

SCARISBRICK PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of the Parish Council held in the St Marks Parish Hall at 7.30pm on Monday 23rd January 2023.

PRESENT:

Councillor J Herbert (in the Chair)
Councillor J Marshall
Councillor N Makin
Councillor C Berks
Councillor S Roberts
Councillor M Wood

Mrs J Smith (Clerk) in attendance

There were no members of the public present.

23/017 APOLOGIES AND REASONS FOR ABSENCE:

Apologies were received from Councillor C Marshall and Councillor A Pickersgill.

23/018 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST:

There were no declarations of interest.

23/019 CONFIRMATION OF THE MINUTES:

It was resolved to approve the minutes of the meeting held on Monday 9th January 2023.

23/020 ADJOURNMENT OF THE MEETING:

The meeting was not adjourned.

23/021 2021/22 BUDGET REPORT Q3 (OCTOBER 22 TO DECEMBER 22):

There was a discussion regarding the current budget surplus with regard to monies set aside for grant funding was noted.

It was resolved that:

The budget report be accepted.

The Clerk to send grant application forms to St Elizabeth's Church, Bescar Lane Church and the Scarisbrick Litter Group advising them to apply for any required grant funding by 27th February 2023.

22/022 BANK RECONCILIATION OCTOBER 22 TO DECEMBER 22: The verified bank reconciliation was noted.

22/023 2023/24 RESERVES:

During 2022/23 reserves have been used to fund SPID purchases and Millennium Wood fencing works. The remaining reserves total £53,504 (earmarked £21,504 and general £32,000)

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The level of reserves expected to be held as at 31/03/23 is £61,038. However, this is dependent on the actual year-end bank balance is available, so some adjustment may be required.

It was resolved to approve the reserves for 2023/24 as follows:

RESERVE	PURPOSE	2023/2024 £
General Reserves:		
General Reserve	To cover 6 months of operating costs in case of delays to income stream	15,000
Election Reserve	To cover unexpected costs of contested election for a casual vacancy	6,500
Locum Clerk Reserve	To cover the loss or prolonged unavailability of the Parish Clerk	10,000
Maintenance Reserve	To cover unforeseen maintenance costs such as urgent remedial work or emergency repairs	3,500
TOTAL GENERAL RESERVES		35,000
Earmarked Reserves:		
Projects – Reserve 1	Planned expenditure on 2023/2024 projects	8,586
CIL – Reserve 2	CIL monies received	17,452
TOTAL EARMARKED RESERVES		26,038
TOTAL RESERVES 2023/24		£61,038

23/024 TO AGREE THE BUDGET FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR 2023/24:

The budget headings for 2023/24 have been revised to provide further detail of the types of expenditure that the Council incurs.

The budget workings produced by the Clerk were discussed and it was agreed that there will be inflationary pressures during 2023/24 along with uncertainties around salary costs due to the NJC pay increase for 22/23 not yet being agreed.

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It was considered important to keep increases to the precept as low as possible (in low single figures) as Scarisbrick residents will be subject to Council Tax increases and other inflationary pressures themselves.

Some funding for projects during 2023/24 will be from earmarked reserves and this will assist in keeping the precept as low as possible. The budget for training has been increased to include training for the Clerk.

Other budget headings have been increased to take account of inflation so that usual activities such as planned regular maintenance and grants to organisations could continue.

It was resolved to approve the 2023/24 budget as follows:

2023/24 BUDGET		
		£
EXPENDITURE:		
Clerk's Salary		12,000
Clerk's Expenses		250
General Administration		4,000
Subscriptions (formerly included in General Administration)		1,100
Grants, Donations, S137		1,000
Equipment/Asset Purchase (formerly included in General Administration)		1,000
General Maintenance		5,000
Contractual Maintenance (formerly Grass Cutting)		3,640
Training		360
Projects		2,050
TOTAL EXPENDITURE		£30,400
INCOME:		
Concurrent Expenditure Grant		2,894
TOTAL INCOME		£2,894
AMOUNT REQUIRED		£27,506
LESS COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT GRANT		-968
AMOUNT TO BE RAISED		£26,538
TAXBASE		£1,414.12
PRECEPT		£18.77

23/025 TO FIX THE PRECEPT FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR 2023/24:

The precept of £18.77 represents an increase of 69p (3.8%) from the previous year. This is well below the predicted inflation rates for 2023/24 of between 8% and 10.9%.

It was resolved to fix the precept at £18.77.

Action: Clerk to advise WLBC

23/026 SECTION 106 FUNDING

The circulated report was discussed, and it was noted that S106 funding is to enable communities to provide and improve public open spaces.

Applications go through a detailed assessment process at West Lancashire Borough Council. And supporting evidence has to be put forward that an assessment has been made of local community needs, which includes a public consultation with Scarisbrick residents.

The application for S106 funding for playground equipment at Scarisbrick Village Hall was submitted to WLBC in January 2022 for consideration. However, due to staffing issues at WLBC limited action was taken. The new WLBC CIL/S106 Officer made contact in December 2022 and has requested further information regarding the application.

A discussion was held regarding the affordability of the project due current financial climate, and related levels of inflation. This will potentially increase the costs of the play equipment and also increase the level of financial support required from the Council to progress the project. For 2023/24 the Council have budgeted to keep the precept below predicted inflation levels so that the cost to residents is kept as low as possible.

Section 106 monies are a community resource and questions were raised about whether the level of expenditure required could be justified in the light of the very low number of responses received from Scarisbrick residents to the public consultation regarding the playground project.

A vote was held.

It was unanimously resolved that:

Scarisbrick Parish Council can no longer support the Playground project on the grounds of cost/affordability particularly where there is not a public mandate to do so.

Action: Clerk to advise Scarisbrick Village Hall and WLBC that the Council can no longer support the playground project on the grounds of affordability and lack of a clear public mandate.

Action: S106 monies to be discussed at a future SPC meeting by which Scarisbrick residents will have been invited to provide their views on potential future projects.

23/027 ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDAS:

There were no items submitted.

The Chair closed the meeting at 9:40pm