

The Guildhall  
Market Place  
Salisbury  
Wilts  
SP1 1JH



**Contact:** Joanna Wood, Interim City Clerk  
**Direct Line:** 01722 342860  
**Email:** [corporate@salisburycitycouncil.gov.uk](mailto:corporate@salisburycitycouncil.gov.uk)  
**Web:** [www.salisburycitycouncil.gov.uk](http://www.salisburycitycouncil.gov.uk)

# Minutes

**Meeting of** : Finance and Governance  
**Date** : 15 January 2024  
**Meeting held** : The Guildhall  
**Commencing at** : 6:30pm

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Present:

Chair: Cllr A Bayliss                      Vice Chair: Cllr I Tomes

Cllrs: V Charleston, S Hocking, C McGrath, J Nettle, A Riddle, R Rogers  
and J Wells.

Cllrs also present: Cllr C Corbin and T Corbin.

Officers: Joanna Wood and Janine Whitty

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***Following the recent bi-election, committee member Cllr E Rimmer has been replaced by committee member Cllr T Last.***

## **741. Apologies:**

741.1. Cllr T Last gave his apologies and was substituted by Cllr A Riddle.

## **742. Public Questions/Statement Time:**

No public questions or statements were submitted.

## **743. Councillor Questions/Statement Time:**

No Councillor questions or statements were submitted.

## **744. Minutes of Previous Meeting:**

The Chairman approved and signed the minutes of the last meeting of the Finance and Governance committee on 30 October 2023.

**745. Declaration of Interest:**

There were no declarations of interest.

**746. Dispensations:**

No dispensations were requested.

**747. Chairman's Announcements:**

747.1. The Chairman had no announcements.

**748. Quarter Three Budget Monitoring:**

The Interim City Clerk Joanna Wood presented the budget monitoring report, which reported up to the end of October 2023. A reduction in Cremation income was highlighted as a significant risk, as it is unlikely to meet target. Several factors have influenced this income line including no extreme weather, closure of the crematorium due to roof works and closure of a local direct cremation firm with whom SCC had a business arrangement. Overspending was also noted in areas such as repairs & maintenance and tree surgery, as well as the crematorium roof repairs overspend. The committee thanked officers and discussed the report, and it was:

**Resolved to:**

748.1. Note the Revenue and Capital Budget Monitoring Reports for the end of October 2023.

**Proposed by:** Cllr A Riddle

**Seconded by:** Cllr J Wells

A vote was taken and accordingly was **carried**.

**749. Budget Setting 2024/25:**

Administration Group Leader Cllr Victoria Charleston provided a statement regarding the proposed budget, including highlighting this year's public budget consultation, as well as thanking officers for their work. A full copy of this statement can be found at the end of these minutes. The committee discussed the proposed budget and precept, and it was;

**Resolved to:**

- 749.1. Approve the proposed revenue and capital budget and fees and charges for 2024/25 as set out in the report and appendices, and
- 749.2. Recommend to Full Council a precept of £5,642,672.

**Proposed by:** Cllr V Charleston

**Seconded by:** Cllr I Tomes

A recorded vote was taken, as follows;

**For** Cllr V Charleston, A Riddle, R Rogers, J Wells, I Tomes, A Bayliss

**Against** S Hocking, J Nettle, C McGrath

A vote was taken and accordingly was **carried**.

**750. Matters, if any, which by reason of special circumstances the Chairman decides should be discussed as a matter of urgency for information only. Please note that the Council cannot lawfully consider or determine any matter which is not specified on the Agenda of this summons.**

There were 2 members of the public and 0 member of the press present.  
The meeting closed at 6.57pm.

## **Administration Group Leaders, Cllr Victoria Charleston – Budget Statement**

I want to begin by thanking officers for all their hard work this year to keep within budget, and to be ambitious with income targets. We are in a good financial position going into 24/25.

I am proud to present this year's budget. It sets out this administration's work to respond to residents and to run an efficient council.

Back in August we ran a survey which asked people about their view on the City Council as well as our priorities. Across the board, 70% of respondents were satisfied and very satisfied with the way SCC runs services which is an endorsement of the hard work by councillors and officers.

We held focus groups and a public meeting to ensure people had their opportunity to contribute to the budget setting process.

People prioritised 'green city' 'lively city' and 'voice being heard' and we looked into that further and have added budget lines and protected budget lines that reflect our residents views.

We have put in new money (£30k) for street weeding, something our residents have asked for this summer. We have put in new money to start making our parks more accessible for all children including disabled starting with a new path to the play facilities on Bemerton Heath. We have protected our climate change lines as well as our cultural grants to the Playhouse and Salisbury Museum and events budgets.

Importantly, we are also committing to making this council run more smoothly by including money for new payroll software and finance software which will enable officers to work efficiently. This is well overdue and been making life very difficult for our staff

We are asking residents for an extra 55p a week to maintain all the services they appreciate. With councils up and down the country cutting everything, and our own residents seeing the impact of Wiltshire cuts to the state of pavement, gullies, and youth services, I hope people can agree that £7 a week for our parks, bins, events, community work is more than a fair price to pay.

Again, thanks to our interim clerk, Jo and interim RFO, Steve for all their hard work on this.