

Minutes of Meeting on 19th October 2023
Elmstead Parish Council – Finance Committee
Community Centre, School Road, Elmstead Market, CO7 7ET

Present: Councillors Martine Ward (Chairman), Amanda Brennan, James Chable and Michael Hare.

Mrs Baxter (clerk)

Absent: Councillor Gill Williams

23/027 Apologies of Absence

Councillor Gill Williams sent her apologies.

23/028 Declaration of Pecuniary Interests and Personal Interests

None.

23/029 To agree the Minutes of the meeting of 24th July 2023.

It was resolved to accept the minutes from 24th July 2023 as true and accurate.

Proposed: Cllr Brennan, Seconded: Cllr Ward, all in favour.

23/030 2023/23 Second Quarter Review

To review the expenditure for the second quarter of 2023/24 against the set budget. Also, to consider the reserves.

The committee reviewed the second quarter expenditure; The wages, expenses, communication, insurance and office cost centres were all within budget. Training was underspent and it was discussed that having the training in Great Dunmow put people off attending. Subscriptions will be slightly over budget once the TDALC membership is paid as the EALC and SLCC fees were higher than anticipated.

Under general maintenance it was discussed that we need to budget more for the mower.

The cost of the service was higher than budgeted and there were unexpected mower hire costs when the council mower was out of service. Similarly, we'll need to increase the budget for general maintenance under the Recreational/Open Space cost centre.

The clerk is to ask the handyman if there has been less fly tipping into the waste bin at the community centre.

The overspend on the community centre hire was due to additional meetings held.

For professional fees we'll need to increase the budget next year.

There has been no expenditure under Speedwatch yet, this is the annual cost of servicing the speed gun, but Cllr Hare reported that the police will be providing us with a new one. The police think that our current speed gun is on loan from them, Cllr Hare is to let them know this is not the case.

Street lighting, grants and publicity are all within budget. There is £200 left in the grants budget which could go towards Essex Air Ambulance. This is to go onto a council agenda.

There were expenses relating to the Garden Community but no budget, so they were paid out of general reserves.

The Neighbourhood Plan and Neighbourhood Development Order are nearly done, and the majority of expenses are paid by grants from Groundwork UK.

Events was fine, with 2 of the cost codes being supported by grants and donations.

The committee reviewed the reserves. The general reserve will need to increase going forward.

23/031 2024/25 Budget

To consider a draft budget for 2024/25.

The draft budget was reviewed and discussed, and changes made.

The clerk is to look into maintenance for the flagpole as it's getting difficult to use.

The reserve for the mower was discussed and the annual budget for it was increased in order to have the fund to purchase a replacement when necessary. The clerk is to check the

Signature

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mower's working hours. Cllr Chable will research mowers. It was asked if we can use s106 money towards a new mower, the clerk is to check.

A reserves budget for a trailer was added, as the current one is nearing the end of its life span.

A final draft budget was agreed for recommendations to the council with expenditure of £70,837, income of £7,828 and a net expenditure of £63,009. As the tax base was unknown the impact of potential precept amounts can be discussed at the January PC meeting when that information is available.

It was discussed that the general reserve is low at £20,769 and it would be advisable to start building it up.

23/032 Date for next meeting.

The next meeting will be to review the third quarter 23/24 expenditure, so will be in January unless an additional meeting is required to agree the budget.

A provisional date of Friday 12th January at 12pm was set.

23/033 Matters raised by Councillors for the next agenda or for information only.

None.

23/034 Verification of Bank Reconciliations

A member to verify the 2nd Quarter 23/24 bank reconciliations.

This is done after the meeting.

The meeting closed at 2.08pm. Minuted by Mrs. A Baxter
Contact: elmsteadparish@gmail.com

Signature

Date