

Sedbergh Parish Council, Finance Committee

Minutes of Sedbergh Parish Council Finance Committee meeting, held Parish Council office, 72 Main Street, Sedbergh on Monday 8th August 2022 at 5.30pm

Present:

Cllrs Lancaster, Capstick, Brooks, Arnold, Bromley and the Clerk, Miss Hassam

Part I

1. Apologies

All Members were present at the meeting.

2. Declaration of Interests

There were no Declarations of Interest for this meeting.

3. Minutes of the Last Meeting held Monday 11th July 2022

The minutes were agreed and signed, as a true record, by the Chairman Cllr Lancaster

4. Financial Summary and Bank Reconciliation

The Financial Summary for July 2022 had been circulated to Members and it was resolved that all payments (attached) were approved for payment. NPower had now also sent invoices for January to July 2022 and these invoices were recommended (£915.56). For reference, in the same period during 2021 £1020.15 was paid. In addition, an honorarium was recommended for the Internal Auditor (£150.00), with payment also recommended for the external Annual Audit (£480.00). This followed the Conclusion of the Annual Governance and Accountability Review (see Item 5, July 2022). The Notice was recommended for approval at Full Council (attached). The Clerk was also able to advise that following the £48.00 cheque outstanding from 2021/2022 (Festive lights, Christmas tree) it had now been formally reported as lost. The Clerk has now cancelled the cheque and a replacement cheque will be issued. Finally, it was noted that the first direct debit for the Clerk's pension contribution will be commencing this month. The Bank Reconciliation, for July 2022, was checked and found to be correct and signed by Cllrs Capstick and Brooks.

5. Receipts and Payments 2022 - 2023

The up-to-date financial report for 2022/2023 was circulated for information. It was noted that the Clerk would carry over the updated Budget information on the financial summary in due course. The Clerk also updated Members that following the incident at Guldrey (some months ago) whereby a post and chain were damaged, the insurance company had offered a settlement, Members resolved to accept the offer.

i) **General review of Budget 2022 – 2023** the Clerk circulated the Budget for updated reference/observations. This may require further adjustments, following the contractors reviews.

6. Grant Applications

There were no Grant Applications.

7. Playing field – update on potential pathway project, Howgill Lane

Following the agreement of the playing field path project finances by Cumbria County Council, the Clerk was now waiting for the contractor to advise the additional costs for the work on the Highway at Havera. In addition to the path, Members noted an item of recent correspondence relating to the pitch area at the playing field. This followed representatives of the Football Club attending the Amenities Committee meeting on 3rd August 2022. Sedbergh & Dent Football Club asked for further clarity on the annual maintenance program for the pitch area that had been discussed at the meeting, and the Clerk was asked to confirm again. For example, current program of works would continue, with annual total costs estimated at £3500. A donation of £500 had been suggested to the Football Club as a contribution toward the substantial costs incurred (almost 10% of Precept) to maintain the pitch to a suitable standard. Included was grass cutting, seed, fertiliser, verti-drain and weed control etc.

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With inflation currently elevated, and the Budget set before the recent exceptional rises, it was now hoped that inflation would plateau (or reduce), allowing current expenditure to remain relatively static. It was also noted, however, that as contracts were currently being reviewed there was a probable anticipated rise in general expenditure – which may require an adjustment to the Budget going forward. Whilst Members hope that the contribution would remain the same, it could not predict any future exceptional inflation rate rises that might require a general review. Therefore, as agreed at the Amenities Committee meeting, the annual contribution by the Football Club should be reviewed annually. The Clerk will respond further to the Football Club, in conjunction with the Chair of the Amenities Committee.

8. Online Banking – future provision of banking arrangements

- i) Registration for Bankline (NatWest) was almost complete, with some further final administrative tasks now required by the Chairman. This would allow the addition of authorised users for online banking and, eventually, the setup of electronic payments.

9. Review of Contractors

The Main Street toilet contract had been signed, and would run for a period of three years. As part of the ongoing general review of contracts, the Amenities Committee had recently met and considered a draft contract for the Parish Handyman/Gardener contract. Members discussed the draft and details will be available for further discussion at Full Council on 11th August 2022. Elements to be confirmed as part of the review, include current rate and hours allocated and scope of works. Members were particularly mindful of the increased likely expenditure and impact on the Council's Budget.

10. Date of next meeting – Monday 5th September at 5.30pm Members resolved to meet in the Parish Council Office, 72 Main Street, Sedbergh.

Part II

It was resolved and agreed that the public should be excluded from the meeting for reason of the confidential and sensitive nature of the information to be discussed.

11. An urgent item was raised by the Chairman following a recent Sedbergh Economic Partnership meeting (29th July 2022). Members resolved that this should be discussed further at Full Council on 11th August 2022, it was further recommended that the item be raised as Part I at that meeting, with a formal response to be concluded and agreed in public. This should then be referred back to the Sedbergh Economic Partnership. It was further resolved that the current Terms of Reference for the Sedbergh Economic Partnership be circulated to all Members as a refresher ahead of the meeting on 11th August 2022.