

An Extraordinary Meeting of the Parish Council was held on Monday the 23rd day of JANUARY 2023 at the Royal British Legion, Long Lane, commencing 7.30 pm, to discuss issues relating to pay reviews and the 2023/24 budget.

COUNCILLORS PRESENT: Messrs Rayner (Chair), Cock, Cole, Fenn and Lambert, Mrs Arnold, Mrs McGeeney, Mrs Peckham and Mrs Wilson.

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: Apologies were received from Mrs Bane and Mr Storey.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST: Mrs Wilson declared an interest in Item 2.

PUBLIC SPEAKING: There were no members of the public present.

1. **Pay Reviews** – Pay rates of the Litter Collector and Handyman, who had not had a pay increase for the last two years, were reviewed. The Clerk advised the National Living Wage was increasing to £10.42/hour in April. Mrs Peckham felt both employees should earn the same, stating the Litter Picker works routinely in all weathers whereas the Handyman is on a zero-hour contract and sometimes has no work to undertake at all, and therefore proposed increasing both employees' wages to £11/hour from April 2023, Mrs Wilson seconded, all in favour. Clerk to advise Litter Collector and Handyman.

2. **Budget 2023/24** – Clerk produced a financial report stating the carryover amount was forecast to be approximately £19,000. The following items were discussed:- **Wages:** Chair said increases in wages including the Clerk's needed to be accounted for; **Election Costs:** Chair said these would range from £2000-£2500 if uncontested, more if contested, although Borough elections were also taking place, therefore costs could be shared; **Grass Maintenance:** Clerk said she had received four quotations so far and an increase of at least £1000 on last year's contract should be budgeted for. Chair said he was also expecting the Borough Council to reduce the number of grass cuts; **Planters:** £1000 had already been allocated to purchase four planters; **Coronation:** Mrs Wilson said Feltwell Community Group had decided not to proceed with a large-scale event for the King's Coronation in May due to vast cost increases in sound, security etc amounting to a total sum in the region of £12,000 which was not just viable therefore no donation was being sought. They would instead use their funds to finance a street party at the playing field and a fete later in the year; **Allotments:** Allotment upkeep costs (spraying, cultivating etc) were difficult to account for but a budget of £1000 was agreed. Mrs Peckham suggested the Allotment Committee consider increasing garden allotment rent to cover rising costs and said even though the farm allotments bring in £5000, the expenditure was mainly on garden allotments. Mr Lambert said this subject was currently being considered by the Committee; **Church Clockface Revamp:** Chair had only received one quotation at over £10,000 and was still awaiting two more prices. Mr Lambert asked if an application to the CIL Project Fund could be made but Chair said a previous application was queried by the CIL Officer regarding donations made to the Church. Alternatively, he said the Church could apply directly for this; **War Memorial Garden:** Mr Cock felt this work should take precedence over the church clock as the garden belonged to the Parish Council. Mrs Peckham felt the revamp could be achieved via a CIL Project grant match-funded by CIL monies already available and therefore shouldn't be precepted for, all agreed. Chair said the War Memorial itself also needed attention; **Electricity:** Mr Lambert said his biggest concern was rising electricity costs as street light energy costs had doubled over the last year. He said electric costs for the Changing Rooms were also extortionate last month but Mrs Peckham said this was due to the extreme low temperatures as the Football Club had not utilised the Changing Rooms during this period. **Conclusion:** Chair said these increases amounted to a village running cost of over £50,000, about £10,000 up from 2022/23. Mr Cock said the precept had not increased for the last two years and the Parish Council did have to recognise these rising expenses. Mr Lambert proposed increasing the precept to £45,000, Mrs Peckham seconded, all in favour.

MINUTE 1771

PLANNING

There were no planning applications.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

3. Memorial Bench High Street – Mr Lambert said the bench is now ready to be painted and queried whether it should be hand-painted or sprayed. It was felt by all that it should be sprayed therefore Clerk to obtain prices ready for the next Parish Council meeting.

Meeting closed at 8.30 pm.
