**FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING AGENDA**

**Tuesday 21st November 2023 at 7:30pm**

**St Anne’s Hall, Aylesbury Road, Wendover, HP22 6JG**

**Committee Membership:** Councillors Gallagher(Chair), Goodall, Walker, Williams and Worth

**to all Committee Members:**

You are herEby summoned to attend the ABOVE-MENTIONED meeting, when it is proposed that the business to be transacted shall be as set out below.

**MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS ARE INVITED TO ATTEND.**

**AGENDA**

1. **COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP**

To consider Councillor O’Donnell for membership of the Finance Committee

1. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

To consider any apologies for absence received:

1. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

In accordance with Sections 30(3) and 235(2) of the Localism Act 2011 and the Wendover Parish Council Code of Conduct Councillors with declare their interest in relation to this meeting.

1. [**MINUTES**](#minutes) **– *page 3***

Consideration of approval of minutes of the meeting on 8th August 2023.

1. **CHAIR’S ANNOUNCEMENTS**
2. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION - A maximum of 3 minutes per speaker will be allowed.**

The Council is committed to community engagement and warmly invites members of the public to contribute**.** Members of the public should note that the Council is only allowed to take decisions on topics that are publicised on the agenda; items not on the agenda can be carried forward for a response later.

Members of the public are asked to respect the fact that this is a meeting to conduct Council business and interruptions during the remainder of the meeting are not permitted.

1. [**CLERKS REPORT & CORRESPONDENCE**](#item6_clkrep) **- *page 6***
2. **GENERAL REPORTS**
   1. To review the [I&E report](#item8a_iande), [EMRs](#item8a_emr) and [balance sheet](#item8a_bal) for Nov 2023 ***– Page 8, 13, 14***
   2. To review the over [£500 report](#item8b_500) and [VAT reclaim](#item8b_vat) for Jul-Sep 2023 ***– Page 15,16***
   3. To review the [bank reconciliations for Jul - Sep 2023](#item8c_bank) ***– Page 21***
   4. To note the [end of year projections](#item8d_eoy) ***– Page 27***
   5. To receive an update on [project costs](#item8e_project) up to Nov 2023 ***– Page 33***
   6. To review the [Flagstone account statements](#item8f_flag) ***– Page 36***
   7. To receive an update on the LGPS pension fund deficit and cessation value.
3. **OTHER ITEMS**

1. [**Annual Return and Audit**](#item9a_audit) ***– Page 39*** 
   * 1. To note the conclusion of the 2022/23 Annual Return.
     2. To note the interim Internal Audit arrangements 2023/24
     3. To receive an update on internal financial checks
2. [**Budget 2024/25**](#item9b_budget)**– *page 43***

To review the draft of the 2024/2025 budget for recommendations to full Council in December

1. [**Card Payment Machine**](#item9c_card)**– *page 53***

To consider authorising the office to look into the best deals for a card payment machine and taking up the best deal for the Council’s needs.

1. **NEXT MEETING AND AGENDA ITEMS FOR FUTURE MEETINGS**

The next Finance meeting 7.30pm on Tuesday 20th February 2024

1. **CLOSURE OF MEETING**

Signed by Andy Smith

Clerk and Responsible Finance Officer Date:16th November 2023.

