second largest item of expenditure after Officer salaries.

The Amenities Committee has a firm deadline of its December meeting to make a recommendation to Town Council. At the current time it is expected that the appointment of a contractor could add £10,000 - £1,5000 to the current figure of £64,575, whilst taking the service in house could require a first year investment of around £140,000. The Amenities Committee have been advised that should it wish to bring the maintenance back in house that the Finance Committee could find it extremely difficult to agree to any further new projects for 23/24.

### Staffing

Woodbridge Town Council employs six Officers – Town Clerk, Deputy Town Clerk, Finance Assistant, Administrative Assistant, Maintenance Officer and Wedding Officer. At the current time Officers are being paid on the 2021/22 Local Government salary schedule, with negotiations on-going regarding the pay award for the current financial year.

The National Employers’ final pay offer was made on 25th July and is currently being considered by the trade unions. The offer would provide employees with a pay increase of £1,925 per annum from 1 April 2022 (equivalent to 3%). The hope is that an agreement can be made before Christmas.

Once the actual figures are known these can be fed into the ‘Staffing budget’ tab on the budget spreadsheet. This currently forecasts for a 5% increase in pay for 23/24, which can be adjusted as appropriate.

All Officers aside from the Wedding Officer are members of the Local Government Pension Scheme. The Suffolk Pension Fund has recently completed its 2022 Actuarial Valuation, the results of which are shown below.

### Contribution rates

Employer contribution rates for year ending	Primary	Secondary		Total	
	% of pay	% of pay	£	% of pay	£
31 March 2023				23.0%	0
31 March 2024	19.9%	2.1%	0	22.0%	0
31 March 2025	19.9%	1.1%	0	21.0%	0
31 March 2026	19.9%	0.1%	0	20.0%	0

This reduction to 22% saves the Council around £1,500 per year, and is represented the budget spreadsheet.

The spreadsheet has also been updated to provide clear guidance on the calculation of National Insurance contributions.

### **New projects**

One off project funding has a major impact on the budget, and in previous years the Council has utilised its reserves to offset the impact of large projects on the budget and precept demand.

The Council's Committee are currently considering their project requests, which will be finalised by the November meeting of this Committee. At the current time the following projects have been proposed, with Officers working to provide further details and project costs in due course.

- Market Square seating
- Promotion of Woodbridge as a tourist destination
- Improvements to Woodbridge Growers area
- for young people - provision of dry space/ seating area
- Improvements to Tide Mill Way.
- App based bike hire scheme
- Water Quality testing
- Discretionary Hardship Fund (already set up as an EMR)

The current spreadsheet uploaded to SharePoint is a working document – many changes will follow in the coming months.

**Members are provided this opportunity to discuss the Council's expenditure requirements.**

## Item 7

To consider quotations received from the Council's Computer Maintenance contractor.

The Town and Deputy Town Clerk have been considering the Council's IT requirements and have sought a number of quotations from the Councils' Computer Maintenance contractor, React Computer Partnership.

The following is a proposal to agree the future purchase of 3 laptops, 2<sup>nd</sup>/ dual screens and the migration of data to Office 365 as a new project line in 2023/2024 budget.

### **Computer Screens**

The Town Clerk, Deputy Town Clerk and Finance Officer consider that using dual screens will make it easier and faster to use multiple programs simultaneously increasing productivity and enabling smoother workflow.

The following quote has been received from React:

Monitors	£315.00
Cables	£19.50
Monitor Stands	£94.32
Installation	£270.00 (2-3 hours max amount)
Carriage (at cost)	<u>£10.00</u>
	£708.82
VAT@20%	<u>£141.76</u>
Total	£850.58

### **Laptops**

Members will have seen the relatively ancient laptop used by the Town Clerk at Council meetings, whilst the Deputy Town Clerk has struggled to achieve functionality with the laptop currently provided to her with was purchased over the counter at the beginning of the pandemic. It is proposed that the Maintenance Officer is also supplied with a laptop which will enable us to set him up with an Office 365 email and to manage his workload electronically, rather than the current pen and paper method.

