

CITY OF DURHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of the Parish Council Finance Committee held on Tuesday 21st June 2022 at 10:00am in the Clayport Library meeting room

Present: Councillors A Doig, V Ashfield and D Freeman

Also present: Parish Clerk A Shanley

Cllr A Doig in the **Chair**

1. Election of Chair of the Finance Committee

Cllr A Doig was elected as Vice-Chair of the Finance Committee. Proposed by Cllr D Freeman and seconded by Cllr V Ashfield.

2. Election of Vice-Chair of the Finance Committee

Cllr D Freeman was elected as Vice-Chair of the Finance Committee. Proposed by Cllr A Doig and seconded by Cllr V Ashfield.

3. Welcome and apologies

Apologies were received from Cllrs L Brown and H Weston.

4. To receive any declarations of interest from members

Cllr V Ashfield declared an interest into the grant application from St. Nicholas Church. Members **agreed** to grant Cllr V Ashfield a dispensation on this item so that a quorum of Members might vote on this particular application.

5. To receive and approve as a correct record the minutes of the meeting on 11th January 2022

The minutes of the meeting held on 11th January 2022 were unanimously **agreed** as a true and accurate record of proceedings.

6. To receive any public participation comments on the following agenda items.

None received.

7. Report on current financial position of the Council 2022-23

The Clerk provided the following report to the Committee on the current financial position of the Council:

After a total expenditure of £198,951 during financial year 2021/22, the Parish Council started the current financial year with £82,920.16, this includes the Parish Council's reserves which remain at £45,000 – an appropriate level of reserves based on national guidance.

In January 2022, Full Council agreed an ambitious programme of work for this financial year, with expenditure thereof totalling £183,100 with a contingency fund – in addition to reserves - of £15,000 for unforeseen expenditure during the year. As we've seen in all years of the Parish Councils existence, this is an important provision for the Parish Council.

In addition to this budget, the Council also agreed to freeze the precept once more and – taking into account an increase in our tax base as a parish – this generated a precept of £156,737.17.

To date, following the two pay runs in April and May, expenditure to date totals £34,369.41. The pay run for June will take place later this week.

In all but a few projects identified in this year's budget, I can see us spending all of the allocated funding. I'll highlight those area where I think there is room for manoeuvre when we come to look at the grants item.

The Parish Council is therefore set to finish the financial year with only reserves carried over. This is important to remember given that expenditure has averaged £180,000 each year the Council has been active and the underspend from the first year of the Council has been used to keep the precept frozen.

The £4,101.36 paid to the Parish Council in May was the refund from the Section 106 Ruth First mural project.

The £100 banked on 15th June was a cash payment made to me in person by Allan Cooke for the hiring of the Jubilee beacon.

Earlier this year, the Parish Council agreed to provide emergency funding of £10,000 towards the Safety of Women at Night (SWaN) hub and this came out of our grant budget for this financial year, thus leaving £5,000 for this priority.

The Parish Council will undergo an external audit from the end of this month for 2021/22. The internal audit highlighted no issues and the Parish Council was once again commended for excellent governance and management.

End of report

8. Consideration of the allocation of grant funding to local community and voluntary organisations in the parish for 2022/23

Members **agreed** the grant allocations for local community and voluntary organisations to go forward for approval at Full Council in June 2022 as follows:

Organisation	Project details	Amount requested	Amount agreed by the Finance Committee
Durham Hospital Radio	To fund continued improvements to the Durham Hospital Radio studios to improve the functionality for the presenters enabling social media and other software to be used in conjunction with live shows. Also, some installed computers need hardware upgrades to allow moving systems to Windows 11.	£1,200	£0

Sixth Form Centre	<p>A grant is required to support and extend our community programme offer into 2023. Following the success of our ongoing pilot programme launched in April 2022, we have gained valuable experience and significant positive feedback from participants. Including:</p> <p><i>'Friendly, accessible and welcoming - I loved it!', 'Engaging content! Thank you for arrangement and planning' and 'Great value. Very exciting - loved the collaborative exercise, fun and very creative.'</i></p> <p>Initially we have commissioned AiRs past and present to deliver either one-off workshops or a series of classes, supported by our arts development officer. Each workshop or block of classes covers a specialist art form, so far including ceramics, ink drawing, digital illustration and drawing.</p> <p>We hope to commission a new programme of classes to launch in Spring 2023. We will continue to work with our AiRs and extend partnerships with cultural organisations and individuals to deliver specialist sessions such as photography and life drawing.</p> <p>By Spring 2023 our new community arts space and gallery will be complete and will be a base for this community work. We hope to reach out into new community groups and invite people to take part in our programme of activities.</p>	£2,000	£1,000
ERA	<p>Re-painting and enhancement of both sides of the brick 'football' wall in St Oswald's playpark (Church St, Elvet). The front side will be repainted with appropriate images for play (e.g. goalposts, targets), and the rear side repainted with a mural depicting by local historical themes: an image of the 'Dun Cow', with a frame inspired by miners' banners. Community artist Lewis Hobson (www.facebook.com/DurhamSprayPaints) has created an outline design, and (if the project goes ahead) will work with residents and with pupils at St Oswald's Primary to develop it. (See attached document for images.) He will also be responsible for carrying out the painting work.</p>	£1,263	£1,000

