

NORTH CRAWLEY PARISH COUNCIL

Notes on Budget Meeting held on Monday 29 November 2021 in the Institute

Present: Councillors Steve Garner (in the Chair), Sue Garner, Cuca Hold and Terry Smith;
Sheila Bushnell (Clerk and RFO)

Apologies: Councillors Baxter, Harpur and Weatherley

The meeting had been called to discuss the budget for 2022/2023 and to consider possible activities to be carried out by the Parish Council during 2021/2022 and beyond.

The Clerk had previously circulated a spreadsheet detailing the current financial position and the outturn for the end of the financial year on 31 March 2022.

Following consideration of each budget heading, it was decided that some of the headings would remain at the same level for the next financial year, with the exception of the following:

EXPENDITURE:

- **Landscape contract:** Increased from £4,750 to £5,500. The contract with RTM Landscapes had expired and this year the PC was in a contract extension under the same agreement. The decision had already been made to go out to tender for the contract from April 2022. Documents had not yet been sent out but it was hoped that this would be done before Christmas or in January to enable a new contract to be in place from April 2022.
- **Seat Maintenance/Replacement:** Andy Gresty had made a good start on refurbishing seats and had received reimbursement for materials so far. When he started this voluntary work, he indicated that a donation to his chosen charity would be appreciated in lieu of payment. This donation has not yet been made. It was agreed that an amount of £100 would be donated to a Diabetes charity in acknowledgement of the number of benches refurbished to date. An amount of £500 would be included in next year's budget for further refurbishment of benches and seats
- **Notice Boards:** A budget of £100 was included in 2022 to allow for the refurbishment of the notice board on the Institute wall.
- **Emptying Dog Bins contract and Village Warden Equipment:** These two headings did not appear in the current budget. The invoice from Marcus Young Environmental for the dog bin emptying service was due in January. An amount of £1,200 was included in the 2022 budget plus an amount of £100 for Village Warden equipment.
- **War Memorial maintenance:** The amount in the budget for next year was reduced to £100 to include the costs of the Village Warden carrying out light cleaning.
- **Playground equipment and maintenance:** It was agreed that the amount included in the 2022 budget would be based on the quotation for adventure park maintenance received from Sovereign for a three year period. There would be a charge of £719.76 (reduced from £770 if paid by Direct Debit) which would be paid in two instalments, one for £360 which will be due around November 2022 and another payment of the same amount around November 2023. There was also an additional charge for zip wire re-tensioning that was not included in the standard maintenance contract due to this work being a specialised service. The cost of each zipwire re-tension was £180 and it seemed that this was usually necessary around every 6-12 months depending on usage. It was agreed that £1,020 would be included in next year's budget made up as follows: £360 maintenance contract plus £360 (2 x £180 for re-tensioning) plus another nominal amount of £300 in respect of anticipated maintenance charges for the children's play park to be installed in March 2022.

POST MEETING NOTE: The Clerk has discovered that the Direct Debit can be taken monthly at a cost of 29.99 per month which would start around November 2022 (first year is “free”) and the zip wire tensioning is actually £449 per tension rather than £180. An adjustment will therefore be needed to the amount agreed for next year’s budget.

- **Defibrillator:** A new budget heading was added as the defibrillator was now at the end of the seven year guarantee and consumables had to be purchased. An amount of £212 was included in the budget for new pads and possibly a battery.
- **Churchyard General Maintenance:** The amount in the budget was reduced from £1,500 to £500.
- **Churchyard Management:** The Clerk reported that she thought it would be advisable to have a computer software solution to manage the cemetery. At the moment, the only electronic records were based on random spreadsheets and Word documents which had no connection with each other. She recommended the software from Rialtas, who also provided the PC finance software, as this would enable cross-referencing of all aspects of the records, e.g. searching by name, date, plot, memorial number, exclusive right number, etc. Memorials could also be managed which would be useful for recording health and safety inspections and actions taken as a result. The software would not replace the existing handwritten ledgers as it was important that they were continued as historical documents; however, if these ledgers were to be damaged or destroyed in some way, there would be no reliable or complete back-up of the information. Approval was given to purchase this software which would be used immediately going forward and the historical information would then be added to form the complete record. The cost of the installation, set up and 3 hours of training and first year licence and support was £1,022. For subsequent years the cost would be £197.
- **Clerk’s and Village Warden’s salaries:** A 5% uplift has been included as an estimate of an anticipated nationally-agreed Cost of Living increase from April 2022. The Clerk mentioned whether the rate of pay for the Clerk/RFO was competitive against similar posts and it was agreed that this would be investigated.
- **Website maintenance and email addresses:** A commitment was included for invoices which were expected in February/March 2022 (£50 10 x email addresses; £500 website annual support and £125 2-year renewal of domain name registration to 2024). An amount of £550 was agreed for the 2022 budget for email addresses and website support.
- **Insurance:** Insurance cost had increased due to the adventure play park because of the value of the equipment and also increased public liability cover for the zip wire. The increase in the premium is £311.58 and the pro rata amount to be paid immediately was £195.49 so this was committed expenditure for the current year. The insurance premium for next year had been quoted at £994.25 but an amount of £1,200 was agreed for the 2022 budget in anticipation that the premium would increase again when the children’s play equipment was installed in March 2022.
- **Bank Account and Barclaycard service charge:** Following the opening of the Unity Trust Bank account and also acquiring a Barclaycard, this was a new budget heading and the amount agreed was £72.
- **IT Equipment:** The Dell laptop support subscription and the McAfee computer virus protection fee that were paid in the current year were valid until April 2025 and April 2023 respectively and were therefore not included in the 2022 budget. An amount of £95 was included as a commitment in the current year for Microsoft Office and the same amount in the budget for next year.
- **SCAN donation:** It was agreed that this would be increased from £200 to £250.

INCOME:

There were no material changes made to the Income budget for 2022/23.

EXPENDITURE ON COMMUNITY EVENTS:

It was agreed that £2,000 would be included in the 2022/23 made up as follows:

Fun Day	£750
Queen's Platinum Jubilee event	£750
Talent Show	£250
Horticultural element to Fun Day	£250

EXPENDITURE ON PLAY PARK:

The following was agreed:

Cricket protection netting: An amount of £2,000 would be contributed towards the cost of the protective netting

Benches in children's play area: The current seats could no longer be used as they were too big for the new layout. It was hoped that they would be re-located. It was agreed that an amount of £540 would be contributed by the PC towards the cost of these benches.

SMB/4.12.21