ALFRISTON PARISH COUNCIL

www.alfristonparishcouncil.org.uk

CLERK TO THE COUNCIL Alfriston War Memorial Hall

Mrs Suzanna Dry Old School House

Tel: 07936 904743 The Tye, Alfriston, BN26 5TL

E-mail: clerk@alfristonparishcouncil.org.uk Friday 18th October 2024

**Draft Minutes of the Finance meeting of Alfriston Parish Council (APC), held in the Alfriston War Memorial Hall on Monday 14th October 2024 at 7.30pm**

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**Present:**

Cllr J Watkins (Chair)

Cllr S Daw Cllr Rabagliati

Cllr A Harris Cllr Spring

Cllr N Parkinson

**In attendance:**

Mrs Suzanna Dry – Parish Clerk & RFO

No members of the public present.

**110. Chairman’s Welcome**

Cllr Watkins chaired the meeting in Cllr Monteath-Wilson’s absence.

**111**. **Public Questions**

There were no public questions.

**112. Apologies for absence**

Apologies were received from Cllr Monteath-Wilson.

**113. Declaration of interest**

Cllr Parkinson declared an interest in the Allotments.

**114. Minutes**

Cllr Daw proposed and Cllr Spring seconded a motion that the unadopted minutes of the APC Finance meeting held on 10th June 2024, were a true and accurate record. It was unanimously **RESOLVED** that the Chair duly sign the minutes as an accurate record.

 **115. Finance**

115.1 Cllr Rabagliati proposed and Cllr Harris seconded a motion that the Quarter 2 Audit figures be approved (as attached with the Agenda). This was unanimously **RESOLVED**.

115.2 Cllr Spring proposed and Cllr Parkinson seconded a motion that the Quarterly 2 VAT Return be approved (as attached with the Agenda). This was unanimously **RESOLVED**.

115.3 All Cllrs confirmed sight of the Expenditure against Budget Figures for Quarter 2 (as attached with the Agenda).

115.4 All Cllrs confirmed sight of the Forecast figures for Quarters 3 & 4 (as attached with the Agenda).

115.5 To discuss the Proposed Budget for 2025/26.

Cllrs discussed the individual budget lines and were generally happy with the figures.

Under ringfenced reserves for the High Street Traffic Plan, Cllr Rabagliati raised the issue of village gateways. APC is to bear the cost of these and to-date ESCC Highways Dept. have not given any indication of cost. We are currently waiting for approved designs from Highways. The Clerk was asked to chase Highways for designs and costs, so that we have a better idea before deciding on the amount for the ringfenced reserves. As the figure may need to be increased. Action point 1.

Cllr Parkinson asked Cllrs if there were any plans for capital projects which would need to be financed within the 2025/26 budget. The only capital project planned was the gateways which will be financed from the High Street Traffic Plan ringfenced reserves.

The Clerk confirmed that this budget represents the minimum amount required for APC to function. If Councillors wished to increase the ringfenced reserves in order to pay for future projects, this would require an increase in the precept.

As per the Clerk’s report (Appendix A) the proposed precept of £58,175.00 would give a council tax band D charge for APC of £131.88 for the year (using the 2024/25 tax base figure). This is an increase of £3.84 (3% ) on last year which was £128.04.

CIL Money - The Clerk confirmed the CIL money currently in ringfenced reserves of £502.07, will need to be spent by March 2025. Cllrs discussed possible uses of this including a new fence between the recreation ground and allotments or towards gateway costs if invoiced by the end of March 2025.

It was unanimously **AGREED** to make a final decision on the proposed budget and precept at the next Finance meeting in January, when the quarter 3 figures will also be available. And that this meeting be scheduled for Monday 6th January 2025 at 7.30pm.

Cllr Parkinson thanked the Clerk for the work in preparing all the figures and this was backed by all Cllrs.

**116. Date of next APC meeting -** Monday 21st October 2024 in the AWMH at 7.15pm.

The meeting closed at 8.45pm.

**Appendices, as referred to in the minutes, attached below or are available on the website.**

**Appendix A - Clerk’s Report & Proposed Budget.**

**ALFRISTON PARISH COUNCIL**

Date: 7th October 2024

Report Subject: Budget & Precept 2025/26

By: Suzanna Dry, Clerk & RFO

The purpose of this report is to present a draft budget for the Financial Year 2025-26 for consideration at the APC Finance Meeting on Monday 14th October 2024. The draft budget document shows last year’s budget, this year’s budget, predicted year end and proposed budget for 2025/26.

Background

As the Responsible Finance Officer, I have looked at each budget line taking into consideration expenditure for the previous financial year, the actual figures as at the end of Qtr 2 (Sept. 2024) and projected figures for the year end (March 2025). Added to this I have calculated in an expected rate of inflation on council bills where appropriate of 3% (as per the latest figures from the office of national statistics – annual average).

The proposed budget of **£59,425.00**, with a Precept of **£58,175.00** represents the minimum amount required for APC to function. If Councillors wish to increase ringfenced reserves in order to pay for future projects, this will mean an increase in the proposed precept.

Despite the unavoidable overspend in 2024/25 due mainly to a need for an election, water leak, recruiting a new Clerk and UK inflation rates, the budget figure for 2025/26 is only a 3% increase. As a comparison some local town\parish councils were forced to put their precept up between 10-40% in 2024/25.

Analysis

Effect on Band D Council Taxpayer – This is calculated by dividing the Precept by the Council Tax Base (CTB) Wealden District Council are yet to confirm the CTB for 2025/26. As an estimate, if we work with the CTB used for the Financial Year 2024/25 which was 441.1, this would give a Council Tax Band D annual charge for APC of **£131.88** for the year (£58,175 ÷ 441.1). The Proposed Budget results in a **£3.84**  increase on last year (3%) which was £128.04.

Increased Amount in Budget Lines:

Earmarked Reserves - £5,000 to be put back into general reserves, as per the Clerk’s and Internal Auditor’s recommendations. Replenish Playground, NDP, Tye Rd Surface & Election Costs with £500 each = £7,000.

Staff Costs - The budget figure includes the following :

National Pay Agreement 2024/25 -estimated figure, as this is still to be decided & will be backdated to Apr 24.

National Pay Agreement 2025/26 - estimated figure, for the same agreement in April 2025/26.

These figures are agreed by Local Government and set for all council workers. Est. figure = last year’s actual.

Annual Performance Review – decided on by APC at Staff Appraisal, using NALC pay scales.

Increase of Clerk’s hours from 22.5hrs to 25hrs pr wk, as previously agreed to review. Using NALC pay scales.

Recommendation

That APC puts forward the motion to agree the draft budget of **£59,425** for the Financial Year 2025/26, with a Precept of **£58,175.**

