

**ALVELEY AND ROMSLEY PARISH COUNCIL  
NEAR BRIDGNORTH, SHROPSHIRE**

**Minutes of the meeting held on the 17<sup>th</sup> January 2023 (Finance Meeting)**

**Present:** Cllr C Brown, Cllr P Barker (Chairman), Cllr R Narburgh, Cllr P Whale, Cllr M Haddon, Cllr S Potter.

**In Attendance:** Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) Mr David Rawlinson and Clerk Mrs Chloe Martin.

**119/22 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies have been received from Cllr I Jakeman, Cllr R Dowson, Cllr C Taylor and Cllr V Voysey.

Absent: Cllr J Taylor

**120/22 DECLARATIONS OF PECUNIARY INTERESTS**

- (a) It was confirmed that, in accordance with Standing Order 13.e, all Councillors have been granted dispensation to speak and vote on the matters on this agenda, notwithstanding their status as Council Tax payers in the Parish of Alveley and Romsley.  
The clerk has received Dispensation Forms from all Councillors present.
- (b) To receive any other declarations of pecuniary interest.  
Cllr S Potter stated that she has a pecuniary interest in the maintenance of the recreation ground and play area, and so could not comment on related matters.

**121/22 NATIONAL AND LOCAL CONTEXT**

The RFO referred to Section 4 of the budget report. He highlighted the high level of reserves that the Parish Council would hold by the end of the financial year. He also referred to the effects of inflation, especially on the costs of street lighting electricity, and the impact of the cost of living crisis on local residents. He advised that a reduction in the Parish precept, by applying reserves, was feasible but that careful consideration should be given to the medium-term consequences of any such decision.

**122/22 REVIEW OF EXISTING PLANNING DOCUMENTS – the following are attached:**

- (i) ARPC Action Plan 2022-25  
After discussion it was **agreed** that the draft plan for 2022-25 should be reviewed and updated to take account of the budget decisions at this meeting and that this should be done at the March Parish Council meeting.
- (ii) ARPC Training and Development Plan 2022/23  
The RFO advised that this plan should be reviewed at the February Parish Council meeting and confirmed that any financial consequences of that review could easily be absorbed within the budget plan for 2023/24. This course of action was **agreed**.

**123/22 TO CONSIDER A DRAFT BUDGET FOR 2023 – 24 AND APPROVE OR AMEND AS NECESSARY.**

The Council considered the projected budget outturn for 2022/23 and the draft budget plan for 2023/24 presented by the RFO. The RFO advised that planned spending was significantly above the levels in the current or previous years, because of the need to significantly reduce the amount of reserves. The plan he presented provided for:

- (i) Budgeted spending £91,465, plus the application of £20,000 of Neighbourhood Fund grant to support the renovation of the car park at Cook's Cross;
- (ii) Projected receipts of £6,000.

Some members were keen to ensure that the planned budget would not constrain the Council's ability to support specific initiatives which were at present in the early stages of discussion. The RFO confirmed that there was significant flexibility within the proposed budget plan. After further discussion, the Chairman proposed to accept the budget plan for spending and receipts put forward by the RFO; this was seconded by Cllr Brown and was carried unanimously.

#### **124/22 TO CONSIDER AND SET A PRECEPT FOR 2023 – 24**

The RFO advised that the precept requirement for 2023/24 would be determined mainly by the extent to which spending in the new year would be met from reserves. The budget plan provided for:

- (i) A reduction in the precept requirement from £53,082 in 2022/23 to £50,000 in 2023/24; this was equivalent to a reduction in the Parish precept by 8% from £62.50 to £57.00.
- (ii) A reduction of £41,615 in general reserves from £93,744 to £52,129.

After discussion, Cllr M Haddon proposed a motion that the Parish precept should remain the same at £62.50 and this was seconded by Cllr Narburgh. Cllr. Brown put forward an amendment that the precept should be reduced by 8% and this was seconded by the Chairman. On voting, the amendment was lost by four votes to two, after which the original motion was passed by four votes to two.

The RFO advised that the consequences of this decision were:

- (i) a precept requirement for 2023/24 of £54,809, requiring a Parish precept of £62.50, the same as in the current financial year.
- (ii) Projected reserves at the end of the 2023/24 financial year to be £84,051, of which £27,113 will be earmarked for specific purposes (mainly street lighting replacement), leaving a general reserve of £56,938.

#### **125/22 CONFIRMATION OF THE DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting of the Parish Council will be held on Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> February 2023 at 7.45pm, preceded by an Open Forum at 7.30pm.

**The meeting was closed at 20.27.**