

SANDIACRE PARISH COUNCIL

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Minutes of the Finance Committee meeting held on Tuesday, 28 November 2023 at 7pm in the Memorial Institute, 19a Doncaster Avenue, Sandiacre, Derbyshire NG10 5FJ

PRESENT: Cllr W Major (Chairman)
Cllr S Bilbie
Cllr Mrs S Hales
Cllr G Hales
Cllr G Hickton
Cllr Mrs G Hickton
A Cllr T Sanghera

IN ATTENDANCE: Mrs M Bloor - Clerk to the Council

MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC: None

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

1. APOLOGIES AND APPROVAL OF ABSENCES

Apologies received from Cllr Sanghera due to work commitments.

2. TO RECEIVE DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

Councillor	Declared Interest
W Major	Personal interest: Memorial Institute Trustee & Cloudside Academy Governor
S Bilbie	Personal interest: Memorial Institute Trustee

3. TO CONSIDER REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATION

There were no requests for dispensation.

4. VARIATION OF ORDER OF BUSINESS

There were no variations of order of business.

5. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION SESSION

No items were raised.

6. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING

Minutes of the Finance Committee meeting held on Tuesday, 29 November 2022 were approved by full Council on 10 January 2023. Copies had been circulated for reference.

7. BUDGET MONITORING STATEMENT

The Clerk tabled 5 pages of financial reports to assist Councillors prepare the 2024/2025 budget. Each page was itemised and questions were invited.

EBC: Concurrent Functions (CF) Grant

Councillors gave careful consideration to EBC withdrawing £22,046 from 1/4/24 and the remaining £2,000 from 1/4/25, brought about by a change in control at EBC.

It was felt removal of such a large amount of funding and without due consultation, would have a significant impact on existing parish services if not recovered and added to the Precept.

Any shortfall in the 2024 budget would prevent service levels being maintained. It was considered essential to safeguard effective and reliable services for the parish that continued to provide excellent value for money.

Page 1. Comparisons

- Census 2021: Population: 9,100 / Households: 3,900
- Sandiacre is the largest of the PC's in Erewash with 14 Councillors
- For several years, it has had the lowest Band D charge: 23/24 = £1,978.49
- Sandiacre has the 4th highest Precept across the parishes: 23/24 = £60,785
- Ockbrook & Borrowash are shown to have the highest Precept: 23/24 = £126,527
- Some Parish Councils offer grants, but Sandiacre prioritises community services
- Parish Precept 2023/24 = Band D properties: £22.71 per year / 0.44 per week
- Proposed: 2024/25 = Band D properties: £36.05 per year / 0.69 per week
[Since confirmed by EBC: £35.74 per year / 0.69 per week]
- Proposed: 58.75% increase in Precept to £96,500 to recover removed CF grant and take into account increases in service costs and inflation
- With a strengthened Precept and a much reduced CF grant of £2,000 for 24/25, the proposed overall budget figure would require an increase of 16%

Page 2. Actual & Predicted income

Page 2. <u>Income</u>	• List of carry forward figures from 2017 to 2023 • Actual carry forward 2023 = £55,151.86 • Polling station admin costs ring-fenced: £2,000 per year over 4 years • Income received from 1/4/22 to 31/10/22: £100,775.72 • Estimated income for forthcoming financial year: £219,799.05 • Predicted Cemetery income 2022/23 = £15,591 • Recommended increase of 5% across Cemetery fees
Page 3. <u>Precept</u>	• An itemised list of Precept expenditure was considered in detail • Energy costs were increasing year on year • It was yet unknown if EBC was considering continuing the Summer play scheme grant of £1,200 to parishes. • Councillors felt it important that Sandiacre PC supported the scheme • Clerk's salary: 100% to be met through the Precept • The 2023 NJC salary pay scales had been agreed and the Clerk would receive an additional £1 per hour from 1/4/23 (Maximum of the pay scale). The 2024 rate was not yet known • It was noted the Parish Council did adopt NJC pay and conditions and arrears would be paid to the Clerk, as set out in the agreement • The Clerk confirmed she would seek outside grant funding to ease budget pressures over the coming year, including £92K for a footpath
Page 4. <u>Concurrent Functions</u>	• From 1/4/24, the CF grant from EBC would be reduced to £2,000 only • Fox Landscaping was contracted for grounds maintenance work on the parks, Cemetery and closed churchyards from 1/4/24 • Mr Wallace was under contract for Amenity Areas in the village centre • Mr Wallace had requested an extra 50p per hour from 1/4/24 for litter picking as fuel costs increased = £12.50 per hour

	The Clerk explained Mr Wallace and Mr Spencer could be called upon for litter picking and low level work and work was itemised each month on time sheets
Page 5.	- Predicted Cemetery fees to include a 5% increase (rounded up) - It was noted the Council relied on Cemetery fees to support services and there was grave space available for approximately 25 to 30 years
Page 6.	- Identified predicted income and potential outside grant funding (FCC £92K) 10.75% contribution by PC - Band D charge estimated for 2024 at £36.05 per annum [Actual 35.74] <u>Priority areas:</u> ➤ DARG: Repairs to play safety surfaces rubber matting ➤ Headstone testing Cemetery/Churchyards ➤ Replace 3 old wooden notice boards <u>Suggestions:</u> ➤ Introduce new Sandiacre PC Cemetery sign ➤ Springfield Park: Welcome to park sign ➤ Replace village sign opposite White Lion PH ➤ Retain regular maintenance of burial grounds (SS)

RESOLVED: to receive the financial reports presented, without amendment

8. CONCURRENT FUNCTIONS (CF) 2024/2025

Budget heading	2024/2025
Cemetery bin collection (EBC)	750.00
Cemetery water rates	200.00
Low level work (Vegetation clearance)	1,050.00
Total set by EBC from 1/4/24 with complete removal from 1/4/25	2,000.00

RESOLVED: unanimously, to agree to recommend to full Council a CF budget allocation of £2,000, as set by EBC with all additional work met through the Precept.

9. PRECEPT FOR THE PERIOD 1/4/24 TO 31/3/25

Each budget heading was itemised:

- Increase in Precept 58.75% from 1/4/24 to safeguard services following withdrawal of CF grant by EBC and allow for increases
- Band D charge from £22.71 to £36.05 **[Actual £35.74]** per year / 69p per week

RESOLVED: unanimously to recommend to full Council a Precept of £96,500

10. CEMETERY FEES FOR THE PERIOD: 1/4/24 TO 31/3/25

The proposed figures had been rounded up to show an overall increase of 5%.

RESOLVED: unanimously to recommend to full Council an increase of 5% from 1/4/24

11. DATE FOR RATIFICATION BY FULL COUNCIL

Tuesday, 9 January 2024 - SECOND TUESDAY IN THE MONTH

The meeting closed at 8.45pm

Signed by the Chairman: _____ Date: _____