

Minutes of a Meeting of Comberbach Parish Council's Finance Committee held on Thursday 9th January 2020 at Comberbach Memorial Hall

Present

Mr S Hornby (Chairman in the Chair)
Mr J Bradley

Ms J Johnston
Mr S Penwill (RFO)

The Meeting started at 4.40pm.

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor J Ryder and Ms D J French (Clerk).

2. To receive Members' Declarations of Interest

None received.

3. Minutes

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Finance Committee held on 22nd October be approved as a correct record.

4. Quarter 3 Budget and Forecast year 2019/20 Report

The RFO presented the Q3 Budget and Forecast Year 2019/20 report. The Committee noted the assumption that spend on picnic tables, an extra noticeboard, and village signage would be complete by end of March. It was agreed that 2019/20 Grounds Maintenance budget should be increased to reflect the Council's decision to spend an extra £250 keeping the recreation area and ground free of leaves and debris over winter.

RESOLVED: that the Q3 budget and Forecast Year 2019/20 report be noted.

5. 3-year Forward Look and 2020/21 Budget

The RFO presented the draft 3-Year Forward Look report in line with the latest Financial Regulations. The Committee discussed and agreed the proposed treatment of spend and inflation by cost category and agreed to adopt Year 1 of the forward look as the proposed budget for 2020/21 subject to increasing the figure for Maintenance (Total) from £5,300 to £5,600. Councillor Johnston queried whether the continued ageing of the recreation equipment would result in ever-increasing maintenance costs until Year 2 when the reserves allowed for some equipment replacement and that this should be budgeted for. It was agreed to discuss this issue at the forthcoming Parish Council meeting on 21st January to determine whether further changes to the budget and forward look were required.

No additional projects were added to the proposed budget at this stage, instead a value for unspecified projects to be set and allocated in-year. The RFO explained

that an apparent overspend in year was acceptable provided funds were allocated from Reserves to cover.

RESOLVED: That subject to amending the Maintenance figure, Year 1 of the Forward Look should be recommended to Council as the proposed budget for 2020/21 and Parish Council should determine whether any further increase to Maintenance costs budget was required.

6. Recommendation to Parish Council for 2020/21 Precept Request

The Committee reviewed the examples of possible precepts for 2020/21 tabled by the RFO. Members discussed how inflation affected the Parish Council, that it should be recovered over the long term but in the short term, not all costs were subject to annual inflation (eg Insurance, some Maintenance elements and Project expenditure). The RFO explained that the Tax Base in the examples was the equivalent number of Band D properties in the Parish, as advised by Cheshire West and Chester Council.

RESOLVED: that Example 2 be proposed to the Parish Council on 21st January, i.e. to maintain the same Band D charge as 2019/20 and request a Precept of £22,212, an increase of 1.4% over 2019/20 which would cover unavoidable inflation in Council costs.

The Meeting closed at 5.16pm

Cllr Steven Hornby (Chairman)