

Minutes of the Meeting of Sedbergh Parish Council Finance Committee

Held in the Parish Room at 72a Main Street at 5.00pm on Monday 10th February 2020

Present:

Cllrs Lancaster, Capstick, McPherson, Brooks and the Clerk, Miss Hassam

1. Apologies

There were no apologies.

2. Declaration of Interests

Item 6 – Grant Applications i) The Rawthey Program, Cllr Capstick.

3. Minutes of the Last Meeting held Monday 6th January 2020

The minutes were agreed and signed by the Chair – Cllr Lancaster.

4. Financial Summary and Bank Reconciliation

The Financial Summary for January was presented to the meeting and payments were recommended (attached) for approval at Full Council. The Bank Reconciliation for January was also checked and found to be correct and signed by Cllrs Brooks and Capstick. Members noted, in particular, the recent invoices relating to Main Street toilet.

5. Income and Expenditure 2019-2020

Members received the attached summary for the year so far, noting the balances for Amenities, Joss Lane and Parish Lighting. All these figures had been known to be reaching and exceeding the initial budget for 2019/2020, however, had been inflated to anticipate increasing expenditure year on year for the 2020/2021 budget. In particular, Members were advised of the increased utility costs associated with the Parish lighting and noted that the Clerk had been discussing the rising cost with Amenities. It is envisaged that an Audit of the lights will be completed by Cllr Steve Longlands and an estimate of time/costs associated with this will be requested as soon as practicable. Members noted that there could be a potential immediate saving, should it be discovered that some lights were already using a more efficient bulb. Sedbergh Parish Council (SPC) has an annual maintenance agreement with Cumbria County Council, so it was unknown how many bulbs may have been switched over in recent years. Currently, SPC is being charged under the unmetered supply agreement with Electricity North West (ENW) that was completed in 1999.

6. Grant Applications

- i) The Rawthey Program – Hells Fells – an application for the sum of £750 had been received and was recommended for approval at Full Council. Cllr Capstick left the room for this item.
- ii) Sedbergh People's Hall – VE Day – application not yet received.

7. Training

- i) Certificate in Local Council Administration – as part of the Clerks ongoing Continuing Professional Development, it was noted that she was now in a position to formally register for the qualification. It was understood that from the date of registration, the Clerk would have 12 months to complete the qualification. A second training day had recently been attended and an additional fee of £40 was recommended for this ongoing support from Cumbria Association of Local Council (CALC).
- ii) Good Councillor Introduction – it was noted that Cllr Cowperthwaite would like to attend the course scheduled for February/March and this was recommended this for approval at Full Council. A full list of training available is attached, for reference.

8. Current accounting process, consider update to a finance/accounting package.

The Clerk explained various options for updating the finance and accounting practice for the Council (currently excel), and Members resolved to recommend an upgrade to a finance package that would give greater benefits to recording, future proofing (for Making Tax Digital) as well as allowing a more streamlined reporting system. The Clerk will undertake to complete the relevant training/administration to switch to a new system and the Chair will be given access to the system once fully functioning. The aim will be to have a new system in place in April with an anticipated annual cost below £500.

- i) **Internal Audit provision** – Members noted that the current internal auditor was prepared to continue for another year as SPC had not been able to find a replacement. Members resolved to advertise for an Internal Auditor for the next financial year, requesting that the Clerk place an advert in the Lookaround and the CALC Newsletter.

9. Sedbergh CIC - Market Service Level Agreement

Members noted that Sedbergh CIC had recently declined to continue with the Market SLA at the revised amount of £2500. The last market that the CIC would deliver would be on Wednesday 25th March 2020, with Sedbergh Parish Council becoming responsible from 1st April 2020. It was understood that a current stall holder may have some knowledge of running/managing a market and may be able to assist. It was resolved, therefore, that an approach be made directly due to the short timescales (prior to Full Council) to seek their feedback on possible solutions, with this being reported on Thursday 13th February. Points to consider, included, gazebo costs, putting up and taking down of gazebos, point of contact, responsibility of weather conditions for safety of the market, collection of pitch fees etc as well as insurance implications to the Council.

10. Policies for consideration, recently updated and created.

Members noted the policies (attached), which included Risk Management, Data Protection, Privacy Notice, Complaints Procedures, Press and Media, Publication Scheme (Freedom of Information), Retention of Documents, Health and Safety, Equal Opportunities and updated guidance for Grant applications. Minor adjustments were requested in regard to the Publication Scheme and will be updated by the Clerk with all policies being recommended for approval at Full Council. Members also discussed the potential for a Safeguarding Policy and Tree Safety/Inspection Policy in the future.

11. Date of next meeting – Monday 9th March 2020 at 5.00pm