



Minutes of Cobham Parish Council Budget Meeting

Monday 6th December at 7.30pm. 2021

Meeting took place on Zoom

Present

Cllr Mike Booth (Chairman), Cllr Steve Dyer (Vice Chair), Cllr Bennett Smith,

Cllr Matt Mason, Cllr Gabriella Gabbitas, Cllr Robert Pryor

Cllr Rosemary Dymond, Cllr Margaret Haig

Present

Charles Amis (Clerk)

1. Apologies for Absence – Cllr Mat Peterson-Pearce

2. Declarations of Interest – None

3. Minutes – The minutes for the Parish Council Meeting held on 9th November were confirmed and proposed as a true record by Cllr Dyer and seconded by Cllr Mason.

4. Grant Request Forms – This was discussed in the main part of the meeting.

5. CPC to consider the amount spent so far for 2021/22 to predict spending up to March 2022

A general discussion then followed around the spread sheet produced for the meeting.

The insurance at £1,213 is the largest cost in the General Cost section. There are other smaller items such as subscriptions for KALC and other organisations. CPC are paying the maintenance man £178.20 per month which is around five hours per week on the minimum wage of £8.91. It was predicted that the total spend would be £4,899 and £5,900 should be budgeted for in 2022/23.

The Clerk was originally employed on the basis of a ten hours per week at a salary of £556 per month. Following a recent review with Cllr Booth and Cllr Dyer it was agreed that 10 hours per week was not sufficient and it was agreed that this should be increased to 15 hours per week with a corresponding increase in salary to reflect the extra hours to £730 per month for the remainder pf the year 2021-22.

There has also been a delay in setting up the clerk's pension and consequently a short payment has resulted, which needs to be corrected for the current year. Payroll Services will advise the amount of the short payment as soon as possible.

Action: Clerk to speak to payroll services

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18/11/2020

There is an annual national review of salary levels carried out by the National Association of Local Councils (NALC), details of which will be advised to CPC in due course and the clerk's salary for 2022-23 will be adjusted accordingly. CPC have budgeted £12,000 for 2022/23.

General office costs are minimal and budgeted for at £300 per annum.

The Public Toilets at Cobham Playing Fields - It was noted that at least a third of the precept is spent on the public toilets but these are a community asset which CPC have agreed to maintain for the time being. There was a discussion on the alternative use of the toilet buildings such as a café or demolition for more car parking. There will be ongoing discussion over future funding of this community asset. £2,188 has been spent this year on maintenance, £1,400 on water, £7,500 on cleaning and opening daily by Medway Norse contractors. A budget cost of £9,000 is considered sufficient for 2022/23.

Action: Clerk to check if the public toilets are going to be liable for business rates going forward.

£3,400 had been spent on the Playing Fields of which £2,200 was for fencing along footpath NS178 and £400 on controlling Japanese Knotweed. £2,000 had been budgeted for the maintenance of the Children's Corner plus £400 for grass cutting. A budget of £3,000 was agreed for 2022/23. Discussions will continue regarding future upgrading of the play equipment.

The need for Community Grant funding has been limited by Covid 19 reducing the activity of many of the previously funded groups. CPC did provide a grant of £2,450 to the St Mary's Church Rooms and making a donation of £68 to the Royal British Legion. The budget for 2022/23 for community grant funding will be £1,500.

CPC had spent £3,000 on other maintenance costs for Sweeps Hole Pond, Village Pump, War Memorial and Defibrillator Training. CPC will need to make a donation for the defibrillator training at the end of January. The sticky pads for the defibrillators will need renewing at some point and these will cost up to £80 each. Nothing had been budgeted for the village signs for Cobham and Sole Street.

£1,000 had been budgeted for the Community Celebrations. Cllr Dymond said £900 was needed for new plants.

The Traffic Group are meeting with Ian Grigor from KCC Highways on Thursday 9th December. The speeding issues in Sole Street will be discussed and it was suggested that CPC might contribute £5,000 towards a feasibility study to get this started as soon as possible. A report from a local resident who was injured in a near fatal accident had been supplied and sent to Ian Grigor to support the need for traffic calming in Sole Street.

Cllr Booth said it should be 20mph from Greenlands, past the Little Shop to the railway bridge and KCC has said that this may need to go to a public consultation. It was suggested that from Green Lane to Sole Street could have the speed limit reduced but this is unlikely to take place because the police would probably not support it. CPC would like to see a pavement installed from Scratton Fields to Round Street and a bus stop installed at the Round Street junction.

Cllr Booth and Cllr Dyer had spoken to Eva Simunovic about funding from the Lower Thames Cross Legacy Fund.

It was also suggested that the parish council may consider a small piece of land at the corner of Scratton Fields and Sole Street as a possible playground for Sole Street but it may attract noise for



neighbouring properties. The open land beside White Post Lane would offer more opportunities although the land is not up for sale.

Action: Cllr Mason offered to work on a 5-10 year plan for CPC with a list of actions that CPC want to do.

6. Compare spending throughout 2021/22 with the budgetary predictions of 2022/23 and that budgetary needs are met when requesting the precept for 2022/23.

It was noted that the precept for Cobham Parish is one of the lowest in GBC. The clerk also noted that the external auditor may question the size of CPC's reserves. It was agreed that the CPC councillors remain comfortable with maintaining the spend to support the infrastructure of the village which may not be covered by GBC or KCC. CPC had spent £35,891 during 2021/22 and it was agreed by all the parish councillors at the meeting that they should budget for the 2022/23 precept to be £35,000 which is an 8% increase on 2021/22.

Cllr Dymond proposed and Cllr Dyer seconded that the clerk should request a £35,000 precept for 2022/23.

The next parish council meeting will be on Tuesday 4th January.

Meeting closed at 8.40pm

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