**WENDOVER PARISH COUNCIL**

**Minutes of the Finance Committee Meeting**

**Tuesday 8th August 2023 7.30pm**

**Meeting held at St Annes Hall, Aylesbury Road, Wendover, HP22 6JG**

**Present**: Councillors Gallagher, Williams, Worth

**Clerk and Minutes:** Andy Smith

**Members of Public**: 3

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE** | | |
|  |  | Councillors Goodall and Walker gave apologies and these were ACCEPTED |
|  |  |  |
| **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST** | | |
|  |  | None |
|  |  |  |
| **MINUTES** | | |
|  |  | The minutes of the meeting of 16th May 2023 were considered. The minutes were **RESOLVED** as a true record to be signed by the Chair |
|  | | |
| **CHAIR’S ANNOUNCEMENTS** | | |
|  |  | None |
|  |  |  |
| **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION** | | |
|  |  | None |
|  |  |  |
| **CLERKS REPORTS AND CORRESPONDENCE** | | |
|  |  | The Clerk’s report was noted |
|  |  |  |
| **GENERAL REPORTS** | | |
| **a)** | **To note that the period of electors rights is now complete** | |
|  |  | The Clerk outlined the rules regarding electors’ rights for new members of Council and it was noted that the period finished on the 21st July 2023 and we had not had any enquiries. It was further noted that the Council are always happy to discuss their accounts with electors throughout the year if we get enquiries. |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **b)** | **To review the I&E report, EMRs and balance sheet for Jul 2023.** | |
|  |  | The reports were noted and it was noted that we are in line to come in on budget so far. |
| **c)** | **To review the over £500 report and VAT claim for Apr – Jun 2023** | |
|  |  | The reports and VAT claim were noted |
| **d)** | **To review the bank reconciliations and statements for Apr-Jun 2023** | |
|  |  | The reports were noted |
| **e)** | **To note an update on the asset register** | |
|  |  | It was noted that we had started to check the assets but there was so much variation that we were double checking the register and this was slowing down the process. This would be complete to report back to the next Finance Committee. |
| **f)** | **To receive an update on project costs up to Jul 2023** | |
|  |  | The costs were noted but some of the projects were presented slightly differently to others so it was noted that the spreadsheet will be updated for consistency |
| **g)** | **To review the Flagstone account statements** | |
|  |  | The statement was noted including the higher rates of interest the accounts were now enjoying. |
| **h)** | **To receive an update on the LGPS pension fund deficit and cessation value** | |
|  |  | The situation was explained to the meeting |
|  |  |  |
| **OTHER MATTERS** | | |
| **a)** | **Equipment replacement policy** | |
|  |  | It was NOTED that Council should have a replacement policy but the easiest way would be to have a suitable budget line with an appropriate sum of money which could be rolled over into future years budgets if needed for larger items. It was further noted that the Devolved Services Review by Buckinghamshire Council may impact on the need to have equipment. It was **RESOLVED** to consider this at the November budgeting exercise for approval as a part of the budget. |
|  |  |  |
| **b)** | **Devolved Services** | |
|  |  | The committee noted the paper and that we are spending more than the income. It is not certain how much extra at the moment. However, the benefit to the community of undertaking the work ourselves (to a higher standard) is important and reflected in the fact that we have won the best kept village award and a higher level of satisfaction. It was noted that nothing can really be decided until we get a new devolved services offer. |
|  |  |  |
| **c)** | **Bank Signatories** | |
|  |  | It was noted that there were only 3 Councillors who could act as bank signatories, and it had been 4. It was RESOLVED to add Councillor Goodall as an additional bank signatory, and this would happen when we have completed our complaint with the bank account. |
|  |  |  |

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **ITEMS FOR NEXT AGENDA** | | |
|  |  | None were presented |
|  |  |  |
| **DATE OF NEXT MEETING** | | |
|  |  | Tuesday 21st November 7.30pm St Annes Hall |
|  |  |  |
| **CLOSURE OF MEETING** | | |
|  |  | All business was transacted. The meeting was closed at 7.58pm |

Signed by   
Chair to the Finance Committee Date: 21st November 2023

**ITEM 7 – CLERKS REPORT AND CORRESPONDENCE**

**All issues covered on the Agenda**

**ITEM 8 – FINANCE REPORTS**

## Summary

Currently we are performing within budgets with any variances netting out to result in coming in on budget for the end of year.

## Headline analysis

#### Amenities income

The debtor discussed in previous meetings is keeping to the repayment schedule with one missed repayment which apparently is a cheque missing in the post. Normally I would not believe that but the regularity of payments gives me less cause for concern.

#### Events Expenditure

There are some costs to be moved out of the Promo materials budget and into the HS2 public meeting now they have been awarded the grant. The grant money will be journaled into that budget line and should net off. This will operate similar to the Freedom Parade line.

The Quiz budget line will be over as in previous years the venue hire had been accounted for in the general events budget. This is rectified in the new budget.

#### Street Light Expenditure

The street light repair budget has gone massively over budget – this is down to the number of faults we are experiencing, which are far higher than anticipated. We have met with the supplier and discussed this very issue but the faults are in line with expectations. After discussing with other Parish Councils this level of repairs is not unusual and it is more likely that the budgets were set with unrealistic expectations of the lifespan of LED bulbs. This is particularly true based on some of the temperature extremes we are experiencing. We are monitoring the repairs and there are very few repeat repairs on our 250 streetlights. Any repairs have a 12 month warranty.

#### Recreation Expenditure

There will be some income from the Community Board to cover the Groundworks budget as we build the water sheds that they agreed to fund. The tree works will continue to increase as we go through a backlog of issues and new issues. Again, this seems to be the age of the trees and the weather conditions that are creating issues. Based on the most recent inspection it is unlikely to be this high every year.

#### Finance and General income

The Interest received will be significantly more than budgeted for when some of the deposit accounts mature, this is down to much more favourable base rates at the moment.

#### Finance and General Expenditure

The website and publicity lines are again going to be over budgeted as costs are now properly apportioned and future budget setting will be in line with that costing. The audit came in cheaper than had been accrued for and in the same way our end of year support was accrued for but not required therefore this line will remain in the negative

#### Staffing

All the direct staff costs will come within budget even with the backdated cost of living increase being applied.

