



Finance Committee Working Group - Comments Monday 28th November 2022

Scheduled Finance Committee meeting was cancelled due to staff sickness and a Working Group (non-decision making) discussion was held via zoom video conferencing starting at 6.00pm.

Parish Councillors in attendance: Chairman: Gerard McCloskey (GM), Adrian Collins (AC) and Max Harwood (MH).

Clerk: Debbie Harknett.

There were no members of the public in attendance.

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- 1) **It was noted the discussion would not be recorded.**
- 2) **Appointment of Vice-Chairman** – included on agenda in error – there is no vacancy as AC is vice-chair not Steve Williamson. It was agreed it would be helpful to have a replacement member on the finance committee – three members is quorate but a fourth allows a meeting to continue if somebody is unable to attend.
- 3) **There were no apologies for absence as all members were present.**
- 4) **There were no declarations of interest.**
- 5) **The Minutes of last meeting** held on Monday 6th October 2022 were approved to be signed as a true record.
- 6) **There were no representations from the public.**
- 7) **Chairman's report** - GM noted there was nothing beyond items covered on the agenda.
- 8) **Review of expenditure against budget 2022/23** - (previously circulated)
GM noted expenditure was as expected and hadn't really changed since it was last considered with some predicted expenditure having now been paid.
- 9) **To consider council mobile phone**
 - a) Clerk explained the advertised phone number for the PC is her home number and if she is away messages can go unanswered for some time whereas a mobile phone could be passed to a councillor allowing communication to continue. Also, if there is a power outage her home phone will not work so a mobile number would help the council to establish a WhatsApp emergency action group. Members understood it wasn't appropriate to require the use of her personal mobile phone.
 - b) AC offered an old phone that could be used with a pay-as-you go sim card.
 - c) Clerk noted Tesco sell monthly pay-as-you-go sim cards for 99p with usage options from £10pcm.
 - d) Agreed to recommend to full council the purchase of a Tesco sim-card on a pay-as-you-go monthly deal. Payment of which would need to be made by the Clerk and reclaimed until such time as the council has an alternative method of meeting the payments.
- 10) **To consider council credit/debit card**
 - a) MH explained there are financial obligations for the benefit of the Council that the Clerk shouldn't be required to make on its behalf.
 - b) Clerk noted the monthly zoom cost is paid through her credit card as are payments for things like Flying Bull volunteer refreshments, stationery purchases, etc – all of which are then refunded through her expenses. VAT can only be claimed if invoices are issued to the PC or the items are purchased directly by use of a PC bank/credit card.
 - c) There was concern shared by everybody (including the Clerk) as to how to limit/restrict any credit/debit card as there is dual authorisation is not available. However, it was agreed that an

appropriate instructions/policy would have to be established.

- d) Clerk thought something is offered through Unity Bank – AC to investigate.

11) Budget 2023/24 (previously circulated)

- a) GM reminded the meeting the full council has approved an increase in precept of 7.5% £2,780.25 from £37,070 to £39,850.25 – approximately £3.54 per band D property (depending on the tax base which is issued by CDC). This meeting is to agree the detail to recommend to full council for approval at the December meeting.
- b) GM suggested MH’s note in the R&T should explain that we reduced reserves so the relationship between reserves and annual expenditure is spot on.
- c) Clerk noted that it wouldn’t take long before the ideal reserve limit of the precept value would be below the precept – the precept is likely to continue to rise annually and the reserves will fall if they are not replenished when used for projects/unexpected items.
- d) AC noted that we have received a request to consider additional village gateways as measures to slow traffic. £2,000 has been included under RATA budget for consideration of these and help for Fyning Lane traffic slowing that is currently being discussed by a local group. We are awaiting the invoice for Rake bus shelter but it is likely there will remain a balance in RATA funds to carry forward to next year.
- e) King’s coronation – MH noted we are likely to be asked to contribute to an event but it was too soon to know. It was agreed that while there is no specific budget heading there is money in the grant ‘pot’. Clerk added CDC may offer grants but they are likely to encourage a lasting tribute rather than supporting a party.
- f) Youth club – while it is looking unlikely that it will be restarted should management be forthcoming it was agreed help could be provided from reserves if necessary.
- g) Additional funds had been included in the hall/room hire budget as it was considered there could be additional expenses if the PC were able to take over the YC room next year.
- h) The training budget had been increased in consideration of PC elections and possible new members next year.
- i) Election costs have been accumulated over a number of years - Clerk explained these vary as it depends if there is district elections (share cost) and if there enough nominations for the PC to require an election.
- j) Budget has allowed for an increase in the regular 6-monthly bus shelter etc payments from £90 to £100.
- k) Grant budget includes specific money allocated for the CAB, food banks and burial grounds there is a further £1,750 which will be available for application.
- l) AC noted that subject to agreement of the finance committee money can be moved from one budget heading to another if necessary as the year progresses.
- m) It was agreed to take the budget, as circulated and discussed, to full council for approval.

12) The next Finance Committee Meeting was scheduled to be held at 7.00pm on Monday **3rd April 2023 at Rogate Village Hall pavilion.**

Discussion finished at 7.38pm.

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Chairman

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Date