

Swilland and Witnesham grouped Parish Council

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MINUTES


Finance Committee Meeting

Wednesday 8th November 2023 at 7.30pm

The School Room Witnesham Baptist Church

1. Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting. Present: Dr Nicol (Chair), Mr Sharples and Dr Williams. Apologies from Mrs Offord.
2. Declarations of Interest: None
3. Minutes of the Finance Committee Meeting of 28th November 2022. These were confirmed as a true record and were signed by the chair.
4. To Review Parish Council spending for the year so far.
Clerk reported that budget income £20,712.35 and actual so far as £15,548.36
The spend budget £20,570 and the actual spend of £8,246.54
Higher cost spending to come this financial year included annual grass cutting (£2.11k) , churchyard costs (usually £500 approx) , Clerk costs (approx £2.4k) , maintenance (approx 1.3k) and a possible SID purchase of £3.2k (£3.2k grant income from SAVID to balance) which gets us to around £18k, so £1k - £2k underspend looked possible (could be another £3.2k as well if SAVID SID does not happen).
5. To consider any required adjustments to current Parish Council Budget for 2023 – 2024 and reserves.
It was agreed that the Clerk as RFO could adjust budget spend headings where required within the budget sheet. A replacement picnic table was required at the Play Area by the School as it had rotted. It was agreed to proceed with a like for like replacement and for the Clerk to approach Dan Clery at ESC for a possible locality budget grant. Once funding was achieved then the budget could be amended accordingly and presented to full council as appropriate. A quote had been received from a supplier to repair play equipment at the Recreation Ground for £1,015.13p plus VAT. After discussion it was agreed to proceed to order the work as it was a H&S issue.
6. To review the rents levied at the Playing Field and Allotment Gardens.
Playing Field rent was reviewed and previous rents were considered over recent years. It was evident that the current rent needed an inflation related increase to cover those costs incurred by grounds maintenance. **It was agreed to raise the rent to £950 from £925.**
Allotment rents were reviewed, with the twelve Coopers Close plots now having a council provided water connection. Running costs incurred so far were for quarterly Standing Charges of £17.46 with no water usage charges yet due to a faulty water meter which had now been replaced. Taking this into

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consideration it was agreed to increase the Coopers Close plot rents by £7.00p per annum per plot. The two Hall Lane plots would remain at £10.00p.

7. To consider a donation to the Baptist Church for Hall Hire.
The meeting was reminded of the frequent ad-hoc free use the PC had to The School Room at the Baptist Church. **It was agreed to make a donation of £110.00p to the Witnesham Baptist Church.**
8. To consider the Parish Council Draft Budget for 2024 – 2025.
A draft 2024-25 base budget proposal had been circulated prior to the meeting. This was discussed by the meeting and amended to include increases in projected clerking costs. **This draft was then agreed as an acceptable base to build the final draft budget on with further discussion under item 9.**
9. To consider any potential major projects referencing the current Council Project Planning Document.
After checking the items listed in the projects document, **it was agreed to add £3,000.00p budget for village phone box renovations and as a precaution, £800.00p for possible PROW diversions in Witnesham, both part funded by grants and draws on reserves.**
10. To set the Precept for 2024 – 2025
After adding the agreed items to the base budget, it was agreed to set the precept for 2024-25 to £16,351.77p, which is an increase of 5% on the tax base.

Hence the meeting agreed the full budget to be presented to council in November as £20,528.77 income (including draw on reserves and grants) and £20,520.00p expenditure.

Meeting closed at 8:40 p.m.

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