

SHORNE PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Finance Meeting held on 27th October 2022 in Shorne Village Hall

PRESENT

Mr R Lane (Chairman)
Mr R Theobald
Mr R Hardy
Ms Clifton
Mrs S Lindley
Mr Bugg
Mrs L Williams
Mr C Rea

1 To receive any declarations of interest

None advised.

2 Review of 2022/23 half-yearly expenditure

The Clerk presented a report on expenditure for the first half of the year compared with the estimates. It was noted that the total precept expenditure for the first six months of the year to 30th September 2022 was **£15,154.59**. The non-precept expenditure for Crabbles Bottom was £2,585.00. See attached schedule.

Expenditure is lower than anticipated, partly due to the slippage in certain items of expenditure which includes the bus shelters, and the discontinuation of the children's adventure trail. However, it is expected that expenditure will increase during the second half of the year.

Barclays (Working Account) as of end of September was £14,885.71. Lloyds TSB (Precept Balances) as of end of September was £64,368.67. Lloyds TSB (Crabbles Bottom Non Precept) as of end of September was £32,925.31. Lloyds TSB (Play Area Renewals) £10,207.81, Lloyds TSB (Fixed Assets Renewals) £6,100.00.

3. Review of anticipated expenditure and full year estimate for 2022/23

The forecast of expenditure for the second half year and the likely outturn for the year was reviewed and discussed. Mr Lane asked Members to be realistic in our second half forecasts as we have a tendency to overestimate our expenditure and make unnecessary provisions. At last year's budget meeting, we significantly overestimated our expenditure forecast for the second half of the year. The second half forecast is not intended to be a budget, it should be our best estimate of the costs that will be incurred.

It is unfortunate that we have not been able to proceed with the children's adventure trail, even though cost of this was included in last year's accounts. The funds have now been moved into our play area repairs and renewals provision.

£10,000 was also budgeted in this year's accounts for other capital expenditure, such as Bus Shelters, Gym Equipment, car park, etc, but as yet we have spent nothing. If we are going to carry this forward into the forecast for the second half of the year, we need

to spend it. Mr Lane would like to think that we can get the bus shelters refurbishments completed by the end of this year. It was agreed that Mr Bugg would seek estimates.

As the Coronation date has been set for May 2024, it was agreed to set aside £1,500 in this year's accounts for costs that may be incurred in advance of the event. It was also noted that the NJC pay settlement has not yet been agreed, and the resulting salary increase for the Clerk will be incurred in the second half and be backdated to April.

It was also agreed that the Parish Council would make donations of £250 to each of the Pop up Café, the Church, and Shorne Scouts, with £250 held in reserve to be allocated before the end of the financial year. In future, we will look at a grant process. Mrs Poole will draft an application procedure for consideration. *(Post meeting note: Jubilee donations of £653.76 were made in October and have subsequently been included in the second half forecast.)*

It was noted that the precept expenditure for the second half of 2022/23 is estimated to be **£21,932.08**. The full year precept expenditure is estimated to be **£37,086.67**. See attached schedule.

For Crabbles Bottom (non-precept expenditure), costs to date amount to £2,585.00. The expenditure during the second half of the year is expected to amount to £3,360.00, making a full year cost of £5,945.00.

4. Consideration of long-term expenditure planning

An updated copy of the long-term expenditure "wish list" had previously been circulated. It is important that the Parish Council continues to plan ahead to invest in improvements and assets for the parish.

Although Shorne West contributes almost one third of Parish Council revenue from the precept, it receives a disproportionately low amount of investment from the Parish Council. Members considered that the Parish Council should look for opportunities to invest in assets for Shorne West.

The possibility of installing additional AEDs (defibrillators) was discussed. It was suggested that these are becoming status symbols within the parishes rather than necessities, and it is questionable whether the cost can be justified. Mr Hardy pointed out that if they save one life, then the cost is more than justified. Possible future locations could include Michael Gardens, Shorne Crossroads, and Chestnut Green. It was suggested that we could carry out a mini consultation in Shorne Ridgeway to see whether the preference was for retaining the telephone box as a public telephone or acquiring the kiosk to house an AED, although opinions are likely to be divided.

5. Consideration of provisions and one-off major items for 2023/24

A number of items were discussed. These included additional AEDs, outdoor gym equipment for Michael Gardens, and the car park resurfacing. Mr Rea was requested to look into the cost of establishing an AED at Michael Gardens, including power supplies. This would enable budgets and funding options to be explored.

Mr Lane proposed that in 2023/24 priority is given to resurfacing the car park and remodelling the borders of the car park. This would entail the removal of the concreted area and the establishment of appropriate vegetation. This was **agreed** and a budget of £20,000.00 was allocated for this.

