

# **Bramley Parish Council Finance Subcommittee meeting**

## **28<sup>th</sup> March 2023, Bill Chafer Youth Centre, Flash Lane, S66 1TS**

Meeting commenced at 16.10 pm  
Chair opened the meeting.

### **1.00 To receive apologies for absence**

1.01 Apologies received

None

1.02 Present:

Chair M Brown

Vice Chair D Hardwick

Cllr D Jackson

Cllr D Sayner

Finance Officer T Sayner

Clerk R Thompson

### **2.00 Minutes of the previous finance subcommittee meeting**

2.01 Chair M Brown noted that the hours for the Handyman had been discussed with full Council. Or Chair M Brown asked for the handyman to be discussed.

2.02 Vice Chair D Hardwick proposed that that the minutes of the 29<sup>th</sup> of November 2022 to be a true and accurate record thereof. Cllr D Jackson seconded. Unanimous favour.

### **3.00 Budget Review**

3.01 Finance officer T Sayner noted for the gas and electricity the company has billed and reimbursed a few times so wasn't sure how accurate the budget figure would be. She also noted they keep charging VAT and discussions have been ongoing regarding this.

3.02 A discussion was had around the roofing costs. Clerk R Thompson explained the funding she had applied for which included the roof being strengthened to receive solar panels and storage batteries.

3.03 Chair M Brown mentioned the heating costs are likely so high because of heating the halls, but they are heated due to use. Finance Officer T Sayner noted the Village Hall costs are not currently as high as the Youth Centre but the percentage has still increased. The fact the Annexe electricity was being estimated was also discussed.

3.04 Clerk R Thompson stated it was suggested we get a smart metre in the Parish Hall.

3.05 Finance Officer T Sayner noted the biggest expense at the budget is wages and associated costs, with garden material costs also still being high. It was noted the Clerk has been looking into and pricing up other ways of planting to keep costs down but still look nice around the village. The Finance Officer suggested she contact Winthrop Gardens again to purchase additional perennials to help with this, but noted this would be a medium term project to reduce garden costs.

- 3.06 The Finance Officer discussed section S137 payments and noted that the majority referred to the lighthouse donation for help with the Cemetery and the funds given to schools for the jubilee celebrations. She also confirmed the approximate remaining balance for the Chairmans allowance is £625 from previous financial years, but noted it needs be voted upon by full Council before it could be carried forward to the next financial year.
- 3.07 Regarding the football pitches, Finance Officer T Sayner mentioned more grant funding would be available if we had more diversity with the teams, i.e having a female team and asked the Clerk if the Assistant Clerks could investigate this. Clerk R Thompson mentioned that some are put off due to the slope. The Chair asked for football discussion to be carried across to the next meeting.
- 3.08 Clerk R Thompson mentioned that Bramley Grange had approached the Parish Council for funds towards sponsoring some of the children going on the school trip with Willows; she noted she had checked and only 2 of the children are Bramley residents. Chair M Brown stated for the two children that are Bramley residents he felt it was good to support.
- 3.09 Finance Officer T Sayner highlighted that the cheque that was sent to cover the Assistant Clerks' training was never banked by the company, so despite the training being completed she noted she would likely need to pay via the bank instead.
- 3.10 A discussion was had regarding further training for staff. The Finance Officer suggested £600 for the training budget. Chair M Brown agreed.
- 3.11 With regards to the allotments, RMBC rent will remain the same. For the water and other miscellaneous costs Finance Officer T Sayner highlighted she had done estimates based on previous years figures.
- 3.12 Cllr D Sayner asked Clerk about the allotment waiting list; the Clerk noted the BAA Secretary hadn't sent it to date, so she had emailed stating the Parish Council would be starting a new list if the current one wasn't provided, which wouldn't be ideal, but he had replied confirming he would bring it into the office. The Clerk also mentioned that all but two allotment leases are now signed and paid for.
- 3.13 Finance Officer T Sayner advised that the 22/23 rent invoice had not been issued until recently as herself and the Clerk had waited until the issues with the Allotment Association had been resolved. Discussions then turned to possible future costs, and she stated that the trees in the allotment are RMBC owned, so should be trimmed by them. She also noted that the fencing around the allotment sites is old so made need replacement.
- 3.14 Chair M Brown asked about the expense of maintaining the church allotments. The Finance Officer noted there would be costs for the clearing and implications for those taking on the plots. It was decided to add £1000.00 to the budget for allotments in the coming year. It was also discussed that any costs incurred could be passed onto the plot holders if wished.
- 3.15 Regarding the cemetery, the Finance Officer commented that this financial year, the site was self-funding with slightly more income than expenditure. She did note however, that this could be affected by cost incurred by ground sink as in previous years.
- 3.16 Finance Officer T Sayner confirmed that we get a large proportion non-resident burial; she also mentioned that the Clerk had noticed some grave plots have started putting on unofficial adornments so that would need to be kept on top of.
- 3.16 After a discussion on cemetery income it was suggested fees be reviewed this financial year by the Finance Committee and then taken to full Council. The Finance Officer

commented that if any fees are put up, her recommendation was to not increase the inspection fee.