## I&E report, EMRs and balance sheet

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## Over £500 report and VAT claim

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## Bank reconciliations

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## End of year projections













## Project Costs







## Flagstone account

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**ITEM 9a – ANNUAL RETURN AND AUDIT**

**BROUGHT BY**

Office

**SUMMARY**

To note the conclusion of the 2022/23 annual return and audit and confirm internal audit arrangements for 2023/24. Further to discuss the internal financial checks and consider a rota between now and the end of the financial year.

**PARISH COUNCIL BACKGROUND**

See below

**DETAILS**

## Introduction

The audit process for Parish Councils with an income at the level of ours is, briefly as follows:

* Internal Audit – conducted by an external auditor and focused on the policies and procedures and that they are being followed. They are appointed by the Council every 3 years.
* External Audit – conducted by an external auditor which is appointed to the Council

We have successfully completed the process for the 2022/23 financial year and our accounts have been confirmed as satisfactory by the external auditor who has signed off the accounts and the process. This notification was sent to us on 18th September and circulated at the time. As set out in the regulations the closure letter and final section of the Annual Governance & Accountability Return (AGAR) signed by the external auditor has been on the website since 19th November and on the noticeboards since the 27th September 2023 where they currently remain as information for the parish.

**AGAR Section 3**

**Closure notice**

## 

## Internal Audit 2023/24

Our internal auditor has been agreed for three years. This is the second year of the internal auditor. Wendover Parish Council appointed IAC Audit and Consultancy Ltd.

Wendover has chosen to undertake 2 internal audits a year and I would recommend it keep this pattern. The first internal audit for this financial year will take place on Mon 11th December 2023. There will be a second audit for this financial year around the year end on 31st March 2024, probably in April.

## Internal Checks

As well as all the paperwork that comes to Council and Finance Committee it is important that our record keeping is tested by Councillors as an internal check on systems and procedures. This happens every quarter, ideally ready for the next finance meeting.

This is a mix of ensuring all reports have been completed along with a simple check and trace of a random sample from the bank account statement. Picking 5 items from the statement (a mix of income and expenditure) the Clerk should then be able to produce the paper trail that supports those transactions. The process is relatively quick, but it does normally have to be done in the Clock Tower so that the Clerk has access to all the necessary paperwork. We can trial doing it via Teams if it makes it easier for some Councillors.

Currently the Chair of Council and the Chair of Finance undertake these checks. However, it makes it more effective if a different Councillor undertakes this process every quarter and that the Chair of Finance then verifies and signs off the checks when complete at the finance meeting.

Therefore, I recommend that Finance Committee produce a rota of the membership to undertake the checks.

**FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS**

* n/a

**LEGAL AND OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

* n/a

**PROPOSAL**

* **To note the end of the external audit and internal audit process.**
* **To agree a rota for the internal checks to be completed every quarter**

**ITEM 9b – BUDGET 2024/5**

**BROUGHT BY**

Office/Amenities/Staffing Committee

**SUMMARY**

To consider the draft of the 2024/25 budget including requests from Amenities and Staffing to recommend to full council on the 5th December 2023.

**PARISH COUNCIL BACKGROUND**

This is part of the annual budgeting process

**DETAILS**

## Introduction

On the whole the budget has been prepared with the principles of keeping the precept charge as small as possible. Whilst there will have to be a rise it is hoped that through prudent planning this rise can be below inflation, thus not adding significantly to the financial burdens faced in the Parish.

There are some significant expenditures that the Council need to be preparing for, including looking at the lifespan of the mower and a replacement of the playground equipment which are not immediate but by careful saving through an EMR that is added to on a yearly basis we can minimise the impact on the precept.

The projected year end position for this financial year is based on the latest set of management accounts for October (month 7) with each budget line being predicted based on known future expenditure.

As we do not have the General Power of Competence each budget line is based on a specific power, Act or Statutory Instrument. This is available separately on request and will be displayed on the website alongside the budget.

As per last year we do not have the current Band D calculations from Buckinghamshire Council. However, there has been very little movement in the Parish; a prediction based on last years calculations will be so close to this year’s actual calculation that Council can be confident of the financial impact of the budget on the average household.

The operational budgets breakdown are shown in Appendix A, The reserves and EMRs are shown in Appendix B, The staffing calculations are shown in Appendix C. This year’s year end projection is shown in previous papers as Item 8d.

