



**Finance Committee  
Working Group - Comments  
Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2023**

Scheduled Finance Committee meeting was held as Working Group (non-decision making) discussion via zoom video conferencing starting at 7.00pm on 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2023 because the hall was unavailable. 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.

Chairman: Gerard McCloskey Harknett gerard.mccloskey@rogateparishcouncil.gov.uk clerk@rogateparishcouncil.gov.uk	www.rogateparishcouncil.gov.uk	Clerk: Debbie
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- 1) **It was noted the discussion would not be recorded.**
- 2) **There were no apologies for absence as all members were present.**
- 3) **There were no declarations of interest.**
- 4) **The Minutes of last meeting** held on Monday 28<sup>th</sup> November 2022 were approved to be signed by the Chairman as a true record.
- 5) **There were no representations from the public.**
- 6) **Chairman’s report** - GM noted there was nothing beyond items covered on the agenda.
- 7) **Review of expenditure against budget 2022/23 and Internal audit-** (previously circulated)
  - a) Clerk noted the grants over spend is covered by the unspent £2,000 youth club budgeted amount – it was agreed to use this when awarding Rogate School £1,000 book grant and Little Angels £150.
  - b) Play area maintenance – year-on-year this maintenance is becoming more expensive as the equipment ages, even though we reduced some costs by using the Handyman for some work last year. Clerk noted the playground was installed in 2008 (15-years ago) and expenditure is likely to continue to increase and items to need replacing – maybe time for a complete revamp if grants can be obtained.
  - c) Legal fees were for registering Fyning Recreation ground and we had put money into reserves towards this cost last year.
  - d) Stationery and general expenses overspend included printing of flyers for ‘cost of living crisis’, refreshments for bus shelter volunteers, bank fees, zoom, phone and stationery.
  - e) Election costs will not be incurred if there is not enough candidates to require an election.
  - f) GM shared comparison figures with a decade ago

Year end	Precept	Staff cost	% of precept	Reserves held	Reserve / precept
2012	£14,324	£8,740	61%	£42,052	Almost triple
2013	£15,041	£13,088	87%	£25,103	1 2/3 times
2022	£30,925	£16,458	53.2%	£33,235	Slightly over
2023	£37,070	£19,121	51.6%	£30,517	80%

- g) GM reminded the meeting the Clerk’s salary was reviewed 3 years ago to resolve neglected increases. The annual salary increases are approved in accordance with NALC (National

Association of Local Councils) recommendations though the detail is not normally provided until the end of the year with any increase needing to be back-dated to April.

- h) Based on the above information staff costs are considerably lower in comparison to the precept than 10 years ago. It was noted a higher salary incurs employer pension and NI insurance contributions a lower salary doesn't.
- i) Members understood there is a cost to the Clerk being involved in tasks previously carried out by Councillors – i.e. Operation Watershed for North Street in current year has taken a lot of time; previously a Councillor completed these projects with minimal involvement from the Clerk. It was also noted there is also additional legislative requirements (such as with the new internal audit) that has increased the Clerks workload.
- j) Members agreed they were all happy with the level of staff costs and the quality of work is better than years ago as well as the provision of support to the parish.
- k) There was some discussion about the depletion of reserves in relation to precept – ideally they should be equivalent to a year's precept. As the precept has increased and reserves spent they have fallen below this level. Committee agreed they would not want to raise the precept to increase the reserves but that the council should be mindful when agreeing expenditure and seek grants whenever possible.
- l) AC felt it would be helpful for the I&E to have % comparative figures for current/previous year.
- m) The committee were happy to recommend the accounts to full council for approval.

**8) To consider council credit/debit card**

AC had investigated what Unity Bank offer but found the debit card they offer is managed by Lloyds Bank on their behalf. Managing it would not be simple and would require a separate process to the bank account with two operators which, it was agreed, was not practical. However, AC has looked at the options around a pre-payment card which seem simpler. He has found a parish council that has a policy for one; Clerk has contacted their RFO for advice and asked if they would share details of their card and how it is operated.

**9) The next Finance Committee Meeting** was scheduled to be held at 7.00pm on **Monday 25<sup>th</sup> September 2023 at Rogate Village Hall pavilion.**

- a) AC noted new committee members and bank signatories would be required following the May elections. Clerk added if there are not enough members to have a finance committee then the work the committee carries out would need to be included within the full council meeting for the council as a whole to consider.
- b) The committee agreed holding the meeting as a working-party discussion via zoom (when no decisions are needed – just recommendations) provided easier document sharing during discussion.

Discussion finished at 7.50pm.

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Chairman

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Date