5.1 Making accounts digital Government plan (April 2024)

Mrs Poole reported that we will need to invest in suitable software to meet HMRC's Making Tax Digital programme. The Government requires all VAT registered organisations to go digital. This has been set back from 2022 to 2024. It will reduce spreadsheet errors, simplify VAT reclaims, enable AGARs to be produced more simply, and enable reports and budget information to be produced more easily.

(Post meeting note – please see <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/making-tax-digital/overview-of-making-tax-digital>).

6. Budget for 2023/24

Members reviewed the likely expenditure for 2023/24. It was noted that annual inflation is currently running at 10.1%. There will inevitably be increases in insurance, salaries, and other costs. The Coronation and local elections are scheduled for May 2024. Taking account of these factors, repairs & renewal provisions, and £20,000 for the car park and border remodelling, the budget expenditure for 2023/24 was estimated to be £54,925. See attached schedule.

(Unfortunately Ms Clifton was unwell and had to leave the meeting. The budget for Crabbles Bottom was set at £4,500.00, and the breakdown has since been added.)

7. Setting of annual precept for 2023/24

Mr Lane commented that although we increased the precept by approximately 8.7% last year, Shorne still has the lowest property precept charge in Gravesham, and by a considerable margin. This is not necessarily because we are more efficient than other parishes, other parishes have additional responsibilities such as parish-owned street lights, offices, covenant management duties, or estate maintenance responsibility. We have also been successful in obtaining grants and donations in the past, including for the children's play area, and the parking area at the Common was re-laid free of charge.

Nevertheless, unexpected expenditure and capital investment is always problematic, and there is the possibility that parish council precept increases could be capped at some time in the future, as are council taxes. We should ensure that we always have sufficient income to continue to provide services and investment, whilst not raising revenue that is unspent. We have sufficient reserves to pay for the car park works.

With inflation running at approximately 10.1%, it was **AGREED** to recommend to Council that the precept should be increased by 9.9% for the year 2023/24, and that a Precept for the sum of £46,410 should be submitted to Gravesham Borough Council.

This would represent an increase for Band D properties from £36.57 to around £40.16 per year based on the current tax base, an increase of approximately 7p per week.

8. Any matters arising from Committees and Members

Mrs Lindley reported that the Lower Thames Crossing Development Consent Order information may be available from Monday 31st October instead of Friday 29th October.

Mr Theobald has received comments from parishioners concerned that they are unable to get through to the local Doctors. He will draft a letter for Mrs Poole to send on behalf of the Parish Council to raise our concerns.

Mrs Poole and Ms Clifton asked if they can attend AGAR training. It was agreed that they could both attend the next suitable training session.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 22.34

Signed Mr Lane:.....

Dated:.....

SHORNE PARISH COUNCIL - 2022/23 Estimates and 2023/24 Budget

INCOME					
Precept		£42,230.00			
Donations		£714.20			
Misc		£4.70			
CCLA Investment		£3,067.96			
HMRC VAT Reclaim		£6,147.82			
Total inc Grants/Donations & Precept		£52,164.68			
Ball Ticket sales (refunds shown as costs)		£1,100.00			
Grand Total		£53,264.68			
EXPENDITURE	Budgeted Expenditure for 2022/23	Actual Expenditure as at 30/09/22	Estimated Expenditure for next 6 months	Total Estimated Expenditure for year	Budgeted Expenditure for 2023/24
Clerk's Salary Gross (incl NI & pension)	£13,000.00	£5,660.68	£7,339.32	£13,000.00	£14,000.00
Course for Clerk & Conf. Fees	£500.00	£100.00	£200.00	£300.00	£500.00
Cllrs Expenses and Cllrs/Clerks Travel	£100.00	£0.00	£50.00	£50.00	£100.00
Payroll for Clerks Salary/Pension	£250.00	£114.00	£136.00	£250.00	£250.00
Accountant PKF Littlejohn	£300.00	£0.00	£300.00	£300.00	£300.00
Civic Expenses & Flowers	£200.00	£75.00	£0.00	£75.00	£100.00
Contribution towards Clerk's IT equipment	£300.00	£300.00	£0.00	£300.00	£300.00
Data Protection ICO	£40.00	£35.00	£0.00	£35.00	£35.00
Hire of Hall and Room/Zoom	£600.00	£140.00	£160.00	£300.00	£600.00
Insurance	£700.00	£576.35	£0.00	£576.35	£700.00
Internal Audit	£250.00	£203.00	£0.00	£203.00	£250.00
Legal Fees	£500.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£500.00
Office, Stationery, Drop in sessions & Postage	£300.00	£100.10	£200.00	£300.10	£300.00
one.com e-mail domain	£200.00	£200.35	£0.00	£200.35	£250.00
Printing - Leaflets	£100.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£100.00
Printing Parish Report	£600.00	£668.00	£0.00	£668.00	£700.00

