

## WRIGHTINGTON PARISH COUNCIL

At the Budget Meeting of the Council of the Parish of Wrightington held on Monday 15<sup>th</sup> January 2024 at Appley Bridge Village Hall at 6.30pm the following were present:

Councillors: Mrs J Burton (Chairman), Mrs J Nicholson, Mr F Johnson, Mr H Carey, Mrs K Jukes and Mr C House. Members of the public were also present.

**97. Apologies** - Reported from Councillor Shaw. Councillor House apologised for arriving late.

**98. To discuss the Current Financial Years Income & Expenditure and Anticipated Expenditure** – The Clerk presented Councillors with a financial report showing last year's Budgeted expenditure figures and identified the expenditure to date in relation to those budgeted figures. In addition a column was included which showed estimated expenditure for the remainder of the financial year to 31/3/24. The next column indicated the total estimated expenditure, (adding expenditure to date and anticipated expenditure), to provide an overall anticipated expenditure figure for the financial year 2023/24. Taking this, along with the anticipated income for the financial year 2023/24, allowed the Parish Council to calculate an estimated balance carried forward at 1/4/24. The Clerk answered questions raised on the financial report where the information was not self-explanatory. It was noted that Wrightington Parish Council (Mossy Lea Ward) had the only contested election in the Borough at the May 2023 elections and that the resultant cost of that was significant.

**99. To discuss projects and anticipated Income and Expenditure for the next Financial Year** – The Clerk confirmed that some of the projects detailed on the financial report will be completed in the 2023/24 financial year whilst others may be carried forward to 2024/25. Work will be required to the car park at Appley Bridge Village Hall, therefore the £500 budgeted for marking the car park and the £1000 no longer required for remedial work to damp at Mossy Lea Village Hall will be commuted towards work to repair the decaying car park surface and pot holes at Appley Bridge Village Hall. It is hoped that some of the accumulated CIL money (approx. £6000) can also be used to undertake the car park repairs in addition to the £1500 now budgeted for this. The £1500 for picnic tables will be carried forward as the Parish Council committed to providing these once security of tenure has been obtained at the play area at Appley Lane South by the Borough Council. Work to set-up the new website will have been undertaken by the 2024/25 financial year however, the Parish Council will need to budget £500 for maintenance, updating and the provision of a domain name and dedicated email addresses. The Clerk had obtained information on the provision of electric hand-driers in the toilets at both Village Halls at a total cost of £1650 (net of VAT). It is hoped that a successful Capital Bid to West Lancashire Borough Council for £1100, will help towards the overall cost of this project.

The Clerk explained the budget figures for 2024/25 and how they had been arrived at. The Clerk confirmed that the same Parish Requirement as this year has been used in the calculations for 2024/25 to facilitate a calculation. The Clerk confirmed from the information received from the Borough Council, passed on to Parish Councillors, the concurrent contributions from the Borough Council and the top up grant will remain the same as received in the 2023/24 financial year. The Clerk explained all estimated figures can be amended by the Parish Council if they so wish.

The Clerk confirmed that the Council cannot always rely on bank interest or Village Hall income as neither is certain. However, the Clerk reported that discussions with the bank over the Appley Bridge Village Hall account could possibly be complete within the next few weeks and the new Treasurer should be able to access the account and arrange for a transfer of funds to the Parish Council. There has been no income to date this year from either Village Hall account. Similarly, with the sudden loss of Councillor Hodgkinson, his wife is no longer the Treasurer of Mossy Lea Village Hall, so the normal transfer in March is unlikely to take place until the banking mandates have been updated for the Mossy Lea Village Hall account. The Clerk now has the paperwork for Mossy Lea Village Hall bank account and will try to bring it up to date whilst awaiting the update to the mandate.

The Clerk reported that currently Honorariums to Village Hall officers are £200 per office (Booking Secretary and Treasurer at each Village Hall). The Parish Council resolved to review this at the Budget Meeting. It was proposed, seconded and **Resolved** – **That the Honorariums will be increased to £300 per officer with effect from the payment made in May 2024, for the role carried out in 2023/24.**

The Chairman left the room during discussions in relation to the appointment of the contractor for grounds maintenance work at the Village Halls for 2024/25. Councillor Jukes took the Chair during discussions on this item. The Clerk had requested 3 quotations but only 2 had been received. The quotations were referred to as being from contractor A and contractor B. There is approximately £750 difference in the two quotations received. It was confirmed that the Parish Council has used one of the contractors before but it was not identified which one. Following discussions it was proposed, seconded and **Resolved** – **That contractor B will be awarded the contract for grounds maintenance at the Village Halls for 2024/25.**

Councillor Burton re-joined the Meeting and took the Chair.

**100. Review Clerk's Salary** – The Clerk reported that advice from SLCC and NALC is to budget for a 6% increase for 2024/25. The 2023/24 increase was 5.4%. Therefore, the figure budgeted for 2024/25 is the current salary + 6%. If the agreed increase is less than that, then at least the Parish Council has not under-budgeted.

**101. To confirm the Parish Precept for 2024/2025** – Having examined all the budget calculations, the estimated income and expenditure for 2023/24 and the predicted income and expenditure for 2024/25, the Parish Council looked at the impact of requesting the same Parish Requirement as last year, and increasing the Parish Requirement by both £1000 and £2000, on the band D property charges. To determine the Parish Requirement Councillors will take the anticipated income, compare it to the anticipated expenditure and, taking account of the estimated balance carried forward, will determine whether it is necessary to increase the Parish Requirement or not. If the Parish Council is happy with the estimated income and expenditure for next year and any changes discussed, taking the same Parish Requirement as last year, the Parish Council will see their balance carried forward go down. Therefore, taking the suggested £21,300 as your Parish Requirement for this year (which would be the same as last year), deducting the top up grant of £625 will give a Precept of £20,675. If the Precept is then divided by this year's tax base of 1191.22 you will arrive at the figure payable by a Band D property in the village of £17.36 per year, a decrease of 16 pence per year or -0.91% on last year's charge. To expand on this, if the Parish Council determine that your Parish Requirement for 2024/25 is £22,300 (i.e. + £1000), deducting the top up grant of £625 would give a Precept of £21,675, dividing this by the tax base of 1191.22 will give a figure of £18.20 per Band D property per annum i.e.: a 68 pence per year or 3.88% increase on last year's charge. If the Parish Council determine that your Parish Requirement for 2024/25 is £23,300 (i.e. + £2000), deducting the top up grant of £625 would give a Precept of £22,675, dividing this by the tax base of 1191.22 will give a figure of £19.04 per Band D property per annum i.e.: a £1.52 pence per year or 8.68% increase on last year's charge. Following on from all discussions at this Meeting it was proposed, seconded and **Resolved** - **that the Parish Requirement for 2024/25 is increased by £1000 to £22,300.00, minus the top up grant of £625.00, giving a Parish Precept of £21,675.00. Resulting in a Band D property charge of £18.20 per annum, an increase of 3.88% on last year's Band D charge.**

A vote of thanks was given to the Clerk for taking on board comments made at last year's Budget Meeting and making the necessary changes during the course of the year to make conducting the Budget Meeting, and setting the Precept, easier.

Meeting Closed: 7.40 pm.

Chairman:

Date: