

## **REVIEW OF EARMARKED RESERVES**

**DATE: 2<sup>ND</sup> OCTOBER 2024**

**REPORT BY: JO CHAPMAN, DEPUTY CLERK & RESPONSIBLE FINANCE OFFICER**

### **PURPOSE**

The purpose of this report is to provide Council with the current position of all earmarked reserves held.

This review looks at whether each Earmarked Reserve is still required.

### **WHAT ARE EARMARKED RESERVES?**

Earmarked reserves are established to fund future large tangible projects eg Toilet block refurbishments and costly future events eg. Cemetery land purchases.

The proposed individual reserve amounts are included in each annual budget calculation and then transferred to the earmarked reserves account.

The existing earmarked reserves & future reserves are reviewed annually in tandem with the budget and plans of Minehead Town Council.

### **EXISTING EARMARKED RESERVES**

#### **New Offices**

Minehead Town Council rents its Office on a yearly basis. There is currently an option to buy Office only, leasehold. The flats above are for sale on the open market.

Therefore, the earmarked reserve will be required in the next 6 -18 months to purchase the existing Office or something similar. Current balance is £239,200.64

#### **Cemetery Extension**

The existing Cemetery in Porlock Road is running out of burial space. Projected timescale 5-7 years. There is plentiful space for ashes interments.

This earmarked reserve is to be used to purchase a piece of suitable land (flat, no watercourse) around Minehead.

Prices of land around Minehead (Aug/Sep 2024) average £100,000-£150,000.

Current balance is £70,000

## **Upgrade Toilets**

Minehead Town Council has a rolling programme to upgrade the public toilets, started in 2019.

To date the toilets at Summerland Road & Quay West have been extensively upgraded.

It was agreed in 2023 to upgrade Blenheim Gardens toilets in tax year 24/25. Budget £50,000. Work is yet to start.

The existing earmarked reserve is £8,115.06.

## **Play Areas/Equipment**

Minehead Town Council maintains four play parks, running track, MUGA, tennis courts, 2 football fields to a high and safe standard.

With devolution from Somerset Council a probability in 2024/2025, Minehead Town Council will likely be given the other play parks, Sea Front x 2, Trinity Way, Culvercliffe, Cuckoo Meadow x 2, Plover Close, Teal Road.

I have inspected these and they (with exception of one on the seafront) are in poor condition. They will require substantial remedial work/replacement.

I would advise an in-depth review on usage/ feasibility of all the playparks in town going forward.

The existing earmarked reserve is £15,000

There is S106 money available for recreational purposes from Somerset Council.

## **Replace Vehicles/Equipment**

This fund is to purchase/replace Minehead Town Councils existing fleet of vehicles or replace/ purchase larger machinery eg ride on mower.

The vehicle used for the toilet cleaner is now over ten years old & getting to the end of its life. This will require replacement in 2025.

The existing earmarked reserve is £19,125.

### **Environmental Stewardship Funds**

This is for stewardship of the public part of Alcombe Common, to increase the number of the rare Heath Fritillary butterfly. These funds come from DEFRA and can only be spent on the Common. Minehead Town Council organises professional, regular management on an annual basis.

The existing earmarked reserve is £10,000.

### **Skate Ramp**

In 2020, Minehead Town Council looked for a place to build/place a skate ramp. This project didn't come to fruition. This money came from the Fairfield Trust.

Contact should be made with the Fairfield Trust to ascertain further steps for this money.

The existing earmarked reserve is £2,000.

### **Cemetery Improvements**

This reserve is for further work to the Cemetery paths, entrances and upcoming tree work.

The existing earmarked reserve is £10,000.

### **Community Building**

The modern Community Building was completed in 2020.

This reserve was created to repair the building, MUGA, tennis courts, green space in the future.

The current reserve level is adequate for the next 3-5 years.

The existing earmarked reserve is £20,000.

### **Local Bus Service**

Prior to 2021, Minehead Town Council along with Porlock Parish Council and Selworthy & Minehead Without contributed to the running costs of the No 10 bus route (Porlock-Minehead) and the No 11 bus route (Minehead circular)

In 2021 Central Government introduced the bus ride incentive to increase bus travel after the Covid pandemic. This is unlikely to continue in 2025.

This reserve is to recommence the bus route contributions in 2025/26.

The existing earmarked reserve is £18,600.

### **Trees (the Avenue)**

This is a new reserve in 2024, specially for trees and their associated costs in The Avenue. This is a public donation that can only be spent on this purpose.

This work will be carried out in the financial year 2024/2025 and this reserve will be spent, along with £6000 budgeted, held in the General account.

The existing earmarked reserve is £500.

This concludes this report.