



Maresfield Parish Council

REPRESENTING THE VILLAGES OF MARESFIELD, NUTLEY & FAIRWARP

Minutes of the Finance & Administration Committee meeting held on Thursday 7th October 2021 at 7.30pm in the Parish Office, Nutley

Present: Cllr M Craddock (Chair), Cllr Dr B Smith, Cllr D Watson and Mrs C Goossens (Clerk)

1. **Public Session.** None.

2. **Apologies for absence.** Cllr T Lewin.

3. **Declarations of interest.**

Cllr Dr Smith – Governor, Nutley Primary School

Cllr D Watson – Member of Nutley Bowls Club/Nutley War Memorial Trust Committee member.

4. **Adoption of the minutes of the Meeting held on 7th September 2021.**

The minutes as previously circulated were **Agreed** to be a true and accurate record.

5. **Review of month 6 2021/22 Receipts and Payments and Bank Reconciliation.**

The following points were noted in discussion:

- All payments routine in nature.
- The Parish Council plans to negotiate a decrease in Parish Office rent. Alternative premises are available although it is hoped this won't be necessary.

6. **Current Year forecasts 2021/2022 and new Budget/Precept 2022/2023.**

The following points were noted in discussion:

- The proposed budget for next year excluding grants currently stands at £76,380.
- The projected spend for 2021/22 is £120,942 which includes reserves and various amounts spent on CIL projects.
- The budget for insurance premium renewal has been increased by 15% on the recommendation of our broker.
- An additional £5,000 has been put into the Fords Green Play Area reserve.
- Salaries – we expect to end the year at £34,000 but have put in a proposed budget for the coming financial year of £36,000. It was noted that advice from SSALC is that Clerks are currently in short supply and Parish Council's do not want to be in a position where good Clerk's leave due to the lure of a higher salary elsewhere.
- Inflation next year is anticipated to be between 5 and 8%.
- There is proposal to save costs on printing and postage of the Annual Report next year.

The draft budget and the implication of this on the precept was noted subject to the inclusion of grants.

7. **Grants/Donations - Bids for Parish Council funding 2022/23.**

Grant applications were considered, and awards totalling £15,260 were recommended as per the attached schedule

The implication of this on the budget for 2022/23 is that there would be an increase of 1.49% on last year's precept.

- i. **Funding request from Nutley Bowling Club.** The Clerk informed the committee that additional information had been received from the Bowls Club that afternoon, but too late to forward to F&A Committee members for consideration at this meeting. It was **Agreed** to add to the agenda for the next F&A meeting. **ACTION:** Clerk.

8. **Employment:-**

i. **Staff hours of work.**

The Clerk would like to consolidate her hours into three days rather than the current four i.e. Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday. The Assistant Clerk will continue to work her hours across four days Monday to Thursday on the weeks when there is a Planning Committee meeting and Tuesday to Friday when no Planning Committee meeting. The Chairman proposed adoption of the working hours as outlined above, this was seconded by Cllr Dr Smith and **Agreed** unanimously.



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ACTION: Cllr Dr Smith to advertise on Facebook and Twitter the Parish Office is open to visitors by appointment.

9. To consider and Agree purchase of RBS Asset Register Software and associated ongoing support and maintenance costs.

Assets are currently recorded on an Excel spreadsheet not directly linked to the RBS accounts package. The current system allows for possible errors. This is an important element of the Annual Governance Accountability Return. The Chairman proposed the purchase of the asset register software and associated ongoing support and maintenance costs. This was seconded by Cllr Dr Smith and **Agreed** unanimously. **ACTION:** Clerk.

10. To consider and agree future of Parish Office. It was **Agreed** to defer this item until Cllr Lewin is in attendance as he has been working on this project. The ideal scenario would be to remain in situ with a rent reduction. **ACTION:** Clerk add to Agenda for next meeting.

11. GDPR update. The Clerk confirmed that work is currently in progress to dispose of all hard copy documents in line with the adopted retention schedule. Shredding will be carried out by an approved off-site bulk shredding company.

12. Matters arising from the meeting for public communication. As per item 8.

13. Correspondence. None.

14. Date of next meeting – Thursday 11th November 2021.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 21.06.