



WOMBOURNE PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE MEETING BUDGET AND PRECEPT SETTING

held on **Monday 26th January 2023** at 7.30pm

This meeting was held in the Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Gravel Hill, Wombourne, WV5 9HA

Present – Committee Members-

Councillors: Barry Bond MBE, Mike Davies (Vice-Chairman), Jan Evans, Mark Evans, Dan Kinsey BEM, Vince Merrick, Martin Perry, Mary Roberts (Chairman), Daisy Tait

Present – Non-Committee Members- Councillors: Elizabeth Keeling, Alan Peace

Absent without apologies – N/A

Clerk – Rachael Wright

Members of the public – N/A

06/23 – Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillors John Pike and Robert Reade.

07/23 – Declarations of Interest

Councillor Dan Kinsey BEM declared an interest in Wombourne Best Kept Village Committee and Wombourne and District Community Association, Councillors Alan Peace and Mary Roberts declared the same interests and in addition Wombourne Carnival Committee.

08/23 – Approval of last Committee Meeting minutes from 16th January 2023

Members approved the minutes of the last meeting.

09/23 – Matters arising from 16th January 2023

None

10/23 – Budget and Precept 2023/2024

The Chairman apologised for Members having to come together for a second time to review the budget, and explained when the Clerk checked through the budget spreadsheet following the last meeting, the sub totals did not include a couple of lines within the budget, and therefore was not correct. However, the positive of meeting again is that firm quotations have been sought for roof and window work at the Civic Centre so accurate figures have been able to be used now.

Unfortunately, the roof work on the Council Chamber building will amount to £76,789 plus the fee for Baillie Kerr of circa £6,500, which coupled with the updated window repairs of £2,214 for the initial repairs and £2,066 for the secondary repairs mean if the budget remained the same as what was agreed on 16th January 2023, the precept increase would have to go from 19% to 61%.

The Clerk explained she had spoken to the Surveyor at Bailie Kerr who had confirmed that the roof work could be split into two projects, so the Parish Council could just deal with the section above Goode Tutoring which is causing an immediate issue within this budget. Budgeting 75% of the overall cost should deal with the quotation, plus any ancillary items and any immediate repairs required on the second section of the roof above the Council Chamber.

By splitting the work into two projects, completing the first half in the current financial year, and the following half in 2024/2025 financial year, it would bring the precept down from 61% to 51%.

Members agreed to review further items which could come out of the budget, and agreed to remove budget headings for noticeboards (£200), Parish flag (£100), grants to community groups (£500), health and safety equipment (£100), community events including Small Business Saturday (£500), new office equipment (£100), King's Coronation (£8,000), Grapevine ad (£140), refreshments (£25), Youth Café (£500) and earmarked reserves for closed churchyards (£50). Taking these items out meant the increase went from 51% to 46%.

It was noted that in the current financial year 2022/2023, the Parish Council would be taking £74,657 from general reserves to balance the budget, leaving just £71,348, in reserves.

Members agreed that they were unable to continue to subsidise the precept using reserves, as there was less left now than what they would be taking out this year. Their own reserve policy states they will keep 50% of last year's precept in reserves (i.e. £119,368), and NALC guidance suggests holding 3 to 12 months expenditure in reserves. An increase of 46% would mean reserves of £119,135.87, equivalent to 3.5 months expenditure.

It was acknowledged the Parish Council hold a large portfolio of buildings including the Civic Centre, Council Chamber and offices, public toilets, and changing rooms at Brickbridge Playing Fields and provide other assets in the village which requiring maintaining, and therefore they needed to have funds to meet unexpected and/or uninsured costs. They should also be able to meet any expenditure not budgeted for such as long term sickness or maternity cover, or another lockdown situation where staff costs were not met by a furlough scheme, but building costs still remained.

Councillor Daisy Tait proposed a 46% increase on the precept from 2022/2023. Councillor Mike Davies seconded the proposal and all Members were in favour.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Parish Council would request a precept of £348,555, which equated to £66.55 for band D properties, an increase of £20.26 per annum, or £1.28 per week which is an increase of £39p per week from 2022/2023.

The agreed summary figures were:

<u>INCOME</u>	Budgeted 22/23	Total Actual to 30.11.22	Projected to 31.3.23	Total Forecast 22/23	Proposed Budget 2023/24
Parish council	239,654	240,543	957	241,501	239,748
Civic Centre	63,752	79,736	33,546	113,282	137,101
Recreation and Amenities	4,200	1,415	0	1,415	1,000
Gross income (A)	307,606	321,694	34,503	356,198	377,849

<u>EXPENDITURE</u>	Budgeted 22/23	Total Actual to 30.11.22	Projected to 31.3.23	Total Forecast 22/23	Proposed Budget 2023/24
Parish council	223,936	161,878	85,073	246,951	257,627
Civic Centre	143,769	87,658	97,224	174,189	148,088
Recreation and Amenities	21,400	7,583	15,585	23,168	20,711
	Budgeted 22/23	Total Actual to 30.11.22	Projected to 31.3.23	Total Forecast 22/23	Proposed Budget 2023/24
Gross Expenditure (B)	389,105	257,119	197,882	444,308	426,426
Surplus (A-B)	-81,499	-64,575	-163,379	-88,111	-48,577

The recommendation to be put forward to Full Council from the Committee will be a budget of £426,426 be set for 2023/2024 and a precept of £348,555 be requested from the South Staffordshire Council.

The meeting closed at 8.05pm.

Signed:

Dated: