

Burwash Parish Council Finance Committee

Minutes of Burwash Parish Council Finance Committee

Held on the 21st October 2019, at 7.00pm in Parish Room (Internet Room), The Bear Car Park

Present

Chair: Cllr Franklin, Cllr McBride, Cllr S Moore, Cllr N Moore, Cllr A Newson, Cllr B Newman, Cllr D O'Neil.

Public Time

One member of the public was present.

1. Apologies for Absence

There were none

2. Disclosures of Interest

No declarations made.

3. Minutes of the previous finance meeting.

The minutes of the previous Finance Meeting on the 17th September had been signed at the Full Council meeting as a true and correct record.

4. Forecast of Expenditure/Preliminary Budget 2020/21 Proposals.

As the two Agenda items are linked it was agreed to discuss them together.

It was noted that the midyear expenditure is below 50% for year; however that includes a nil spend on traffic calming, the largest item on the budget for this year. The spend on Clerk salary is just within 50%.

There followed a discussion on the Budget item – Safer Villages - and the Village Gates. Cllr. B. McBride advised it was her intention that the Gates would be installed at each of the communities and should be matching and of good quality. The Consultation on yellow lines taking place next year is very important, with council and residents working together. The Community Matched Funding of £11,500 has been set aside, and the open session at the Village Hall on 5th October served as one qualification for this funding. It is anticipated that the full Traffic Calming measures would take about 3 years to complete, with additional budget/funding needing to be set aside each year, approximately £23,000 included in the budget for each year, plus matched funding. There is a need for Safe Crossing areas, but these would take much more resources than the Council has. Cllr. B. Newman suggested that if the budgeted amount was not used in the year, the promised funding could be withdrawn, there was then a discussion on purchasing the gates now and storing them. Cllr. S. Moore stated that ESCC were not cutting the hedges around signs, making them less visible – if ESCC were unable to complete this trimming, the Parish Council should be empowered to do so. Cllr. N. Moore advised that the Car Park needed tidying. Cllr. A. Newson said that signs purchased though ESCC were more expensive, could the Council not purchase their own.

Cllr. B. McBride spoke about the reduction of funds available to Local Government; Burwash Parish Council precept was below the national average, but that Burwash Parish Council had a rolling plan and was ambitious for its communities. However, because these projects extended over several years, the communities needed something visible now.

Cllr. S. Moore had several proposals for the next year budget:

1. Shops Project. Identify where businesses used to be and provide small blue plastic plaques for the resident to place in the window commemorating this, throughout all 3 communities; Cllr. S. Moore claimed at one time there were 60 businesses in the High Street alone. Budget - £250.
2. Cycle path from Burwash to Etchingam Station. Link the Church to Borders Lane. As an initial plan, identify through Land Registry search the individual pockets of land where the cycle path

would run to seek permission – if permission not granted by just 1 piece of land, then the project would have to be scrapped, as there was no existing right of way. Budget £100.

3. Refurbish the pavers in the High Street, and value the Lime Trees. The pavers and Lime Trees, together with the historic architecture of Burwash are unique to the village and must be retained. There are areas where the pavers need attention; Cllr. S. Moore has a store of these pavers and could attend to a small area. The pavers must be safe and not a trip hazard. Cllr. S. Moore has discussed with ESCC and Diane Barrett from Rother the possibility of listing the Ancient High Street, which they would support. The Lime Trees need professional maintenance, some more in need of TLC. Would-be adopters of the Lime Trees would need to accept that maintenance is essential, with a commitment to an estimated annual cost of £100. The complete project would take an estimated 3 years, and when complete could apply for listing. Budget £750 per year.

Required updates to the Car Park were discussed: electric car plug-in system (near toilet block, disabled bays to be relocated), the entrance should be improved and made safe for pedestrians (potholes, hazard of wet leaves). Cllr. D. O'Neil advocated friendly lighting in the High Street, without affecting the 'Dark Skies'.

The refurbishment of the Parish Offices was discussed, with the installation of a connecting door. RESOLVED – The Administration Officer should purchase suitable adaptable office furniture for the smaller Parish Office. Also RESOLVED – To pursue Community Grants to help extend the budgeted and authorised spend on the Parish Offices e.g. replacement secure windows, without the need for bars, and to cover the risk of asbestos being found in the buildings during the refurbishment. It was agreed that the Parish Council should offer to paint the exterior of the Scout Hut at the same time, so all the buildings of the same construction retain similar appearances, and to provide alternative space for the Internet Café during this refurbishment.

The budget for Staff costs next year should cover 10 hours per week for the Clerk/RFO at £22.00 per hour, and 15 hours per week per week for the Administrative Officer at £12.00 per hour.

Grants. The local organisations should now be applying for grants for the next financial year, but it was agreed that no deadline should be set, in order to be more flexible; however, it would be appreciated if, for Budget purposes, most Grant applications should be received by the end of November.

For Best Practice, it was agreed that the balance of the Earmarked reserves should equate to about one third of our Annual Budget.

5. Internet Banking Administration and Signatories.

It was agreed that Cllr. N. Moore would be added to the list of signatories, and that at the moment, the Clerk would not be included. The Council is proceeding towards being Internet Banking ready, once the signatories have completed the formalities at the Bank.

6. Electronic Payments (EFT).

There were no payments required.

7. Quarterly Internal Review Process.

The Clerk and Cllr. A. Newson to discuss the terms of the quarterly review.

8. Future Agenda Items.

To continue the Budget process, and to consider our Grant applications.

9. Date of next meeting – 25th November 2019.

There being no further business the meeting was closed at 9.00pm