Overleaf is a quotation from React covering this item and the proposal below, with the costs for laptops being £1650 + vat (£550 each).

### **Migration of data to Office 365**

The Council's server was purchased in April 2018 and it's 5 year warranty comes to an end in April 2023.

We currently use Office 365 to host our email accounts and the SharePoint area Councillors use to access documents for meetings.

All programmes and documents used by officers are currently stored on the server located in the Shire Hall. This can overheat in summer and is vulnerable to power cuts.

Officers cannot work on the same documents at the same time, meaning agendas must be written at different times or by the same person. Wedding spreadsheets can't be used at the same time.

If Officers work remotely, we use the Zyxel SSL VPN app to remote log into the network, this is often unreliable and slow. It also requires the desktop in the office to be on.

The quote attached is to mitigate these issues by storing all data and compatible software on a cloud-based system maintained by React. All documents could be accessed from anywhere with any computer, tablet, phone. This would also be covered by barracuda protection and using Multi Factor Authentication would be fully GDPR compliant.

The Finance system is compatible with a cloud-based system, if they payroll system is not compatible, it is also possible for React to host this on a remote server. Maintaining a server on our own would no longer be required.

The only change to councillors would be the introduction of multi-factor authentication for security reasons. You can decide if this is required later.

£1915.00 + vat

**Members are asked to consider allocating £4273.82 as a new project line (IT update) in the 2023/24 Woodbridge Town Council budget.**

# Quotation



React Computer Partnership Ltd

## Company Address

Unit 5 Deben Mill Business Centre, Old Maltings Approach, Woodbridge, IP12 1BL  
Phone: 01394 387337; email sales@reactcp.co.uk

Date 31/08/2022

Quotation 4897

Customer ID

## Quotation For

Belinda Lloyd  
Woodbridge Town Council

Quotation valid until: 30/09/2022

Prepared by: Richard Pledger

## Comments or Special Instructions

None

## Customer Quotation acceptance details

Customer Contact	P.O. Number	Required Date	Quote Accepted	Terms
				Due on receipt

Quantity	Description	Unit Price	VAT Applicable	Amount	X
	<b>Laptops</b>				
3	Dell Vostro 3000 3510 39.6 cm (15.6") Notebook - Full HD - 1920 x 1080 - Intel Core i5 11th Gen i5-1135G7 Quad-core (4 Core) - 8 GB Total RAM - 256 GB SSD - Carbon Black - Intel Chip - Windows 10 Pro	£ 550.00	Yes	£ 1,650.00	
	<b>Option 3 - Migration of data to 365 SharePoint</b>				
1	Implementation of Multi Factor Authentication	£ 360.00	Yes	£ 360.00	
1	Workshop session for key users to discuss and review SharePoint requirements Post workshop documentation write up, review and agree works package	£ 400.00	Yes	£ 400.00	
	Implementation stages following above				
4	Configuration and set up of SharePoint groups and permissions - estimate based on workshop session	£ 90.00	Yes	£ 360.00	
8	Build of SharePoint site – estimate based on above workshop.	£ 90.00	Yes	£ 720.00	
5	React SharePoint support - (additional to current support service charge) Per user per month	£ 15.00	Yes	£ 75.00	

Subtotal £ 3,565.00

V.A.T Rate 20.00%

V.A.T £ 713.00

If you have any questions concerning this quotation, please contact:  
the above on 01394 387337

Quantity	Description	Unit Price	VAT Applicable	Amount	X
			Other		
			<b>TOTAL</b>	£ 4,278.00	

Thank you for your business!

## Item 8

### **To consider the financial management of Council Funds.**

Councillor Sanders has written to the Town Mayor and Chair of the Finance Committee to request that this Committee discuss the current processes the Council currently follows when making payments to external bodies:

As you will be aware we are getting an increasing number of request via Councillors, or directly to the Clerk, for funds to support events and assisting charities. Some of these requests are by individuals, some are by non-profit making organisations and others by registered charities or limited companies. Of these, the first and last are the ones which causes me greatest concern. In many instances the audit trail of this public money is currently poor or non-existent beyond the issuing of the funds. Whilst monies sent to registered charities or limited companies have some visibility via published accounts, these are not published for up to two years and there is rarely sufficient detail for an adequate audit trail. Further with limited companies, funds could be lost if the company goes into administration or liquidation.

