



**Minutes of a Meeting of the Finance & General Purposes Committee
On Monday 4th December 2023 @ 4.30pm
Parish Office, Great Missenden**

Present: Cllr M Johnstone (Chair)
Cllrs V Martin, A Hewett, S Rhodes

Also present: Jane Hennessy, clerk

F23/05 Apologies: Cllr Pither, Cllr Gladwin

F23/06 Declarations of Interest – Cllr Hewett – Great Missenden Xmas lights/Event grants.

F23/07 Minutes of meeting **Wednesday 2nd August 2023** were signed, following approval at the September parish council meeting.

F23/08 Budget Preparation 2024/25

The finance committee reviewed the initial draft budget prepared by Cllr Johnstone and the clerk. The following items were discussed, agreed and adjusted:-

- Clerks travel – increased to allow for parish warden mileage
- Training – increased
- Special Projects – two budget lines added, Little Green Fingers and Photography Exhibition, whilst the parish event line was reduced to zero.
- Grants – Age Concern was increased by £250, Christmas lights and events were split into two budget lines one for Prestwood and one for Great Missenden – both of £7,000. The Source was increased to £4,500 to include provision to assist with annual insurance payments. The library grant was reduced to £2,000 and Missenden Walled Garden increased to £2,000.
- A grant of £1,000 was added for Prestwood Village Hall to cover anticipated expenditure on room hire and publicity.
- Open Spaces – Sextons contract was increased by RPI of 6%. The gabion and plant maintenance was removed as this is now carried out by the Missenden Walled Garden voluntarily.

Reserves were reviewed and adjusted as follows:-

- GMMC refurbishment was reduced to £3,500
- Playground Reserve increased to £106,000 – to cover the two multiplay equipment pieces planned
- Prestwood Village Hall - £10,000 reserve added – as grant has been approved by the PC but the funds not yet requested – until all funding is received.
- Buryfield step and fence reserves removed as work completed or to be carried out this year
- The contingency reserve of £30,000 was removed, subject to a further review of reserves
- A reserve of £30,000 was created for Frith Hill footpath.

- The utility reserve and photography project reserve were removed. The photography project reserve of £150 was then added as a budget line for spending next year.
- Community Infrastructure Levy - a net amount of £48,700 of the CIL fund was earmarked as a reserve for spending.

The committee reviewed the initial total of £355,624 which with use of £43,000 of reserves gives a total precept request of £312,624 (an increase of 7.82% on last year). The committee are mindful of the rising costs that are affecting all the residents of the parish.

The committee agreed that as the tax base was not yet available from Bucks Council the increase should be around 6%. Cllr Johnstone will make further adjustments to achieve this and the summary of each budget category will be presented at the full council meeting in December which include the Finance Committee's recommendation. If further adjustments following the December council meeting are required then another Finance meeting will be held and the final budget presented at the January meeting for approval. The deadline for submitting the precept request to Bucks Council is 31st January.

F23/09 Any other business – None.

Date of Next Meeting – prior to January council meeting – if required.

Meeting closed at 5.45pm