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## **Minutes of the Ash Parish Council Annual Finance Meeting Monday 15<sup>th</sup> November 2021 at 7.30pm at Cartwright & Kelsey School, School Road, Ash CT3 2JD**

### **1 Present and Apologies**

Mr J Tanner (Chair), Mr P Chandler, Mr M Humphries, Mrs M Owen, Mrs J Wilkinson.

In Attendance: Mrs Haggart (Clerk).

Apologies: Mr A Harris-Rowley (work), Mr M Porter (personal), Mr L Rogers (personal), Mrs L Steed (work).

It was agreed that Mr J Tanner take the Chair.

It was **proposed** by Mr Tanner, seconded by Mr Chandler and agreed that this Council approves the reasons given for absence from Mr Harris-Rowley, Mr Porter, Mr Rogers and Mrs Steed.

### **2 Declaration of Interests - none**

### **3 Minutes of previous meeting**

The minutes of the Ash Parish Council Finance meeting held on Monday 1st December 2020 were proposed by Mr Tanner, seconded by Mr Chandler, agreed as a true record and were signed by the Chair.

### **4 Report on Current and Year End Estimated Spend for 2021-22**

Spending to date and major items planned to end of Financial Year

- i) Employment – in line with the budget when salaries receive back dated pay once the National Wage Negotiations are completed. The current offer is 1.5%.
- ii) Administration – due to the resignation of the current clerk to finish at the end of March 2022, there are a number of unbudgeted costs that will be covered by budget adjustments.
  - a) IT Hardware will include a new laptop for clerk. The current clerk asked if it would be acceptable to purchase the existing laptop from the parish council.  
It was **proposed** by Mr Tanner seconded by Mr Humphries and agreed that Mrs Haggart could make an appropriate donation for the existing laptop.
  - b) Insurance is due to be paid in March 2022 and the estimate has been revised to £1,600 from £2,000.
  - c) Newsletters/ directory  
It was **proposed** by Mr Tanner, seconded by Mrs Wilkinson and agreed that the directory would be published by year end and that there would be a newsletter with an update on the NDP distributed with the notice of the annual parish meeting. Revised estimate of £1,000.
  - d) Recruitment / handover costs. It was agreed £500 from unspent administration headings would be re-allocated to cover these costs.
  - e) Stationery. It was agreed that the binding of old minutes would be completed by year end from the budgeted Ear Marked Reserve.
  - f) Training employees. It was **proposed** by Mr Tanner, seconded by Mrs Wilkinson and agreed that training employees be left at the budgeted amount of £250.

- iii) Tree Surgery - £1,000 covers maintenance; £1,000 to cover felling of diseased tree that will be allocated from contingencies.
- iv) Village Maintenance
  - a) Repairs & Renewals – grit bins purchase will be completed in December.
  - b) Noticeboards included new boards for Westmarsh and Collar Makers Green. It was agreed that the purchase of these boards could be moved into 2022-23 budget.
  - c) Information board about the Recreation Ground history.  
It was agreed that the design would be based on the village information boards (Ash Village and Westmarsh boards) and the design and production be carried out by DDC. The draft wording would be circulated and the Heritage Centre had a number of photos that could be used.
- v) Planning Advice includes the consultant advice for Rose Farm caravan site Westmarsh.

The estimated year-end (Y/E) spend for 2021-2022 is £79,566 and the estimated General Reserve is £73,869.

## 5 Proposed Budget 2022-23 F/Y expenditure

- i) Employment Costs are based on the estimated Y/E spend plus an indicative increase of 2% for wage increases. The PAYE has been increased to allow for increased employer National Insurance contributions.
- ii) Admin – expenditure based on estimated Y/E spend
  - a) Councillor training. It was agreed at £750 to include bespoke councillor training.
  - b) Room Hire had been estimated at pre-Zoom levels with adjustment for less committee meetings.
  - c) Subscriptions. It was agreed to remove the renewal for Zoom when the current subscription ends in July 2022.
  - d) Training employees. It was agreed at the upper estimate of £1,800 to cover possible costs for the new clerk.
- iii) Recreation Ground - based on estimated Y/E spend
  - a) Mowing, hedging. The uplift was agreed to account for the increased fuel costs for contractors and increased NI contributions.
  - b) Repairs & Renewals. It was agreed at the same amount as the previous budget and would include £400 for ground re-enforcement of entrance path off Queens Road beside Resthaven.
  - c) Repairs & Renewals. It was agreed that following the introduction of the wildflower swathes, the replacement of bollards with fencing may not be practical. The report on installing bike stands to replace the bollards between the swings and the carpark was discussed.  
It was **proposed** by Mr Tanner, seconded by Mr Chandler and agreed in principle to further investigate the cost of using of bike stands between the swings and the carpark.
- iv) Parish environment (Village Maintenance) Repairs & Renewals. Re-pointing of the brick bus shelters is included. Clerk to obtain an estimate of cost.
- v) Others - NDP includes the subscription to Survey Monkey £320; renewal August 2022. It was agreed to leave this in the budget pending review by the new NDP Committee on usefulness of the comparative information for the future review of the NDP.
- vi) Ear-marked Reserves
  - a) Pound Corner Trees  
It was **proposed** by Mr Chandler, seconded by Mr Tanner and agreed to start an Ear Marked Reserve of £1,000 from General Reserves for future work on the silver birches at Pound Corner.

- b) New play equipment Phase II. S106 contributions will be received for this project. It was agreed to start an Ear Marked Reserve of £2,000 from the precept.
- c) Community Facilities.<sup>1</sup> Possible long-term project to extend Ash Village Hall. If this goes ahead the build would be funded from S106 money, grants and a Public Works Board Loan.  
It was agreed that an Ear Marked Reserve of £3,000 from the precept should be started for the preparation costs for the project, including consultation with the community.
- d) Traffic Calming HIP 2.  
It was agreed that an increase in the current Ear Marked Reserve of £2,000, plus a budget cost of £1,000, be included from the precept.

## 6 Grants

- i) It was **proposed** by Mr Tanner, seconded by Mr Humphries that the grants to Ash Village and Westmarsh Village Hall and the maintenance of the St Nicholas Church grounds be the same as for 2021-2022.
- ii) It was **proposed** by Mr Tanner, seconded by Mr Humphries that the grant to Ash Heritage Centre be the same as for 2021-2022.
- iii) It was agreed that the S137 allocation remain at £2,000 from Ear Marked Reserves.

## 7 New expenditure

- i) Equipment – shredder for hedge cuttings and tree pruning.  
It was **proposed** Mr Tanner, seconded by Mr Chandler and agreed to include £750 for the purchase of a shredder for hedge cuttings and tree pruning.
- ii) ECO Green Dispensing Station for Dog Waste Bags. It was not possible to prevent the removal of large numbers of bags by individuals and for this reason it was agreed not to purchase a dispensing station.

## 8 Allotment charges for 2023

It was **proposed** by Mr Tanner, seconded by Mr Humphries and agreed to increase the charge for 2023 by £2 for a full size plot to £38 per year.

## 9 Setting indicative precept

It was **proposed** by Mr Humphries, seconded by Mrs Wilkinson and agreed to increase the precept by 1.5% (£1,253) to £84,753.

The final precept and the amount per Band D property will be known when the information on rateable properties for the parish is issued by Dover District Council.

The changes to the first draft of the budget gave a surplus of £42, Ear Marked Reserves of £34,000 and a General Reserve of £64,211.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 8.15pm.

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<sup>1</sup> Local Government Act 1972 s 133 and s144; Local Government (Misc Provisions) Act 1976 s19;  
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