

APPROVED AND SIGNED 16 January 2023

05/12/22

Summonses to the meeting of Sampford Peverell Parish Council to be held in the committee room at the Memorial Hall, Lower Town on 5 December 2022, starting at 7.00 pm, were distributed with the agenda and posted on the website on 28 November 2022.

Minutes of the Meeting of Sampford Peverell Parish Council held on 5 December 2022

Present:

Councillors Cutts (Chairman), Castle, O'Connell and Taylor and S McGeever (Clerk).

Cllr Cutts opened the meeting and welcomed those present. The meeting was primarily to discuss finances and set the precept for 2023/24.

2022/23/007/1 - Public Open Forum

No members of the public were present.

2022/23/007/2 - Apologies

Apologies had been received from Councillors Burt, Culpin, Perks and Williams.

Being a finance meeting only, Councillors Norton and Collis (MDDC) and Radford (DCC) were not required to be in attendance.

2022/23/007/3 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

2022/23/007/4 – Approval of the Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 21 November 2022

It was RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 21 November 2022 were a true record of proceedings and they were duly signed by the Chairman. There were no matters arising from those minutes.

2022/23/007/5 - Planning matters

22/01688/MOUT – variations to conditions

Councillor Culpin had reported via email that the MDDC Planning Committee had voted to allow the variations to the conditions so that the road changes did not have to be completed until the first house was occupied. It was a disappointing result.

22/00156/NEWDEV

New Street Names at Development at Higher Town, Sampford Peverell

Discussion had taken place via email on the choice of names for the new streets at the Higher Town development. Of the names put forward, it was RESOLVED that Sampford Peverell Parish Council would request the names Sheep's Nose, Pippin and Fair Maid.

This decision would be conveyed to MDDC Planning.

2022/23/007/6 – Finance

a) Review of accounts to 30/10/2022

The Clerk had produced a cashbook spreadsheet showing receipts and payments for the current and reserve bank accounts.

Each month reconciled to the bank statements and showed a 6-month picture of the accounts.

The Chairman thanked the Clerk for presenting the figures in this way. The spreadsheet would be updated monthly to give an ongoing picture of income and expenditure.

It was RESOLVED to approve the figures presented.

b) Review of budgets 2014-2022

The Clerk had produced a spreadsheet of the budget figures for the period 2014-2022 from the information available from the minutes and the accounts for these years. It gave a picture of income and expenditure over the past eight years.

The Chairman thanked the Clerk for presenting the figures in this way and appreciated the time took to put the information together from the website.

The figures for 2022 gave the budget figure, the amount spent at the six-month period and the projected spend for the year 2022/23. There were variations in the budget and projected expenditure mostly due to the costs of the public conveniences and the utilities required.

It was noted that the Clerk had worked over and above the hours provided for in the contract. The number of hours had been set in discussion with the previous clerk and the Parish Council appreciated that given the limited amount of information provided by the previous Clerk and the need to bring the Parish Council in line with statutory requirements additional work had been required.

Considering the extra hours, it was agreed that the Clerk's salary would be increased by 25% (£1000) to £5000 per annum effective from 1 December 2022. In addition, the recommended national pay increase would also become effective from 1 December 2022 which based on the Clerk's actual hours would be £450 making the new salary £5450.00.

These changes would be reflected in the year end figures for 2022 and in the budget for 2022/23. It was hoped that by the financial year end many of the processes and files would be in place and the number of hours worked would be more in line with the hours first contracted.

c) Review of budgets 2022-2026

The Clerk had produced a spreadsheet of the budget figures to the period 2022-2026 to provide a view of current and ongoing costs. The figures had several changes in the cost sectors to reflect the current projects and ongoing work of the Parish Council. The costs had been provided for as general costs which would include the ongoing opening and cleaning of the public conveniences and probable costs for tree works and maintenance of parish council property.

The predicted budget expenditure for 2024/25 and 2025/26 was based on current activities and financial commitments with a percentage increase in line with current predicted inflation rates.

Following discussion, it was agreed to make the following adjustments to the proposed budget:

Clerk's salary	from £4500	to £5450
Opening/closing and cleaning of the public conveniences	from £3890	to £4500
Toilet cleaning materials	from £ 110	to £ 250
Grass cutting	from £1500	to £2000

It was felt unlikely that the Election Provision would be required but it was a necessary budget item for 2023/24.

The figures would be updated to updated to show the changes in the Clerk's salary.

The item Station Bin as yet had not expenditure and it might be that the billing would come through from MDDC during the current financial year.

