

## Sedbergh Parish Council, Finance Committee

Minutes of Sedbergh Parish Council Finance Committee meeting, held Parish Council office, 72 Main Street, Sedbergh on Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> January 2024 at 6.00pm

**Present:** Cllrs Arnold (Chair), Welti, Capstick, Brooks and the Clerk, Miss Hassam

### 1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Cllr Lancaster, and accepted by the meeting. Members welcomed Cllr Welti to the committee, during the agreed short-term absence of Cllr Lancaster.

### 2. Declaration of Interests

There were no declarations of interest for the meeting.

### 3. Minutes of the Last Meeting held Monday 11 December 2023

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

### 4. Financial Summary and Bank Reconciliation 2023/2024

The Financial Summary for December 2023 had been circulated to Members and it was resolved that all payments (attached) were recommended for online payment. Payments for the festive light installation and the hedge cutting were noted, along with VAT for Quarter 3 - £3644.14. The Bank Reconciliation, for December 2023, was checked and found to be correct and signed by Cllrs Brooks and Capstick, along with bank statements/summary of receipts and payments. Members briefly discussed any potential price increase for sourcing an alternative Internal Auditor, and the 20% increase given for the Council's accounting package, due in February.

### 5. Receipts and Payments 2023 – 2024

The up-to-date financial report for 2023/2024 was circulated for information to all Members.

- i) **Budget requirements 2024/2025 – budget and update on Precept/Parish Grant for 2024/2025, including confirmation of the tax base from Westmorland and Furness Council.** Following preliminary agreement of the draft budget in December, Members were now in receipt of the confirmed tax base from Westmorland and Furness Council (W&F) – 1130.02 an increase from 1088.43. Members resolved to recommend an overall increase of 8% (average Band D equivalent 2023/24) to Full Council - £49607.88. The tax base had increased, sharing the Precept burden, and Members were mindful of inflation seen in recent years along with notice from Westmorland and Furness Council that they would not be paying the Parish Grant from 2025. The overall 8% increase would see an average Band D property rising from circa. £40.65 to £43.90. For reference, in comparison, neighbouring Town and Parish Councils Precepts ranged from £52.66 to £119.96 (23/24) – with the average national Precept being £81.74 last year.

In addition to the Precept, and in consideration of the Budget, Members also discussed the parking tariffs following analysis by the Chairman (short term) and annual parking permits. Members resolved to recommend, therefore, that these be increased along the following ranges, with the item being formally added to the February Agenda. Annual parking permit scheme – increase to £70.00 from £60.00, with Holiday accommodation permits to increase to £120.00 (currently £100.00). This amendment would become effective from September 2024 (last increase September 2021). Short term parking tariffs to increase approx. 20% each (last increase 2022), with the removal of the 30-minute ticket (which is little used) and the introduction of a 3-4-hour ticket (removing 4-5) hours. This would be more in keeping with Westmorland and Furness Council parking tariffs generally. Members noted, however, that as parking tariffs must be agreed as part of the Westmorland and Furness Council Parking Order, confirmation on their deadlines for 2024/2025 is awaited. If not possible, for example, to confirm the new tariff to W&F following the February meeting, then potential increases would only be effective from April 2025.

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Finally, Members noted that all these increases were necessary to regain reduced levels of income vs increased expenditure in recent years (with high inflation) – and with an aim for the Council to consider a future three year rolling plan, the following was recommended to Full Council.

2024 – to substantially address the depreciation in value of revenue due to inflation, indexed to 2021 levels.

2025 – Achieve neutrality in revenue value as above.

2026 – Achieve a minimum of a 2% increase in revenue value to aid in delivery of large planned projects.

Members noted that allocated funds currently held on account, for projects, had also depreciated in terms of buying power.

### **6. Grant Applications**

There were no Grant applications received in December.

### **7. Projects – scope funding in respect of improvement proposals at Joss Lane car park and playground – any update?**

No further updates were available in respect of funding from Westmorland and Furness Council for Joss Lane car park. In respect of the playground, Cllr Arnold hopes to meet with further contractors in respect of conceptual design only. With the aspiration to then engage the community for further feedback/consideration of playground proposals. Any conceptual design may also assist Sedbergh Parish Council with any pre-planning advice required from Yorkshire Dales National Park in respect of the project.

### **8. Date of next meeting – Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> February 2024 at 6.15pm. Members resolved to meet in the Parish Council Office, 72 Main Street, Sedbergh (Note, meeting one day later than previously scheduled).**