

## LEICESTER FOREST EAST PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Finance and Policies Committee meeting on Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> January 2023, held in the Parish Hall, Kings Drive, Leicester Forest East, commencing at 7.00pm.

**Present:** C. Lawrence (Chairman) P. Linnett (Vice-Chairman) R. Darlison  
D. Di Palma P. Kitchen

Mrs L-A Holland O'Brien – Assistant Clerk and Assistant RFO to the Parish Council  
Mrs H. E. Mann – Clerk and RFO to the Parish Council

**Fin 23.1 To receive apologies for absence**  
None.

**Fin 23.2 To receive Disclosures of Interest in accordance with the Code of Conduct**  
The Committee noted that all Councillors had previously been granted a dispensation by Council to vote on budget and precept matters until January 2025.

**Fin 23.3 To adjourn the meeting to receive Questions from the Public**  
None.

**Fin 23.4 To confirm the Minutes of the Finance and Policies Committee Meeting held on Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> May 2022 as a true and accurate record**  
**Resolution:** The Committee resolved, by majority decision, to accept the Finance and Policies Committee meeting minutes of 25.05.2022 as a true and accurate record.

*Clerk to remove the word draft from the 25.05.2022 Finance and Policies Committee minutes.*

**Fin 23.4 To discuss the Accounts**  
The December accounts were noted.

**Fin 23.5 To note LRALC advice regarding precept and budgeting**  
Noted.

**Fin 23.6 To discuss the 2023/2024 budget**

### Income

- Bank interest income is more than expected as interest rates have increased so the budgeted figure was slightly increased.
- LiFE magazine advertising income has been left at nil as the Council like to have the extra adverts.
- Council to consider hall hire charges, especially in light of the huge increases in gas and electricity costs for the Parish Hall.
- Football and American Football subscriptions to remain the same as there have been no relevant increase in associated costs to the Council.

### Expenditure

- There has been a £1,764 overspend on wages due to the unplanned and unprecedented National Joint Council pay award.
- The Clerk's expenses (business mileage) have been less than predicted for this year.
- Extra has been added to the stationery and printing section of the budget as new office items may be needed when the Parish Office building work is completed.
- A copy of the up-to-date Arnold-Baker Clerk's manual, plus a VAT manual for use when the office alterations are carried out, have been added to the budget.
- 5% has been added, as a predicted increase, to all insurance costs
- IT costs include call outs, monthly back ups and replacement of an office laptop if needed.
- A smaller amount was agreed to be added for Councillor laptops/iPads.
- It was agreed to keep the website provider budget at £600 for next year.

- There have been some bank charges (the Council pays per transaction) but these needed to be investigated in more detail, an amount was added to the budget.
- The outsourced payroll charge has increased slightly this year.
- The amount for a Christmas tree outside St. Andrew's church, plus Christmas tree lights, plus installation of the tree and installation of the lights by an electrician, was increased from £1,200 to £1,500 as the Clerk now has delegated authority to spend up to that amount to ensure a 20 foot high tree is purchased.
- £100 miscellaneous was kept in the budget.
- The Committee decided not to spend money updating the gavel and chains of office.
- There is an increase in Parish Hall repairs and maintenance due to £800 being put into the budget for new blinds at the Parish Hall for the film evening and £2,000 for parquet floor refurbishment.
- It was agreed to remove any budgeted figure for wildflower reflection path, new gate for the Parish Hall car park and MUGA lighting.
- The Committee recommend to Council that the £15,000 in the Wildflower Garden path reserve is increased by £10,000 and the reserve be re-named 'paths around the Parish Hall'.
- An amount was added for a raised bed in the Wildflower Garden.
- The amount for the slabs in front of the new benches was reduced to £250 with a view to salvaging slabs from the entrance to the Parish Hall when those paths are tarmacked.
- Gas and electricity prices are very hard to predict and budget for so the estimates received when taking out the gas and electricity contracts has been used.
- Water costs have remained low with the new provider which is a positive.
- Cleaning materials have been reduced in next year's budget due to an underspend this year.
- Security services has been increased to £10,000 due to this years overspend.
- It was noted that the cost of litter and dog bin emptying is very expensive but necessary cost to the Council.
- It was agreed to reduce bench numbers to just one of the Highways and one of the parks to save money.
- There is £1,300 remaining in the 2022/2023 budget for redecoration, this will not be spent this year but likely next, once the office renovations have taken place.

The Committee noted that the Council's ongoing costs have significantly increased for 2023/2024 so the Finance Committee discarded some projects to save money.

The Finance Committee proposed a precept, based on the budget of £181,000.

#### General Reserves

The Committee discussed general reserves and the likely year-end position, taking into account known projects and normal monthly spend.

#### Actions:

- *Assistant Clerk to check budget costs from 2019 to add a suitable figure to the 2023/24 budget.*
- *Assistant Clerk to look into other venues hall hire costs with a view to increasing the Parish Hall's.*
- *Clerk to add to full Council agenda 'reserves' with a view that the £15,000 in the wildflower Garden reserve is added to with an extra £10,000 and the earmarked reserve be re-named 'paths around the Parish Hall', the wildflower path reserve no longer being required.*
- *Clerk to bring examples of more colourful, two metre high Christmas lights to the Parks Committee.*

**Fin 23.7**                      **To discuss Reserves**  
Noted.

**Fin 23.8**                      **Date of next meeting**  
TBC

The meeting closed at 9.13pm.