

Clerk to the Council
Sheila Hodgson
clerk@southbourne-pc.gov.uk

www.southbourne-pc.gov.uk

Minutes of the Meeting of Southbourne Parish Council's Finance and Policy Committee held 11th January 2023

Present: Cllrs: P. Thorne (Chairman), L. Hicks, D. James and N. Redman

In Attendance: S. Hodgson - Clerk and RFO

The meeting opened at 6.31pm

52. CHAIRMANS INTRODUCTION AND WELCOME

The Chairman welcomed everyone and opened the meeting.

53. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies had been received from Cllr. Tait who is stepping down from the Committee and Cllr. Taylor who is on leave.

54. MINUTES. TO APPROVE AND SIGN THE MINUTES OF THE FINANCE & POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 2nd NOVEMBER 2022

Members **AGREED** to **APPROVE** the Minutes of the Finance & Policy Meeting held on the 2nd November 2022 and they were duly signed by the Chairman.

55. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.

There were no Declaration of Interests.

56. ADJOURNMENT FOR OPEN FORUM

There were no members of the public present.

57. CLERK'S UPDATE

Members **Noted** the Clerks Report

Pitch marker paint – Min 57.1 Refers

At the last meeting Members approved the purchase for a bulk order of paint from General Reserves. Due to misinformation from the supplier this did not materialise. The Clerk will continue to investigate other sources for a more competitive rate.

Pavilion Supply – Min 57.2 SSE Refers

Following the last meeting Members may like to Note that a credit for the supply to the Pavilion has been issued from SSE.

Members are further asked to Note that the DDM has been reinstated.

58. TO RECEIVE AND NOTE, THE REPORTS FOR THE MONTHS OF NOVEMBER AND DECEMBER 2022 AS FOLLOWS:

- TO NOTE VERIFICATION OF BANK RECONCILIATIONS FOR THE COUNCILS CURRENT ACCOUNT AND ACTIVE SAVER ACCOUNTS FOR THE MONTH OF NOVEMBER AND DECEMBER IN LINE WITH THE COUNCIL'S FINANCIAL REGULATIONS
- TO NOTE THE INCOME & EXPENDITURE FOR THE PERIOD COVERING 1ST APRIL 2022 - 31ST DECEMBER 2022
- TO NOTE THE BALANCE SHEET, RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS REPORT AND EMR REPORTS

The reports were **NOTED** and the Chairman signed the balance sheets for November and December as reported and previously circulated.

59. TO AGREE ANY PENDING PAYMENTS AND TO RATIFY PAYMENTS AS PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED

Members **AGREED** to **RATIFY** the payments as previously circulated. There were no pending payments.

60. CONSIDERATION OF THE SOUTHBOURNE PARISH COUNCIL OFFICE RENTAL INCREASE

Members **Noted** the Clerks Report

Members felt the increase of 33% was a too high even when taking into account the current cost of living increases. Following discussion, Member's **AGREED** for the Clerk to offer an increase of 16%

61. CONSIDERATION OF ANY BUDGETARY REQUESTS OR RECOMMENDATIONS FROM OTHER COMMITTEES:

- GREENSPACE AND COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE, 30th NOVEMBER - MIN 59 REFERS, RECOMMENDATION TO ENGAGE A LOCAL COMPANY TO DETERMINE PRECISE BOUNDARIES OF THE LAND HELD IN TRUST BY SPC WITH FURTHER RECOMMENDATION FOR ASSOCIATED COSTS TO BE MET FROM THE LEGAL FEES BUDGET.
- GREENSPACE AND COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE, 30th NOVEMBER - MIN 60.5 REFERS, RECOMMENDATION TO PURCHASE A SIT ON LAWN MOWER WITH MAINTENANCE AND ASSOCIATED LABOUR COSTS FACTORED IN
- GREENSPACE AND COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE 30th NOVEMBER - MIN 61REFERS, TO RECEIVE THE RECOMMEND PROPOSED BUDGET FOR 2023/24
- GREENSPACE AND COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE 30th NOVEMBER - MIN 63 REFERS, RECOMMENDATION FOR REPAIRS TO BUS SHELTER 1 BRAMLEY GARDENS – COST TO BE MET FROM GENERAL RESERVES

Members considered the budget requests from the Greenspace & Community Services Committee Meeting as follows:

61.1 Greenspace and Community Services Committee 30th November 2022- Min 59 refers, Recommendation to engage a local company to determine precise boundaries of the land held in trust by SPC with further recommendation for associated costs to be met from the legal fees budget.

Members **AGREED** to the recommendation to engage a local company to determine precise boundaries of the land held in Trust by SPC and for the costs to be met from the legal fees budget.

61.2 Greenspace and Community Services Committee, 30th November - Min 60.5 refers, Recommendation to purchase a sit on lawn mower with maintenance and associated labour costs factored in

As there is further information relating to this item that is due to be discussed under the additional agenda item, Members **AGREED** to defer this decision until the additional item is taken.

61.3 Greenspace and Community Services Committee 30th November – Min. 61 refers, to receive the Recommend proposed budget for 2023/24

Members **NOTED** the recommendation and **AGREED** to make the necessary provision within the 2023/24 budget.

61.4 Greenspace and Community Services Committee 30th November - Min 63 refers, Recommendation for repairs to bus shelter 1 Bramley Gardens - cost to be met from General Reserves

Members **AGREED** to proceed with the repair for the Bus Shelter and for the costs of £196.28 + VAT to be met from general reserves.