## This year’s request

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **2024/25 Request** |  |  |  |  |
| Amenities Income | 39,113.00 |  |  |  |
| Amenities Expenditure | 130,515.00 | 91,402.00 | Net Budget Cost | |
| F&G Income | 4,700.00 |  |  |  |
| F&G Expenditure | 83,750.00 | 79,050.00 | Net Budget Cost | |
| Staffing Expenditure |  | 205,993.00 |  |  |
| **Total** |  | **376,445.00** | **% increase** | **4.84%** |
| Difference from previous year | | 17,367.00 |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| **BAND D 2024/25** |  |  |  |  |
| **Band D Households** |  | 3422.44 |  |  |
| **Precept Due** |  | **109.99** | **Year** |  |
|  |  | **9.17** | **Month** |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| **Band D Tax Confirmed 6/12/2022** | |  |  |  |
| Annual Difference | £5.07 |  | Percent | 4.84% |
| Monthly Difference | £0.42 |  | Percent | 4.84% |

The precept for this year based on the current budget request is £376,445. This increase is under 5% with an annual difference of £5.07 based on last year’s Band D calculations, this equates to 42p a month increase.

**FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS**

* This is the budget request for 2024/25

**LEGAL AND OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

* n/a

**PROPOSAL**

* **To recommend the budget for approval by Parish Council**

Appendix A - INCOME AND EXPENDITURE BUDGET













Appendix B – EMR AND GENERAL RESERVES

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **2024/25 EMR's** |  | **Comments** |
| Cessation | 75,000.00 | inc by £25k - Needs to be inc to £75k |
| Skate Park | 15,000.00 | Tender about to be awarded |
| Library Extension | 8,000.00 | 10% donation of total project |
| Transport projects | 10,000.00 | TWG Priorities |
| Climate Action | 5,000.00 | Projects are coming in at lower costs, inc water collection sheds |
| Play park replacement fund | 2,400.00 | Projected surplus from park maintenance will go into this account and not general reserves |
| Equipment replacement fund | 2,000.00 | Projected surplus from equipment purchase will go into this account and not general reserves |
| **Total** | **117,400.00** |  |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **GENERAL RESERVES 2024/25** |  |  |
|  |  |  |
| **Detail** | **£** | **Comments** |
| Balance as per Oct 2023 (Month 7) | £424,313.00 | Source - Balance Sheet |
| Deduct Predicted Spend remaining | £155,814.40 | See forecast spreadsheet for details |
| Sub Total | £268,498.60 |  |
|  |  |  |
| Deductions |  |  |
| n/a | £0.00 |  |
|  |  |  |
| Deduct Expected EMR Spends through to March | £16,000.00 | Clock tower wall |
|  | £8,000.00 | Library extension |
|  | £10,000.00 | Christmas Lights |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
| Sub Total | £34,000.00 |  |
|  |  |  |
| **Predicated End of Year Balance March 2024** | **£234,498.60** |  |
|  |  |  |
| 2024/25 budget | £376,445.00 | Funded by Precept |
| Money in from BC for Precept 2023/2024 | £376,445.00 |  |
| Sub Total | £234,498.60 |  |
|  |  |  |
| Minus EMR's planned for 2024/25 | 117,400.00 |  |
|  | **£117,098.60** | **General Reserve Remaining** |

Appendix C – STAFFING CALCULATIONS



**ITEM 9c – CARD PAYMENT MACHINE**

**BROUGHT BY**

Office

**SUMMARY**

To consider authorising the office to look into the best deals for a card payment machine and entering into a contract with the best deal for the Council’s needs.

**PARISH COUNCIL BACKGROUND**

n/a

**DETAILS**

## Introduction

From a safety and audit perspective the office have been trying to reduce the amount of cash it handles. Whilst we will still be able to accept cash payments for market stalls and allotments, for many a card payment is now a lot easier for the customer too.

Further, we are looking to fundraise by sale of the wooden discs at the markets and Christmas Fair and again this would provide a more transparent reconciliation and protect Councillors from handling cash if we were able to take card payments.

## Costs

Costs vary slightly by provider but the transaction fees seem to be similar.

* Lloyds Bank Cardnet mPOS – a mobile card reader that links to an app on a mobile device. Devices need to be purchased (p.o.a.) then 1.75% charge for each transaction. No monthly fee.
* Sumup – a mobile card reader that links to an app on a mobile device. Device needs to be purchased (£39 to £139) then a 1.69% charge per transaction. No monthly fee
* Zettle – Uses a mobile phone as a contactless reader complete with free app so no initial purchase fee. 1.75% transaction fee and no monthly fees
* Square – Purchase of a mobile reader and link via app on mobile device. Readers start at £19 and transaction fee is 1.75%. No monthly fee.

This will have a marginal impact on the income due to the fees paid but should reduce the time taken to collect and process cash for invoices such as allotment fees, likewise when collecting market pitch fees.

**FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS**

* There will be a marginal extra charge for transactions and an initial setup fee

**LEGAL AND OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

* n/a

**PROPOSAL**

* **To authorise the office to apply for the most costs effective card payment solution and set it up to pay directly into the Parish Council bank account**