Minutes of the Finance Meeting of the Council held

on 14th November 2022 at 7.30 pm, The Cartwright & Kelsey School, Ash.

Present: Cllr P Chandler, Cllr Harris-Rowley, Cllr M Humphries, Cllr M Owen, Cllr M Porter, Cllr J Tanner.

Also, present: Caroline Flynn (Clerk to Ash PC)

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Cllr L Steed (Personal Reasons)
Cllr J Wilkinson (Personal Reasons)
Cllr T Broun (Personal Reasons)
Cllr L Venny (Personal Reasons)

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

3. MINUTES

The minutes from the Finance meeting held on the 15th November were circulated to members.

Resolved: The minutes were agreed as a true and accurate record, proposed by Cllr J Tanner seconded by Cllr M Humphries and carried. Minutes were signed by the Chairman of previous Finance meeting.

4. REPORT ON CURRENT AND YEAR END AND ESTIMATED SPEND FOR 2022-23

The estimated year end spends for 2022-23 is £68,110 with an underspend of approximately £20,000. Estimated year end balances including reserves is approx. £107,000.

New signs are due at the recreation ground for the Byelaws and the rules at the children's play area, this can be from this year's budget.

Insurance is due to be paid in March 2022 and the estimate has been revised to £1,450 from £1,250.

Play Area Inspections, this is still outstanding as the original company have not responded, a new company will need to be contacted, may not require £750 as the full budget this year.

Repairs & Renewals – Grit bins were due to be purchased last year but were not so these still need to be arranged.

5. PROPOSED BUDGET FOR 2023-24

Employment Costs – in line with the budget salaries have just received an increase of £1 per hour which has been back dated this month, a 3% increase has been added for next year plus an extra increment for the clerk as per contract.

Admin

- Newsletters/ directory - An amount of £1,000 has been budgeted, it was suggested just a few copies be printed for those who prefer a hard copy.
- Training for employees. This was increased previously for the new clerk to £1800, this has been reduced to £1000 as less training will be required.

Elections – this will need to be topped up to £3,000 due to the election next year.

S137 – Members present at the meeting felt this should remain at £2,000.

Recreation Ground - The mowing and hedging has been increased to £6,500 as the Environmental Officer may not be able to cut certain hedging due to health issues, also with increasing labour/fuel costs. Members would still like to purchase a shredder for the cuttings.

Bollard Replacement – several bollards are rotting and need replacing, a very rough cost is £1500 but could be more. AW has also suggested different low level type fencing with bike racks, but CWG would need to provide a quote and could be more costly.

Members suggested a figure of £2,500 to cover the costs of replacement bollards, a quote would need be to be provided before the final budget is agreed.

Tree Surgery - Currently a budget of £3,500, this year's estimate was £2,040. All present felt the budget of £3,500 should remain for next year.

Working Groups
Members discussed working groups which form part of the NDP, some projects still need costings and likely to be built up over time with reserves due to high costs, particularly the Highway Improvement Plan.

Allotments/Toilets
Possible fencing repairs as a chain link fence has been suggested, build a reserve of £1,000. The tree maintenance is included in the annual tree works at the recreation ground.
The toilets will now be closed during the winter months so should even itself out on the budget, no further repairs are required at this time.

Parish Environment (Village Maintenance)

Pound Corner – possible maintenance on the paving, AW put forward an idea last year. Members asked for a quote from CW before the final budget, an approximate cost is £3,000.

Contingencies – members discussed contingencies and agreed this should be increased to make the total £8,000.

Planning Advice – this is to remain at £3,000 for 2023-24.

DDC Toilets – the Clerk was asked to check with DDC for next year's contribution.

Ear-marked Reserves

Pound Corner Trees - add a further £1,000 from General Reserves to further build for future work.

New Play Equipment, start to build a reserve of £2,000 from the General fund (underspend)

Elections are next year so will need to replace this amount £3,000 in reserves from GF(underspend), the clerk to ask DDC if the election costs have increased.

Community Facilities 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. Should this be increased further by £3,000.

Traffic Calming HIP should consider adding further to this reserve as it is very costly to work on these projects. Currently has £4,000 suggest add another £2,ooo from GF to total £6,000.(underspends)

6. GRANTS

Consider grants to Ash and Westmarsh Village Halls, Parochial Church Council, Heritage Centre.
It was agreed to keep these grants the same and for each group to be granted the following:

Ash Village Hall -	£2,000.00
Westmarsh Village Hall -	£400.00
Parochial Church of Ash -	£650.00
The Heritage Centre -	£650.00

7. NEW EXPENDITURE

The clerk explained to members the cost of a fireproof cabinet to house all old minutes in had been quoted by the Heritage Centre at a cost of £650.00.
All present agreed this should be included to keep all historic minutes safe.
The clerk put forward that the Environmental Officer should have a work tablet and an Ash Parish Council email address as he should not be using a personal laptop and email.
Cllr J Tanner commented he had a spare and can arrange a work email address for him going forward, all members were happy with this.

8. ALLOTMENT CHARGES 2024

Previous year allotment charges were increased to £38.00, a further £2.00 was suggested for 2023-24, making the price to £40.00 per year.

Cllr A Harris-Rowley proposed the £2.00 increase to £40.00 per year, this was seconded by Cllr J Tanner and carried.

9. SETTING INDICATIVE PRECEPT.

An indicative precept of £90,324 was suggested, which is roughly a 2% increase. The clerk will contact DDC to find out when the tax base is available.
Cllr A Harris-Rowley proposed an indicative precept of £90,324, seconded by Cllr J Tanner and carried.