

- b) An internal email referring to the NFDC front desk being shut from 4.00pm on 24 December through to reopening on 4 January, NFDC staff having been given an extra 2 days leave for 30 & 31 December in appreciation of their continued efforts during stressful times. Members felt similar arrangements could be extended to Town Council staff, including two days for ground staff before 31 March if they had to work over the Xmas period.

It was

RECOMMENDED: That the matter be referred to F&GP on the same basis as NFDC.

65. RESERVES

The Town Clerk referred to page 28 of Annex B Committee Budgets Version 4 commentary and in particular confirmation from Derek Kemp, Accountant that General Reserves may be used to reduce the Precept burden on local ratepayers, subject to the council retaining recommended levels of General Reserve, being 3 months equivalent of annual precept. At £100k per month, based on annual precept of £1.2m, equates to £300k being retained. The Town Clerk pointed out General Reserve increased by £100k last year from £250k to £350k

It was then

RECOMMENDED:

That £13.5k of General Reserve be used to reduce the Precept increase to £1,186,665 resulting in an overall increase of 4.99%, rather than 6.19%.

It was also

RECOMMENDED: That Fees & Charges be reviewed with overall 5% general increase.

66. COMMITTEE BUDGETS

The Chairman referred to Annex B – Committee Budgets for 2022/23 (Version 4). Following further discussion of points raised on page 28, and subject to clarification from our Accountant regarding the accounting treatment of the Quilter Cheviot investment. It was

RECOMMENDED:

That the Committee Budgets for 2022/23 (Version 5) be endorsed by the relevant standing committees.

Regarding benchmarking of grounds operative wages, the Town Clerk confirmed the basic pay next year was based on £20,903 per annum, plus budgeted 4% cost of living increase covering 2021-22 and 2022-23, resulting in budgeted earnings of £21,739. Town Clerk referred to recent adverts for similar posts in the region offering from £24k to £25k pa.

Estates Manager was asked to undertake a further benchmark exercise comparing ground staff wages at other councils locally, indicating what their likely salaries will be from 1 April.

67. TIMETABLE

The Town Clerk referred to an email dated 30 November received from Julie Dunsdon of NFDC asking parishes to provide precept requests and information by 14 January 2021.

68. DATE OF NEXT MEETING - TBA

There being no further business to discuss, the Chairman thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 3.15 pm.

CHAIRMAN _____ DATE _____

Distribution:

Members of the Executive Committee

Town Councillors – For Information

District Councillors C V Ward, J L Cleary

County Councillors M Kendal, F Carpenter and K Mans

Press

Minute	Action Points	Action by date	To be actioned by
64 a)	Report ASB at Ashley to Police, etc	ASAP	Town Clerk
64 b)	Xmas opening recommendation	8 December 2021	F&GP
65	Fees & Charges 2022-23 / Precept	9 December 2021	Amenities / F&GP
66	Committee Budgets 2022-23	9 December 2021	Amenities / F&GP