

Minutes of a Meeting of Comberbach Parish Council's Finance Committee held on Wednesday 26 October 2022

Present

Councillor Johnston (in the Chair)

Councillors:

R Chandler

V McDermott

J Ryder

Denise French (Clerk)

Stephen Penwill (RFO)

The Meeting started at 4.30pm.

1. Appointment of Chairman

RESOLVED: That Cllr Johnston be appointed Chairman for the municipal year.

2. Appointment of Vice Chairman

RESOLVED: That Cllr McDermott be appointed Vice Chairman for the municipal year.

3. Apologies for absence

None.

4. To receive Members' Declarations of Interest

None

5. Minutes

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Finance Committee held on 7 January 2022 be approved as a correct record.

6. Quarter 2 Budget

The Committee considered the Quarter 2 budget review. The RFO confirmed the current bank balance was £39,883. The forecast spend to year end was around £9k leaving up to £7k to £9k to rebuild reserves to fund future commitments.

Advertising income had not been received; the RFO would be issuing invoices shortly.

RESOLVED: That the Quarter 2 budget be received.

7. Reserves

The RFO had circulated the current Reserves List. The list showed a general reserve of £5k along with earmarked reserves of over £15k.

RESOLVED: that the Reserves List be received.

8. Mobile Phone for the Clerk

The Clerk and RFO proposed that a new mobile phone be purchased for the Clerk. The current phone was over 5.5 years old and it was not possible to access any voicemail messages; the £10 top up voucher did not last very long when calls were made. It was suggested a GiffGaff contract be explored as this was recommended on the SLCC forum and should enable the existing number to be retained.

RESOLVED: That the Committee supports a new mobile phone contract for the Clerk with a maximum £250 budget for the handset plus additional monthly contract fees.

9. Working from Home allowance

The Committee discussed a work from home allowance increase for the Clerk and RFO in recognition of the increased costs of utilities and overall higher inflation rate. The RFO proposed working out options based on the increased inflation rate since the officers had commenced employment in 2017.

RESOLVED: That the RFO prepare a report on options for the work from home allowance that reflects the current inflation situation.

10. Options for toilet provision to serve the Recreation Area

The Committee considered the possible provision of toilets at the Recreation Area. Councillor McDermott reported on a site visit she had undertaken with Councillor Darwin to look at the provision in Cuddington. Their toilets were part of the rebuild of the hall but were accessible without going through the building; their cleaning regime was every 2-3 days.

The Clerk had circulated information from other local councils.

It was noted the Memorial Hall were not prepared to take responsibility for the build project or the cleaning.

The Committee discussed the financial impact which would probably see an approximate 25% annual increase in the current precept level. Members suggested views could be sought from residents which would include an annual cost per Band D equivalent household. The Council would also need to be clear about any insurance implications.

RESOLVED: that the provision of toilets be considered further at the Parish Council meeting on 1 November 2022.

11. Budget 2023/24

The Committee considered possible projects for the forthcoming budget. The Parish Council meeting on 10 January 2023 would need to confirm the budget and precept level.

The possible commitments included:

- The Zip Wire
- Commemoration of the Coronation
- Election (a figure of £1k was already in the reserves).

RESOLVED: that the budget be considered further at the Council meeting in December and the following Finance Committee.

The Meeting closed at 5.50pm

Cllr Jill Johnston (in the Chair)