At the Town Council meeting last week, the discussion and agreed resolution to the request by Councillor O'Nolan for £7,500 to be given to the Salvation Army required that the Salvation Army submit requests to the Clerk for drawing down monies from a grant 'pot' rather than handing monies over without any substantiation. In my view this type of approach provides a reasonable audit trail but this is the only instance where I am aware we have requested this, or a similar approach.

The Item in last night's postponed CEE committee meeting was for agreeing to payment to an individual of £500 with only very generalised details of what the money was to be used for. Further when the Town Council agreed last week in Item 26, by majority vote, to pay £400 to the organiser of Elmfest, there were no substantiation details of the stated losses in his request or a request by the Council for that to be supplied prior to payment. I also noted the request was not in the name of the organiser's event management limited company, Event Manager Ltd, but in a personal capacity. Following that I determined from the Clerk that the £1,500 grant funding for Elmfest in July was not paid to the organiser's event management company bank account but to his personal bank account. Whilst there may be nothing untoward in the use of those monies, we currently have no means of auditing that use and confirming they are wholly used for the purpose they were granted.

In my view, we should seek to resolve by a motion to be voted on by Councillors that in granting monies we should

a) for payment to individuals personal bank account, irrespective of the destination of the money, require a full set of receipted invoices before payment is made or payment in made direct by the Clerk for goods and services up to the granted sum

b) for payment to non- profit organisations, without bank accounts, e.g Opera in the Park, but where money is given to a registered charity to administer, a post event set of accounts for the event sponsored

c) for payment to registered charities a post event set of accounts for the event sponsored

d) for payment to registered charities for ongoing costs the charity is to provide monthly (or other agreed period) requests for proposed expenditure up to the granted sum to be followed by a breakdown of the actual expenditure

e) for payment to limited companies submission of detailed receipts for payment for goods and services to be reimbursed on receipt by the Clerk up to the granted sum.

The Chair of the Finance Committee in return:

Hi Robin

I think you raise some good points here. Given that sadly we are likely to receive more of these requests we do need to tighten up.

I had a look at our Fin Regs:

*4.2.No expenditure may be authorised that will exceed the amount provided in the revenue budget for that class of expenditure other than by resolution of the council, or duly delegated committee. During the budget year and with the approval of council having considered fully the implications for public services, unspent and available amounts may be moved to other budget headings or to an earmarked reserve as appropriate ('virement').*

This suggests to me that if we have spent our 'Grants' budget we should not be giving out more. A grant should come from the grants budget and therefore if its empty, it needs to be topped up from reserves. I am not sure we should treat reserves as a budget heading.

With regard to grants the regs say: 5.8.

*In respect of grants a duly authorised committee shall approve expenditure within any limits set by council and in accordance with any policy statement approved by council. Any Revenue or Capital Grant in excess of £5,000 shall before payment, be subject to ratification by resolution of the council.*

I think our actions were OK in this respect. So just some minor tidying up I think at our end, but there remains the issue of proper accounting for the public money we part with.

Our grants policy is where we need to look for some indication of what we should be expecting, although the policy makes no reference to awarding monies to individuals. We did tighten up on our post award requirements:

*All organisations in receipt of grants will be required to provide a short report by May of each year (or when the project has completed, if sooner) indicating how the grant was used and the benefits arising.*

I think this needs beefing up to say something about (for grants over what... £250?) itemised expenditure and receipts are required and for grants less than this a statement on what grant money was spent on must be sent on completion of project/expenditure.

So the £400 for Elmfest should in return give itemised spending and receipts to show expenses incurred.

**Members are asked to consider financial management of Council Funds.**