



Clerks: Miss B Macklen & Mrs C Feltham, PO Box 202, Heathfield, East Sussex TN21 1BN
e: clerk@buxted-pc.gov.uk w:buxtedparishcouncil.gov.uk

1st November 2023

The Chairman and Members of the Finance Committee
The Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Council.

MINUTES OF THE FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 31ST OCTOBER 2023

Present: Cllr Roberts (Chair), Cllr Rose, Cllr Smith, Cllr Coxon, Cllr Marshall, and Cllr Blandford.

Also present; Clerk/RFO Claudine Feltham

There were no members of the public present.

1. Apologies for absence.
All members were present.
2. Declarations of members' interests in respect of items on this agenda.
No declarations of interest were made.
3. Review and approval of the minutes of the finance committee meeting held on 22nd November 2022.
The minutes of the finance committee meeting held on 22nd November 2022 were approved and signed.
4. Review of Year End accounts for year ending 31st March 2023.
Members referred to the spreadsheet provided by the Clerk/RFO which detailed the expenditure v budget for 2022-2023.
Expenditure was largely as expected.
Members considered the rent charges for High Hurstwood allotment field hire. This is currently used for grazing. All members approved that no increase would be added at this time.
5. Audit for the year ending 31st March 2023
5.1 To note the Internal Audit report for year ending 31st March 2023 and consider any recommendations.

Both the interim and final audits had been re circulated to the finance committee members prior to the meeting. Cllr Roberts confirmed that there were no points carried forward from the end of year audit.

Banking arrangements: The RFO has continued the efforts in trying to open additional savings accounts. Unfortunately, the process with Barclays had been very lengthy, with them initially having a waiting list and then losing the paperwork.

An application has been submitted to Unity Trust Bank, and documents were also being submitted to The Cambridge Building Society.

Cllr Smith recommended that if the above two were not successful then to try Metro Bank.

5.2 To note the conclusion of the external audit for year ending 31st March 2023 (by PKF Littlejohn) and consider any notices or advisories.

The year end accounts that were submitted to PKF Littlejohn were accepted without any queries. There were no notices or advisories made and the audit was officially signed off by PKF Littlejohn.

The notice of conclusion of audit and the AGAR documents were placed on the website and noticeboards as per the instructions.

5. Review of current financial years expenditure v budget (spreadsheet from the RFO).

The expenditure in the first 6 months of the year has essentially been as expected.

When considering the second part of the year members discussed that there may be additional costs associated with the movement of an electricity pole on the recreation ground.

In addition, the Ionides Trust may wish to extend the sleepers to mark out the site of the proposed new community hall.

There had been a recent meeting between the Scouts group and members of the parish council about their plans for a new Scout Hall on the recreation ground.

Members raised their concerns that the investment funds that the Scouts were due to receive may not allow for money to be spent on the land outside of their leased area.

Overall, we may have a surplus of £9,000 on the budget set at the end of the financial year before any costs relating to the matters above.

Members noted that the NALC salary scales (for 1.4.23) have still not yet been set.

6. Review of current available funds and earmarked reserves (spreadsheet from the RFO)

Cllr Roberts reported that there were approx. £34,00 in general reserves at the start of this financial year and anticipated there would be approximately £44,000 in general reserves by the end of this financial year.

The balance of the Earmarked Reserves (EMR) was £321,769 at the halfway point of the financial year (30.09.2023). The majority of the EMR's could be used towards the building of a new community hall.

Members considered the current EMR codes and balances and resolved to propose the following changes to full council:

EMR	AMOUNT £	DETAILS OF CHANGE
ELECTIONS	£3313	Pay the £2,100 elections invoice from WDC and leave balance of £1,213 towards next election costs
STAFF	£1500	Mark this EMR as do not use (DNU ¹) and transfer £1500 to play areas renewals and maintenance.
PLAY AREA RENEWALS	£0	Combine with play area maintenance and mark this EMR as do not use (DNU ²)
PLAY AREA MAINTENANCE	£5,420	Rename this 'play areas renewals and maintenance' and increase amount to £20,000
TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT	£6,000	Mark this EMR as do not use (DNU ³) and transfer £6,000 to play areas renewals and maintenance.
COMPUTER AND OFFICE EQUIPMENT	£1,597.65	Increase to £2,000
LEGAL & VALUATION FEES	£5,000	Remain as is
COMMUNITY HALL DEVELOPMENT	£59,496	Add funds to this code for the new community hall.
PARISH PLAN PROJECTS	£0	Mark this EMR as do not use (DNU ⁴)
ALLOTMENT DEPOSITS	£1,160	Remain as is
REPAIRS AND RENEWALS	£100,000	Mark this EMR as do not use (DNU ⁵) transfer £100,000 to parish hall development
CIL FUNDS	£98,125.60	Update when CIL funds are received or spent
NEW HALL FUNDS	£0	Mark this EMR as do not use (DNU ⁶) as it is a duplicate
OFF SITE PLAY	£40,156.74	This is specifically for use on the Buxted play area (as per S106 agreement).

Action: add proposal for above changes to full council agenda - November 2023

7. To consider the budget setting for 2024-2025 (spreadsheet from RFO).

Members reviewed the budget setting spreadsheet for 2024-2025 in line with the current years expenditure and anticipated expenditure moving forwards.

There are relatively little sources of other income (less than £1,000) and so to cover the budgeted expenditure a precept of £123,606 would be required. This is an increase of 8% on last years precept. The increased expenditure includes a budget for defibrillator related expenses, 5% has been added to the salary and on costs budget code (which is dependent on final notification) and rates that are now payable on the Reading Room (as it is not in use).

¹ RBS does not allow for the codes to be deleted when there have been funds within the year, so need to mark them as DNU.

² RBS does not allow for the codes to be deleted when there have been funds within the year, so need to mark them as DNU.

³ RBS does not allow for the codes to be deleted when there have been funds within the year, so need to mark them as DNU.

⁴ RBS does not allow for the codes to be deleted when there have been funds within the year, so need to mark them as DNU.

⁵ RBS does not allow for the codes to be deleted when there have been funds within the year, so need to mark them as DNU.

⁶ RBS does not allow for the codes to be deleted when there have been funds within the year, so need to mark them as DNU.

8. To approve the precept amount to be recommended to full council.

Resolved: as proposed by Cllr Roberts, seconded by Cllr Coxon, and reached unanimous approval, members agreed to propose to full council, an increase of 8% for a precept of £123,606 for 2024-2025.

10. Any other matters properly notified.

None

Meeting closed at 2020 hours

Claudine Feltham, Clerk and RFO, Buxted Parish Council