

# Carlton Parish Council

## Minutes of the Finance Committee meeting, held on 15<sup>th</sup> November 2023 at 7.30pm at Carlton Methodist Church

**Present:** Cllr's Taylor, Clayton, Land, Lowes, and Quinn.

**Attending:** Helen Phillips – Clerk.

### **29. Apologies for Absence**

There were no apologies for absence received.

### **30. Declarations of Interest**

There were no disclosures of personal and prejudicial interests from Councillors on matters to be considered at the meeting.

### **31. Minutes of Finance Committee Meeting**

The Committee received the approved minutes from the Finance Committee meeting held on 12<sup>th</sup> September 2023 for information only.

### **32. Accounting Records**

- i) The Committee received the Income, Expenditure, Bank Reconciliation, and Budget Monitoring reports, and Bank Statements for consideration up to the 31<sup>st</sup> October 2023.

**Resolved: That the accounting records up to 31<sup>st</sup> October 2023 be approved.**

- ii) The Committee considered the verbal update by the clerk on the cost of provision, installation, dressing and disposal of the Golden Garden Christmas Tree.

The Christmas Tree is arranged to be provided and erected on 4<sup>th</sup> December 2023, at a cost of £340.00 + VAT.

**Resolved: That the clerk's verbal update be noted.**

### **33. Cemetery**

- i) The Committee received a verbal update regarding the progression for the cemetery walls repairs/ funding.

The clerk explained that a decision on the application with the main potential, through the Government's Levelling Up Grant Scheme, will be made and notified by the end of December 2023. On discussion the Committee requested that the clerk continue to pursue the remaining options for funding to spread the applications and aid successful fund gathering for the project.

**Resolved: That**

- a) the clerk's update be noted; and
- b) the clerk to continue to pursue funding options be approved.

- ii) The Committee reviewed the Cemetery Charges.

The clerk reported that she had assessed the cemetery charges for a local Parish Council and felt that specifically the 'non-residents' charges for Carlton Cemetery should be increased. This would give greater priority to the interments of Carlton residents, and protect the unsold plots for allocation to Carlton residents.

A discussion was held, and the Committee thought a further comparison of other local cemetery charges should be made, and the clerk report to the Parish Council at the meeting on 28<sup>th</sup> November 2023.

The Committee felt that a Parish Council Policy should be drafted to confirm the rules on applying the charging mechanism for Carlton Residents and Non-Residents, to aid consistency.

**Resolved: That**

- a) the clerk continue to compare and assess local cemetery charges and report to the Parish Council at the meeting on 28<sup>th</sup> November 2023; and**
- b) the clerk to draft an appropriate Policy relating to the rules on applying cemetery charges for Carlton Residents and Non-Residents, and report to the Parish Council at the next possible meeting be approved.**

**34. Allotments**

- i) The Committee considered implementing a rental increase to £20.00 per plot bi-annually to all tenants. (Noting that the new layout would lend itself to sixteen plots; each plot is chargeable which equates to £640.00 revenue per annum).

A discussion was held, and it was agreed to charge the bi-annual £20.00 per plot charge for new tenants, pending a full charges review.

It was agreed that to show justification of a notice of rental increase to all tenants the clerk should provide allotment expenditure (Local Rates, waste bins provision contract costs, administration time, etc.) verses to income gained for rental of plots.

**Resolved: That**

- a) any new tenants should be charged at a bi-annual £20.00 charge; and**
- b) the clerk explore the analysis of allotment expenditure verses income gained to give justification of rental increase to all tenants, and report to the Parish Council at the meeting in January 2024 be approved.**

- ii) The Committee received a verbal update from the clerk regarding the funding and costs of improvements to the allotment area facilities.

The clerk reported that the Parish Council has previously received £2,000.00 from the Locality Fund. A further £700.00 has been applied for from the remaining Locality Fund, under Cllr Jordan's invitation. Quickline Communications PLC have confirmed they will kindly provide £1,000.00 and an application to Drax Power Station Community Fund is pending for up to £2000.00

Gained and potential funding and VAT Reclaim verses the approved contractor quote leaves a shortfall of £1,776.00

As this is a project that has already been approved by the Council the clerk suggested that the Finance Committee recommend to the Parish Council to consider approving provision of the £1,776.00 shortfall, to permit the project to commence and be completed before the end of the financial year.

**Resolved:** That the clerk's verbal update regarding the allotment improvements and funding be noted.

**Recommendation:** That the Parish Council approve the provision of the shortfall of £1776.00 for payment to permit the project to commence and be completed by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024.

### 35. Budget 2024-2025

- i) The Committee considered the approval of the draft budget for 2024-25 prepared by the clerk.

A discussion was held, and a number of slight tweaks were made leading to a projected Expenditure for 2024-25 of £40,054.00 and a projected Income of £5,900.00

**Recommendation:** That the Parish Council consider approval of the draft budget for 2024-25.

- iii) The Committee considered the groundworks contract for 2024-2025, with a verbal update from the clerk.

The clerk reported that she had contacted the present contractor for the groundworks agreement, who had indicated that increased rates would be required for 2024-25 to cover external costs. This meant that the cost per year would increase from £3,550.00 + VAT to £4,000.00 + VAT

**Recommendation:** That the Parish Council approve the proposed increase for the cost of the annual groundworks contract for 2024-25.

- iv) The Committee considered the Precept request amount for the financial year 2024-2025.

On agreeing the amended draft budget for 2024-25 the Precept demand amount was £34,154.00 which equates to a 5.15% increase on the Equivalent Band D Council Tax to 2023-24. This is justified by the content and conclusion of the amended draft budget for 2024-25.

**Recommendation:** That the Parish Council approve the Precept Demand for 2024-25.

- v) The Committee considered the Ear Marked Reserves for 2024-25.  
A discussion was held, and it was agreed to defer the review of the Ear-Marked Reserves Policy until the next scheduled meeting of the Finance Committee in 2024.

**Resolved:** That the review of the Ear-Marked Reserves Policy be deferred until the next Finance Committee meeting scheduled for 2024.

### 36. Funding and Grants

There were no funding applications received to consider for community funding from local groups.

### 37. Date of next meeting: - 14<sup>th</sup> February 2024 at 7.30pm.