



Mrs J Nolan
Clerk to the Council

The Parish Council Community Centre
Bell Lane, Ackworth
Pontefract, WF7 7JH

Tel: 01977 611583

E-mail: clerk@ackworthparishcouncil.gov.uk

Minutes of Finance & General Purposes Committee held on Monday 22nd January 2024 @ 6PM.

Attendance

Cllr Sarah Balfour - Chair
Cllr Carolyn Hall
Cllr Martin Robers
Cllr Suzy Sherratt

Clerk J Nolan

3 members of the public present

<p>1. Reminder by the Chair of the Council's expectations for the audio or visual recording of this meeting. <i>The Parish Council meeting may be audio recorded under the Openness of Local Government Regulations 2014. Devices are to be placed on the table provided throughout the meeting.</i></p>
<p>2. Apologies</p> <p>2.1 To receive apologies for absence given in advance of the meeting 2.2 To consider the approval of reasons given for absence</p>
<p>2.1/2.2 Apologies for absence were received and approved in respect of Cllr Bell and Cllr Maiden. The reasons for absence were noted in the attendance book.</p> <p>It was noted that Cllr S Sherratt was running late.</p>
<p>3. Declarations of Interests and Dispensations</p> <p>3.1 To receive any declarations of interest not already declared under the Council's Code of conduct or a member's Register of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests on items on the agenda 3.2 To receive, consider and decide upon any written applications for dispensation for disclosable pecuniary interest 3.3 To grant any requests for dispensation as appropriate</p>
<p>3.1/3.2/3.3 None received.</p>
<p>4. To note the minutes for the Finance and General Purposes Committee meeting held on 27th November 2023.</p>
<p>4.1 Noted.</p>

5. To receive and approve a quotation from Wakefield Council for the Grounds Maintenance Contract Extension to run from March 2024 to March 2025.

5.1 The clerk provided a verbal report that confirmed that the WMDC renewal had increased by just over 3% in line with inflation and that an outstanding action to review this renewal for March 2024 was unachievable at this time due to time constraints and potential detrimental impact to the village spring cutting schedule if changes made at this time. The Clerk proposed a re-review between Sept-Oct 2024 to enable a full review and any changes to service provider achieved by March 2025.

It was **recommended** that the current quotation is approved for March 24 to March 25. Proposer Cllr Roberts, seconded by Cllr Hall. All in favour

Cllr S Sherratt joined the meeting.

6. To consider the draft budget proposal/s for 2024 – 2025 (tabled) and to make recommendations for approval at the Parish Council meeting held on 5th February 2024.

6.1 The clerk provided an overview of the information provided and how the proposed draft budget had been produced. A timeline was given which included review, approval by council and submission to WMDC by 7th February 2024.

The clerk explained that preparation and creation had been completed in 3 stages, this included;
Stage 1: Council Input - All individual Councillors were asked for their input and meetings with committee and council Chairs were completed to review current budget expenditure and a proposed budget draft.

Stage 2: Proposed Budget Forecasting – Factors had been considered but were not exclusive to; Inflation at 3%, current YTD and projected 23/24 expenditure, planned software improvements for 24/25 approved by council, staffing requirements for 24/25 and a budget structure 'clean-up' for easier overall budget management into 24/25 by the council.

Stage 3: Supplementary information provided during this meeting to the proposed budget included any final amends, general reserve information and precept calculations from 0% to 5% in 0.5% increments and included potential budget deficit from general reserves at each increment.

It was **noted** that the budget proposal was based on an expenditure of £325,224.82 and forecasted income of £289,684.76, with a potential variance of £-35,540.06.

The Chair led the discussion in reviewing the proposed budget section by section and asked for Councillor feedback at each stage of review. Discussions took place over items highlighted during the meeting.

A three-part proposal for **recommendation** was made by Cllr Balfour, to increase the precept request by 1.5% and therefore request a total precept amount of £219,400 from WMDC, to earmark a contribution of Income to the proposed budget from General Reserves to cover any budget variance (potential deficit for 24/25) and lastly to bring back to this committee further review general reserve overview, any investment information and a list with estimated costs for earmarking allowing a minimum of 6 months running costs to remain within General Reserves for further review in March. Seconded by Cllr Hall, All in favour.

Paperwork provided detailed that a 1.5% increase would result in an average increase of £1.13 for a Band D household.

7. To consider the precept amount for 2024 – 2025 (tabled) and to make recommendations for approval at the Parish Council meeting held on 5th February 2024.

7.1 It was **noted** that the discussion for this agenda item had taken place during agenda item 6 and that the recommendation for the precept amount formed part of the proposed recommendation under agenda item 6. This recommendation by this committee was:

A three-part proposal for **recommendation** was made by Cllr Balfour, to increase the precept request by 1.5% and therefore request a total precept amount of £219,400 from WMDC, to earmark a contribution of Income to the proposed budget from General Reserves to cover any budget variance (potential deficit for 24/25) and lastly to bring back to this committee further review general reserve overview, any investment information and a list with estimated costs for earmarking allowing a minimum of 6 months running costs to remain within General Reserves for further review in March. Seconded by Cllr Hall, All in favour.

8. PUBLIC BODIES (ADMISSION TO MEETING ACT 1960) THAT THE PRESS AND THE PUBLIC BE EXCLUDED FROM THE REMAINDER OF THE MEETING ON THE GROUNDS THAT PUBLICITY WOULD BE PREJUDICIAL TO THE CONFIDENTIAL NATURE OF THE BUSINESS TO BE TRANSACTED

9. To note the meeting minutes of the Personnel Sub-Committee held on Monday 4th December 2023.

9.1 The meeting minutes were **noted**.

Time Closed: 18:59