

FELSTED PARISH COUNCIL



Minutes of the Finance Committee Meeting

held on 23rd November 2022 at 6.00 pm in the Committee Room at the URC Hall.

Present Councillors Roy Ramm (Chair), Frances Marshall, John Moore and Richard Silcock.

F22/60 **Apologies for absence and declarations of interest**

There were no Apologies for Absence or Declarations of Interest.

F22/61 **Approval of Minutes of the meeting held on 12th October 2022**

The Minutes of the meeting were approved and signed by the Chairman.

F22/62 **Matters arising from the previous Minutes (not covered elsewhere on this Agenda)**
None.

F22/63 **Bank Reconciliation and PAYE records**

The bank reconciliations were reviewed and were signed by the Chair and Councillor Frances Marshall.

F22/64 **Review of Accounts for the current year**

Members studied the budget comparison prepared by the RFO (appended on page 3) and noted the following items:

Income:

- Magazine advertising and donations were estimated to be around £2,370 lower than budgeted given receipts in the year to date.

Expenditure:

- It was noted that the Salary and Expenses budget line was still under budget and that this had not corrected following the PAYE/NI payments made. The RFO suggested that the estimate made for the budget based on the increased hours for the Clerk and Assistant Clerk may have been too high.
- Street lighting was still expected to come in significantly over budget in the current year due to the large rise in electricity prices and an unanticipated increase in lights needing repair.
- Maintenance, Repairs and Upkeep was now forecast to be ~£4,140 under budget. However the RFO noted that some of this was due to the village attendant being out of action for most of October and that this would likely correct as the missed jobs were caught up on.
- The projects budget line was £1,000 over budget. This reflects expenditure on the Platinum Jubilee event and is not forecast to increase further.

The RFO noted that the current year end estimate was approximately £7,500 under budget but cautioned that there was significant uncertainty for the remainder of the year given the current levels of inflation and the expected reduction in the Maintenance, Repairs and Upkeep line surplus as noted above.

F22/65 **Final Consideration of the 2023-24 Budget and Precept for proposal to Full Council**

The RFO presented the updated draft budget for 2023-24 (appended on page 3) which was considered by members.

The RFO again noted that setting the budget for the coming year was particularly challenging given the current high inflation rate and uncertainty over wage settlements, electricity prices and insurance costs in the coming year.

It was agreed to leave the budgeted wage increase at 6% for both the officials and the village attendant. It was noted that there was considerable uncertainty regarding the outcome of the wage negotiations for the coming year and agreed that the 6% was only the Committee's best estimate. It was noted that the budgeted amount did not commit the Council to any specific increase in wages for either the officials or the village attendant.

Members had no further comments on other budget items following the previous review and the updated draft budget. It was unanimously agreed to recommend the draft budget as presented to Full Council for approval.

Given the budgeted expenditure agreed and considering the need to rebuild the Council's reserve position the members considered that an increase in the Precept of between 6% and 8%, in line with anticipated inflation, was appropriate.

Members discussed the rate at which they felt the reserves should be rebuilt and noted that a number of unexpected expenses (e.g. removal of copper beech tree, pavilion repairs) had occurred and agreed would be prudent to recommend an increase in the Precept of 7.5% from £106,000 to £113,950. This would lead to an increase in reserves of £5,560 for 2023-24.

The RFO noted that the Band D Tax Base information would be provided by Uttlesford District Council on 7th December and he would update the Full Council meeting with the actual Precept figures and percentage increases for each household council tax band at the Full Council meeting.

It was unanimously agreed that the draft Budget and Precept recommendation would put to Full Council for consideration and approval at the 7th December meeting.

F22/66

Review of Conduct of future Finance Committee Meetings

It was agreed that the 22nd February 2023 Finance Committee Meeting would take at 6pm in the Committee Room of the URC Hall (subject to availability).

F22/67

Any urgent matters and proposals for future agenda items

F22/67.1 – Coronation Event

Councillor Richard Silcock noted that the date for the Coronation had been set and that the Felsted Village Events Committee had begun organising the event and paying for bookings. It was agreed that until the Council had setup a new separate bank account to hold the funds that Felsted Village Events Committee proposed to donate then they should continue to organise and pay from their funds. Once the setup had been complete and the Events Subcommittee formed then there could be a transfer of responsibility to the Council. In either case the organisation of the event should proceed seamlessly.

F22/67.2 – Solar Farms

Councillor Richard Silcock informed the Committee that there was an organisation that helped Parish Councils setup and run solar farms. It was suggested that this might be of future interest once the Felsted Community Trust was operating as it could be a potential income stream. Councillor Roy Ramm noted that both land and money would be needed.

F22/68

Next meeting

The meeting closed at 7.10pm.

The next meeting will be held on 22nd February 2023 at 6.00pm in the Committee Room at the URC Hall, Stebbing Road, CM6 3JD.

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Chairman

Dated

F22/64 - Review of Accounts for the current year



FPC - Budget Comparison to 15 November 2022

	Budget 2022-23		Actual 2022-23		Year End Estimate		YE Estimate - Budget	
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
Opening Balance		59,782		59,782		59,782		
RECEIPTS								
Precept	106,000		106,000		106,000		0	
Allotments Rents	1,700		1,455		1,700		0	
Playing field rent	500		500		500		0	
Grants	0		0		0		0	
Sundry other receipts	0		150		150		150	
Magazine advertising & donations	4,516		1,345		2,147		-2,369	
Total Receipts		112,716		109,450		110,497		-2,219
PAYMENTS								
Salary and Expenses		48,598		23,843		38,411		-10,187
Street Lighting		5,453		5,332		8,023		2,569
Administration		11,523		7,421		11,316		-206
Maintenance, repairs and upkeep		40,807		28,036		36,670		-4,137
Projects		6,958		3,096		8,054		1,096
Sundry		4,762		5,840		5,915		1,153
Total Payments		118,101		73,568		108,389		-9,712
Closing Balance		54,397		95,664		61,891		7,494

F22/65 - Final Consideration of the 2023-24 Budget and Precept for proposal to Full Council



Felsted Parish Council - Proposed 2023-2024 Budget

	Actual 2021-22	Estimated 2022-23 Year End	Proposed 2023-2024 Budget
Opening Balance	99,286	59,782	61,891
RECEIPTS			
Precept	85,000	106,000	113,950
Allotments Rents	1,723	1,700	1,700
Playing field rent	0	500	500
Grants	2,351	0	0
Sundry other receipts	2,502	150	0
Magazine advertising & donations	3,263	2,147	2,150
Total Receipts	94,839	110,497	118,300
PAYMENTS			
Salary and Expenses	34,210	38,411	42,013
Street Lighting	4,640	8,023	12,799
Administration	11,837	11,316	12,511
Maintenance, repairs and upkeep	51,628	36,670	32,210
Projects	28,055	8,054	7,950
Sundry	3,973	5,915	5,257
Total Payments	134,343	108,389	112,742
Closing Balance - Accrual Basis	59,782	61,891	67,449

Notes:
Precept increase of 7.50% on previous year's Budget