Publications (Council Books)	£60.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£60.00
Refreshments Parish Assembly/Christmas	£100.00	£63.58	£50.00	£113.58	£100.00
Subscriptions Open Space, SLCC, KALC, CPRE	£1,100.00	£1,060.52	£45.00	£1,105.52	£1,200.00
Tel/Broadband	£400.00	£186.28	£213.00	£399.28	£400.00
Website	£500.00	£80.00	£200.00	£280.00	£500.00
Grants/Donations	£1,000.00	£50.00	£1,000.00	£1,050.00	£1,000.00
Church Clock	£225.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
Lower Thames Crossing	£500.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£500.00
Jubilee/Coronation (including donations made)	0	£2,577.48	£2,153.76	£4,731.24	£1,000.00
Ball Ticket Refunds	0	£1,100.00	£0.00	£1,100.00	0
British Legion	£55.00	£0.00	£55.00	£55.00	£70.00
Election fees for 2023	0	0	0	0	£200.00
Subtotal General Expenditure	£21,880.00	£13,290.34	£12,102.08	£25,392.42	£24,015.00
Planning & Highways (see below)	£2,500.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£2,500.00
Public Consultation	0	0	0	£0.00	0
Signage on Roads	0	0	0	£0.00	0
Traffic Monitoring The Street	0	0	0	£0.00	0
Other	0	0	0	£0.00	0
Subtotal Planning & Highways	£2,500.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£2,500.00
Footpaths, Properties and Greens (see below)					
Village Hall Car Park (shrub maintenance)	£0.00	£80.00	£80.00	£160.00	£160.00
Butt/Bollards	£500.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£500.00
Contingency	£1,000.00	£0.00	£250.00	£250.00	£1,000.00
Noticeboard replacement	£500.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£1,000.00
Play area and annual maintenance	£150.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
Shorne Rec maintenance	£100.00	£571.92	£0.00	£571.92	£100.00
Signs	£150.00	£37.33	£50.00	£87.33	£100.00

Supplementary verge cutting	£600.00	£500.00	£0.00	£500.00	£600.00
Tree survey	£250.00	£75.00	£350.00	£425.00	£350.00
Tree remedial work	£1,000.00	£600.00	£500.00	£1,100.00	£1,000.00
Subtotal Footpaths, Properties & Greens	£4,250.00	£1864.25	£1230.00	£3,094.25	£4,810.00
Repairs & Renewals Funds (see below)					
Car Park remedial fund provision	£1,000.00	£0.00	£1,000.00	£1,000.00	£1,000.00
CCTV Maintenance	£300.00	£0.00	£300.00	£300.00	£300.00
Defibrillator AED	£200.00	£0.00	£200.00	£200.00	£200.00
SID	£500.00	£0.00	£500.00	£500.00	£500.00
Play Area	£1,500.00	£0.00	£1,500.00	£1,500.00	£1,500.00
Speed Watch	£100.00	£0.00	£100.00	£100.00	£100.00
Subtotal Repairs & Renewals Funds	£3,600.00	£0.00	£3,600.00	£3,600.00	£3,600.00
SUBTOTAL	£32,230.00	£15,154.59	£16,932.08	£32,086.67	£34,925.00
Capital Projects (see below)					
Bus Shelters	£10,000.00	£0.00	£5,000.00	£5,000.00	£0.00
Car Park resurfacing & border remodelling	-	-	-	-	£20,000.00
*AED Shorne West. Although not formally budgeted, a sum of £7,000 was proposed if funding permits	-	-	-	-	*See note
TOTAL PRECEPT EXPENDITURE	£42,230.00	£15,154.59	£21,932.08	£37,086.67	£54,925.00
2023/24 Precept Request	£42,230.00			+ 9.9%	£46,410.00
Expenditure from Reserves					£8,515.00
Crabbles Bottom (Non-precept expenditure):					
Footpaths, Meadow & Bridleway (Gozzett)	£2,500.00	£2,585.00	£660.00	£3,245.00	£3,000.00
Other (branch removals, bramble removal, etc)	£500.00	0	£2,400.00	£2,400.00	£500.00

Fencing repairs	£5,000.00	£0.00	£300.00	£300.00	£1,000.00
Total Crabbles Bottom	£8,000.00	£2,585.00	£3,360.00	£5,945.00	£4,500.00
Total Precept Expenditure	£42,230.00	£15,154.59	£21,932.08	£37,086.67	£54,925.00
Total Crabbles Bottom	£8,000.00	£2,585.00	£3,360.00	£5,945.00	£4,500.00
Total Precept Expenditure plus Crabbles Bottom	£50,230.00	£17,739.59	£25,292.08	£43,031.67	
VAT		£1,020.47			
Total		£18,760.06			

* I am not convinced we formally agreed to allow £7,000 in next year's budget for AEDs.