

CITY OF DURHAM PARISH COUNCIL

DRAFT Minutes of the meeting of the Parish Council Finance Committee held on Thursday 12th January 2023 at 11:00am via Zoom.

Present: Councillors A Doig, V Ashfield, D Freeman and L Brown.

Also present: Parish Clerk A Shanley

Cllr A Doig in the **Chair**

1. Welcome and apologies

Apologies were received from Councillors G Nair and H Weston.

2. To receive any declarations of interest from members

None received.

3. To receive and approve as a correct record the minutes of the meeting on 22nd November 2022

The minutes of the meeting held on 22nd November 2022 were unanimously **agreed** as a true and accurate record of proceedings.

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

None received.

5. 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 Parish 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.

The Parish Council's expenditure to date totals £152,029.53 and based on our current projected cash flow, we are expected to finish this financial year with around £60,000 in the bank. 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.

In all but a few projects identified in this year's budget, I can see us spending all of the allocated funding.

I have produced a detailed Income & Expenditure by Budget Heading report. 6025 to be moved to 4300 of £200.

There are a number of large invoices for January – Durham in Bloom. Should just make you aware that the Planning and Licensing Committee may have a proposal for Magistrates Court depending on STACK.

End of report

Committee Members thanked the Clerk for his work and his report.

6. Consideration of budgets from Committees

The Committee unanimously **agreed** the following budgets for each Committee to go forward as a recommended budget for 2023-24:

Planning and Licensing Committee

Item of potential expenditure	Cost (£)
PRIORITY 1: Representing the parish on planning and licensing matters	
Professional support in responding to planning applications and licensing hearings	5,000.00
PRIORITY 2: Improving the licensed economy	
Enhanced drug searching scheme with Durham Police	600.00
PRIORITY 3: Hosting (separate) planning and licensing training events with the community	
Hosting a licensing training event	1,000.00
Hosting a planning training event	250.00
PRIORITY 4: Review of HMO licensing arrangements	
Production of a report into HMO licensing options	5,000.00
PRIORITY 5: Delivering a Conservation Area Management Plan	
Conservation Area Management Plan	5,000.00
TOTAL PROVISION IN 2023-24 AGAINST PRIORITIES	16,850.00

Environment Committee

Item of expenditure	Cost (£)
PRIORITY 1: Additional policing and safety for the parish area	
Enhanced SLA with Durham Police for late night policing	50,000.00
Safety of Women at Night hub	10,000.00
PRIORITY 2: Noise abatement	
Building on the Shhh campaign	2,000.00
PRIORITY 3: Clean Air, Clean and Green City	
Durham in Bloom	8,000.00
2 x Electric Vehicle Charging Points (Clean Air and Active Travel)	6,000.00
Tackling residential car parking in the City	0.00
PRIORITY 4: Appearance of the City	
Neighbourhood Warden SLA with DCC	10,000.00
Christmas frontages awards	2,000.00

PRIORITY 5: Recycling	
Continuation of Terracycle scheme	2,000.00
Green Award for Businesses in the parish	1,000.00
PRIORITY 6: Enhancing the River Wear	
Supporting the work of the Wear Rivers Trust	3,000.00
TOTAL PROVISION IN 2023-24 AGAINST PRIORITIES	94,000.00

Business Committee

Item of potential expenditure	Cost (£)
PRIORITY 1: Supporting Independent businesses	
Professional support for independent businesses in Durham	10,800.00
PRIORITY 2: Increasing footfall through events	
Hosting events in Durham City (Remembrance Sunday, Christmas events, Coronation 2023, miscellaneous).	25,000.00
PRIORITY 3: Business frontages awards	
Running a best Business frontage awards scheme	1,000.00
TOTAL PROVISION IN 2023-24 AGAINST PRIORITIES	36,800.00

Full Council

Item of Expenditure	Cost (£)
PRIORITY 1: Administration of Parish Council (rent, room hire, audit, insurance, printing and postage, newsletters, website, other expenditure)	17,000.00
PRIORITY 2: Training budget	2,000.00
PRIORITY 3: grants for local community and voluntary organisations	15,000.00
PRIORITY 4: Staffing costs – including salary, National Insurance contributions and workplace pension	60,516.56
TOTAL PROVISION IN 2022-23 AGAINST PRIORITIES	94,516.56

Committee	Cost (£)
Planning and Licensing Committee	16,850.00
Environment Committee	94,000.00
Business Committee	36,800.00
Full Council	94,516.56
TOTAL PROVISION IN 2023-2024 AGAINST PRIORITIES	242,166.56

General Reserves	£45,000.00
Contingencies	£15,000.00
TOTAL	£60,000.00

7. Precept request 2023/24

The Clerk reported that the 2023/24 Tax Base for the City of Durham Parish area is 4,641.5. The 2022/23 City of Durham Parish Council Tax Base was calculated at 4,494.9. Our Tax Base has therefore increased by 146.6.

The Clerk also reported that the LCTRS grant payable to the City of Durham for 2023/24 is £0.

The Clerk reminded Members that precept request must be submitted to Durham County Council by the end of January 2023.

The Chair highlighted that the Parish Council's precept has been frozen at a Band D charge of £34.87 since 2018. Although the City of Durham Parish Council area has a high population, its tax income is lower than areas of similar size due to the significant number of properties exempt from Council tax because of their use as student accommodation.

The Chair also advised that the Band D charge in the City of Durham parish area remains one of the lowest in County Durham.

The Chair also highlighted the work which has been done to agree an enhanced policing SLA with Durham Police for additional police officers to cover the night time in the city. The Chair set out a range of options for this.

The Committee expressed a strong preference for Option 2 (£50,000 towards two additional officers met by the Parish Council (Wednesday, Friday and Saturday nights, 12 months of the year)) and **agreed** to recommend a total precept of £242,166.56 to Full Council in January 2023, which would increase the Band D precept charge to £52.17.

8. Dates of future meetings

13th April 2023 at 11am

8th June 2023 at 11am

14th September 2023 at 11am

7th December 2023 at 11am

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

Signed,

Chair of the Parish Council Finance Committee