With these amendments, it was RESOLVED to accept the budget expenditure figures.

d) Review of proposed precept calculation

The Clerk had produced a spreadsheet showing the precept over the period 2014-2022/23. Based on the budgetary figures, the Clerk had calculated the precept at £17151, an increase of just over 8%.

Given the increased potential expenditure for 2023, it was RESOLVED that the precept level would be set at £17451 which represented a 10% increase. Any shortfall could be covered by the Parish Council reserves.

Given that the accounts were now being presented as spreadsheets and that there were reserves available, it was agreed that the Parish Council would benefit from the ability to put such spreadsheets and planning documentation onto a screen.

It was RESOLVED to purchase a projector for use at Parish Council meetings. It was noted that Amazon currently had several offers on projectors.

Action: Clerk to research and advise

e) VAT reimbursements

The Clerk had prepared a paper outlining the advice of the Devon Association of Local Council's VAT advisor (attached).

The Parish Council also considered the letter from the Village Hall accountants and took note of the practices that they had inherited and had been in place since 2014.

Weighing up all the information received and considering the broader picture, it was felt that repayment of any VAT would decimate the organisations involved and for the good of the village these organisations should continue.

The Parish Council RESOLVED that they would abide with past practice for the year ending 31 March 2022 but that they would not continue with the practice going forward. This decision would be conveyed to the those concerned. The Clerk's concerns over this course of action were noted.

The Clerk was asked to prepare cheques for payment of the VAT reclaimed on behalf of the Village Hall and associated organisations.

- f) Review of Clerk's hours and National Pay Rise
See items 6 b) and c) above.
- g) Internal Audit
A report of the requirements of an internal audit had been submitted to all Parish Councillors by the Clerk together with correspondence regarding the services offered by MicroshadeVSM.

The Clerks' recommendation was to appoint a qualified internal auditor for the year 2022/23.

Given the VAT situation, and the fact that this had not been picked up by the current internal auditor in previous years, it was RESOLVED to utilise the services of the existing auditor for 2022/23.

A qualified internal auditor would be appointed for the year 2023/24.

- h) Financial Provision for the 2023 May elections
A provision for the elections had been agreed in the budget for 2023/24.
- i) Review of quotes for tree works at the Tennis courts
The quotes received for the above-mentioned tree works were reviewed. It was RESOLVED to utilise Four Seasons to undertake the work.

It was noted that the trees were within the conservation area and as advised by Mid Devon District Council, a notification of the proposed works would need to be submitted to MDDC through the planning portal.

Action: Clerk

- j) Grant requests
The grant requests received were for the 2023/24 financial year and would be considered and/or approved at the May 2023 meeting.

Given the next Parish Council meeting was not until January, the following prior approved payments were made:

P Bowers (Christmas Tree)	£ 22.50
B O'Connell (opening, closing and cleaning of the public convenience)	£1143.00
S McGeever (November salary)	£ 333.33
Sampford Peverell Village Hall (hire charges for meetings)	£ 30.00

2022/23/007/7 – Review of Standing Orders and Core Documents

- a) Financial Regulations
The Clerk had prepared and circulated a set of Financial Regulations based on the template available for use by Parish Councils. The document covered all the requirements some of which were not required by Sampford Peverell Parish Council such as procedures for the use of credit or debit cards.

There were several sections where the Parish Council needed to agree the financial limit within a clause and it was RESOLVED to include the following amounts:

- 1.14. £100
- 4.1. £100 in all cases
- 4.5. £250
- 4.8. £100 or 15%
- 11.1. a) v) £250
- 11.1. h) a) £10,000
- 14.2. £250

The duly updated Financial Regulations would be published on the website.

b) Asset register

The Clerk had prepared a revised asset register to include all the items owned by the Parish Council and purchased from 2014.

As had been advised, this also included the lands and property where the Parish Council was the Custodian Trustee. The value of such assets was given as £0. It was noted that the Parish Council was the joint policy holder for the insurance for such assets.

Further work was required to identify the sections of land allocated to the Playing Area and Tennis Courts.

Councillor Taylor undertook to provide the serial numbers for the defibrillators.

It was RESOLVED that once the above to items had been added, the updated Asset Register would be published on the website.

2022/23/007/8 - Any other matters by leave of the Chairman or the delegate Chair

Councillor Taylor raised the question of the funding for replacing the batteries for the defibrillators.

It was noted that there was funding designated for their maintenance in the Parish Council reserves. However, Devon County Council Locality Budgets were currently open and Councillor Taylor undertook to contact Councillor Radford to see if he would approve a grant.

2022/23/007/9 - Next meeting of the Parish Council

The date of the next meeting of the Parish Council was:

16 January 2023 at 7pm in the Committee Room of the Memorial Hall

Signed _____ Date _____