Harbour	<p style="text-align: center;">Stronger Together</p> <p>This is a new project we want to launch to support the family members of the clients we help. We have recognised that there is no practical support for immediate family or even close friends of the clients who are using our service. Whilst our clients get emotional support and practical advice from us, when in an abusive relationship or after leaving an abusive relationship, it can often be difficult on the parents, siblings and adult children. As those people have not been direct victims of abuse they are not eligible for support within our service but it has become clear that they often do need some form of support. We want to offer a monthly group session so they can offload, have a contact within Harbour to ask or seek advice and guidance.</p> <p>Initially we will deliver this service via Teams, but in the longer term we want to deliver this locally, face to face in a friendly environment, we therefore need to cover staffing costs, venue costs as well as refreshments. We will also need to cover costs to promote this new service across the area. We have a staff member who is willing to deliver this service, as additional hours to her usual working hours, therefore no additional training costs are needed. She is a fully qualified Counsellor and Support worker so has all relevant skills and tools needed to facilitate this project. It will be supported by the Service Manager and organised and managed by an admin officer. We have had some funding to deliver this in the Tees Valley area but would like to reach our Durham clients also.</p>	£1,000	£1,000
Merryoaks WI	To purchase a further microphone enabling each speaker to have their own avoiding the need to share. To purchase a full Zoom subscription to allow speakers from elsewhere in the country and to enable us to hold hybrid meetings, making us fully inclusive.	£250	£250

St Cuthberts Hospice	<p>Our gardens provide much needed sensory stimulation and therapeutic benefit to our patients and their families.</p> <p>Funds from the City of Durham Parish Council will be used to improve accessibility around the Hospice grounds and enhance experience for all who visit our gardens through improvements and essential repairs. Your donation will be used to pay for tools, equipment, plants and furniture.</p> <p>As a result of these funds and improvements, we will be able to remain a welcoming, peaceful and accessible environment for our patients, families and visitors, through innovation and repair. Over a 12 month period we expect that 1,000 patients and their families will be able to enjoy the therapeutic value of nature within our grounds.</p> <p>Gardening Supplies = £1,750 Grounds Maintenance = £2,500</p>	£4,250	£1,750
St Margarets Centre	<p>A new course has been arranged in joinery and wood working skills in order that participants can earn a certificate issued by the centre describing exactly the level of skill that has been achieved by the production of actual articles made and produced on the course. For example, joints, rebates, hinge and lock settings, routing etc. This application is specifically for the purchase of a new Bandsaw and the purchase of materials where the costs have escalated for the purchase of both soft and hard wood.</p>	£3,000	£3,000
St Nics Church	<p>To help fulfil our aims of serving the community and acting as an eco-church we need to reclaim the church's graveyard which has been neglected (and desecrated) over the last 10 years. We want to turn it into a heritage rest and recuperation area potentially with mini-allotments for older residents to use and designated picnic and meeting areas and areas for rest and contemplation.</p>	£3,200	£3,200
Total		£16,163	£11,200

Members **approved** the following amendments to the Environment Committee's budget in order to accommodate grant applications for this financial year.

The budget for an OASES/ school project was reduced from £3,000 to £1,000.

The budgets for both celebrating plastic free businesses and community composting project were reduced from £1,000 to £0.

Members also **agreed** to move £2,200 from the contingency fund of the Council.

9. Dates of future meetings

The Chair advised that he would contact Members with the date of future meetings.

There being no further business, the Chair thanked Members for their attendance and contributions and closed the meeting.

Signed,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large, stylized initial 'A' followed by a smaller, more fluid signature, all written over a horizontal line.

**Chair of the Parish Council Finance Committee
(22nd November 2022)**