- 3.17 The Finance Officer was asked to check with the Cemetery contractor if he intended to increase his fees this year.
- 3.18 A discussion was had around Cenotaph costs and possible ways of reducing them.
- 3.19 Regarding community events, Finance Officer T Sayner and Clerk discussed possible grants for the Coronation, Gala and other events.
- 3.20 When discussing professional fees the Clerk R Thompson confirmed for the holiday club Youth Work Works would be in two days a week and currently the plan is for Active Regen to cover another two days, both running through 4 weeks of the summer. It was decided to increase the figure for professional fees next financial year to £3500.00 as this would allow for additional projects not yet planned.
- 3.19 The Finance Officer confirmed there is £6498 income under community fund and £3000.00 in donations, but that this included all events income such as the Chatty Café and Lost Chord. The recent increase in the number of events happening had highlighted the need for a more detailed breakdown when setting up the new accounts system. The Clerk suggested one nominal code for the Café and a second for other events.
- 3.20 The committee looked at community projects expenditure and the Finance Officer pointed out the figure included purchases for events like the Café. Clerk R Thompson mentioned that the Co-Ops offer to donate the food items for the Café was still open so that would drop the costs. It was also decided that any takings by the Café would go back into the Café budget.
- 3.21 Bramley Village Trust; The Finance Officer confirmed the Handyman would be doing the markings on Flash Lane pitches in the next financial year. The Clerk confirmed he is also happy to do the grass cutting on the playground, as we already have the lawn mower. The Finance Officer commented the current grass cutters had no contract and recently increased prices. However, she raised concerns about their other costs such as field cutting increasing should the amount of work done on site by them reduce.
- 3.22 When discussing the Flash Lane site, the Finance Officer commented that it would be highly likely that this site would continue to run at a loss, as limited income was received from football and the site had many costs for grass and maintenance.
- 3.23 The Finance Officer T Sayner highlighted that both the Parish Hall and the Youth Club have had slight increases in bookings and use, but they are still not self-funding due to lots of gaps for daytime hire. Chair M Brown noted classes such as exercise groups could work well, but the issue is people working so limits the variety of people available. A discussion was had around ways to increase the building income.
- 3.24 Chair M Brown suggested the Assistant Clerks looked into attracting daytime users.
- 3.25 Finance Officer T Sayner stated that the Parish Council and the Bramley Village Trust together were expected to use almost all the Precept received in the financial year 2023/24. Any projects undertaken after that such as roof and annexe repairs, would use reserves.
- 3.26 Cllr D Sayner asked how much the council had budgeted to spend on the annexe. Clerk confirmed £30,000 by the Council in addition to a substantial grant. It was discussed that if the grant was not received the council would have to reconsider going ahead with the repairs.

17:15pm Finance Officer T Sayner leaves the room to take an urgent telephone call.

4.00 Regarding staff wages Cllr D Sayner suggested the large increase in the wage bill deserved a closer look and suggested himself, Vice Chair D Hardwick and Cllr D Jackson as ex-business owners look further into the increase. Both Cllr D Sayner and Cllr D Jackson commented that this would be due diligence.

4.01 Cllr D Jackson asked the Clerk about the percentage of wages costs, and she confirmed it was on par with other Parish Councils in the area.

4.02 A discussion was held around there being no cost to the council to undertake the task.

17:21pm Finance Officer T Sayner returned to the room and was brought up to date by the Chair M Brown.

4.03 The Clerk advised that she had reduced the gardeners hours has discussed by the committee.

4.04 The Finance Officer gave out a document outlining wages costs for the past financial year for each employee. Cllr Sayner asked if it was net or gross costs, she advised net. He apologised but requested the information in gross to better understand pension costs etc.

4.05 There was a further discussion around the wages review and Cllr D Sayner stated it may result in no savings. Chair M Brown responded by highlighting the fact that it was being seen to do the right thing.

5.00 The Clerk advised that discussions regarding the repairs required to the roof were underway and she would report the findings to full council. Or The Clerk advised quotes for the roof repairs were being gathered and she would report back to full Council.

6.00 The Finance Officer T Sayner advised that budget meetings should be held quarterly. She also informed the committee that she had the internal audit mid-May and had to prepare for that.

6.01 It was decided to hold the next meeting in late June 2023.

7.00 The Finance Officer T Sayner advised that the electric quote for the Youth Club electric repairs had now expired and this may have an implication on the budget if costs have since risen.

7.01 In light of meeting held earlier today the Finance Officer asked for there to be a review of systems in place for finance and their compliance with current regulations.

Meeting concluded at 17.30pm

DRAFT MINUTES ONLY

Signed by the Chair as a true and accurate record.

..... Date:.....