*Members **RESOLVED** to change the order of business and **AGREED** to take the additional agenda item at this point.*

62. TO RECEIVE THE NOTES OF THE STAFFING CONSULTATIVE GROUP MEETING HELD ON THE 5th JANUARY 2023 INCLUDING CONSIDERATION OF ANY RECOMMENDATIONS

Members were asked to Note the following statement:

Staffing notes are confidential and not for general circulation. Therefore, only the recommendations and appropriate related information will be submitted to the relevant Committees.

Recommendations from the Staffing Consultative Meeting held on the 5th January 2022:

62.1 To AGREE to appoint the role of an Administration Assistant and to identify a budget to accommodate this.

Members considered the reports by the Clerk as previously circulated. After discussions Members **AGREED** the following:

To proceed with the appointment of an administration assistant and to further **AGREE** that a budget would be made available for the associated costs such as provision of pension, mobile phone and laptop. Members further **AGREED** that the role would initially be for 8 hours per week with a pay scale of SPC of 8 or 9 depending on experience.

62.2 To AGREE that from the 1st April 2023 the arrangement with the current contractor be increased to a 2 day week and for provision for this arrangement to be made within the 2023/24 budget arrangements.

Following discussion Members **AGREED** to increase the current contractor/caretaker hours to 2 days a week and further **AGREED** for a formal contract to be drawn up.

Cllr. Hicks gave a verbal update regarding provision of a lawn mower:

Members were advised that a local community organisation would be willing to allow SPC the use of their sit-on lawn mower on a regular basis subject to agreement of a contribution to ongoing maintenance and costs. Cllr. Riddoch had inspected the lawn mower and was able to confirm that the specification would be adequate for SPC's requirements. However, there would also be a requirement to purchase a suitable trailer to transport the mower and a towbar would also need to be purchased. However, any initial outlay would save money in the long term as it would mean the grass cutting would be bought in-house and negate the need to use outside contractors.

Following discussion Members **AGREED** to pursue the offer of sharing the use of the community organisations lawn mower and further **AGREED** to make budgetary provision for the likely associated costs of a trailer and towbar.

63. TO CONSIDER AND AGREE THE FINAL DRAFT OF THE SOUTHBOURNE PARISH COUNCIL 2023/24 BUDGET AND MAKE RECOMMENDATION TO FULL COUNCIL FOR APPROVAL.

The Clerk's Report was **Noted**.

Members expressed their wish to keep any increases to the precept to a minimum and to make cuts to the budgets wherever possible to enable this. The RFO asked Members to consider that most costs have or will continue to increase and to bear this in mind when adjusting budgets.

Members also wished to take into account any underspend on certain budgets but the RFO reminded them to be mindful that overall projection based on the Income & Expenditure reports would suggest that although some budgets would not be fully utilised there would be quite a considerable overspend on others. Therefore although it would appear that there was a potential underspend of £12k this would have to compensate the overspend. The RFO further advised that it would be wise to factor in additional expenditure for the remaining quarter.

Members considered the budget spreadsheet as previously circulated.

Following discussion Members **AGREED** to **RECOMMEND** the following budget 2023/24 to Council.

Total Estimated Expenditure	£291,664.00
Less Total Estimated Income	£ 4,460.00
Subtotal	<u>£287,204.00</u>
Less contribution from Reserves	£ 50,000.00
Required Precept	£237,204.00

This equates to an increase on Band D properties from £83.27 this year to £87.71 for 2023/24. This is a 5.3% increase equivalent to £0.09 per week.

The RFO reminded Members of the need to maintain reserves and cautioned the utilisation of such a considerable sum. However, Members acknowledged that many people would be experiencing financial difficulties because of the current economic climate and therefore felt that it would be appropriate to use some of the monies held in reserves to keep the precept as low as possible.

64. UPDATE ON EAR MARKED RESERVES CODE 325 – OPERATION WATERSHED EXTRA ORDINARY MEETING 5th OCTOBER 2022 - MIN. 36.2 REFERS.

Members **NOTED** the Clerks report.

65. UPDATE AND FURTHER CONSIDERATION OF THE BRANDING ARRANGEMENTS INCLUDING FEEDBACK FROM DESIGNERS AND EXAMPLES AS REQUESTED.

Members **NOTED** the Clerks report.

Members considered the examples of designs as previously circulated and along with the statement from the third designer.

Following discussion Members **AGREED** that the third designer should be approached and invited to an online meeting to discuss the branding project further. Officers will make the necessary arrangements.

66. CONSIDERATION OF PROPOSAL FOR A REVIEW OF THE PARISH COUNCIL'S INVESTMENTS AND TO SEEK ADVICE ON OPPORTUNITIES AND GUIDANCE ON FINANCIAL SECURITY FOR GENERAL RESERVES - MIN. 37.5 REFERS.

Members **NOTED** the Clerks report.

The RFO referred to the internal auditors' comments regarding cash at bank and limits within the Financial Services Compensation Scheme.

Following discussion Members **AGREED** for the Clerk to contact three independent financial advisors for an initial consultation and to report back to the Committee at a future meeting for further consideration.

67. TO NOTE THE DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting is scheduled for 8th March 2022

The meeting closed at 8.29pm