

SWANTON MORLEY PARISH COUNCIL BUDGET MEETING MINUTES

MONDAY 22ND JANUARY 2024 AT 7PM

SWANTON MORLEY VILLAGE HALL

Councillors Present: Mr R. Atterwill (Chairman), Mrs A Walker-Fraser, Mr J Phillips, Mr J Venworth and Mr B Almond

Also in attendance: Mrs K. Pickard (Clerk, remotely joining via Microsoft Teams)

Matters Raised Under Time Allocated to the Public

No members of the public were in attendance.

The Meeting Went into Session

1. To Accept Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Councillor Turner, Councillor O'Dowd and Councillor Rodrigues, accepted by the Council.

2. To Receive Declarations of Interest

Councillor Venworth declared an interest in item 5

3. To Consider the sum to extend the Main Areas Grass Cutting Tender for 2024

Councillor Venworth proposed that the contract is extended with a 5% Increase seconded by Councillor Walker-Fraser and carried.

4. To Agree sum to extend the Churchyard and Burial Ground Grass Cutting Tender for 2024

Councillor Walker-Fraser proposed that contract is extended for a cost of £4509 seconded by Councillor Venworth and carried

5. To Discuss the Allotment fees for 2024/2025

Councillor Almond proposed that there is a 10% increase to the allotment fees due to the increase in running costs seconded by Councillor Walker-Fraser and carried

6. To Agree the 2024/2025 Parish Council Budget

The draft budget had been sent to Councillors for consideration prior to the meeting.

This consisted of a breakdown of items that form the budget.

Staff costs were agreed to include the increase a potential government increase. The rate for the pension fund has been reduced by 0.05%

The Training budget has been reduced for specific clerk training and potential new councillor training.

Communications and Community were discussed. This included an annual cost for the printing of the Mardler.

Financial Year 2023/2024

The community heading also includes the annual fee for the Link Up article, and the cost to keep the permissive paths open to the public. The sum for the Manns Lane field rent has been increased by £152, this is reflected in the budget.

The Community heading also allows for a Parish hardship Fund.

The general expenditure was discussed.

Under the office banner this includes utility costs, stationery and the Parish Council insurance premium. A 5% increase has been agreed for the insurance due to inflation as 2023/2024 budget.

Legal and Contingency

This item includes an amount for Parish Council contingency and a small reserve fund. There has also been an amount allocated for the Neighbourhood Plan review.

This figure now includes the PWL repayment for the Village Hall replacement boiler.

The Parish Council detailed and discussed the standard subscriptions. This is for governing bodies including NALC and SLCC. Membership to these organisations ensure the council implement proper practice.

Donations

The Parish Council considered the donations that they would like to make during the financial year. This includes the British Legion and the Citizens Advice Bureau helping residents through difficult times.

This year there is an additional amount to donate to Dereham Cancer Care.

Democratic

The democratic heading includes a small cost for councillor expenses and the Chairman's allowance.

The grounds maintenance and assets costs have been increased for 2024/2025 due to the increase in costs from the contractors.

The Parish Council agreed for 2024/2025 to again, include a nominal fee for a nitrogen feed to be carried out on Davidson Park. (This sum would be paid from the S106 money received for the development).

The Grounds Maintenance also includes additional verge cutting, hedge cutting and estate grass cutting to keep the Village well maintained.

The burial ground and churchyard budget include a figure for general maintenance, general maintenance of the Church clock and to install a water supply into the burial ground.

The open spaces budget is allocated to work on the Village Green, Gooseberry Hill Park, Davidson park and the Village Hall youth area.

Sums were agreed for full pressure washing of the equipment, replacement rubber softbond surfacing and the planting around the memorial lectern.

The budget for Allotments has reduced for this financial year for any maintenance costs.

The budget for common lands is earmarked for the river weed clearance at Burgh Common.

Councillors agreed the maintenance budget for streetlights and included an increase to the electricity budget due to inflation and the recent section 38 agreement for the streetlights on Swanton Vale.

Financial Year 2023/2024

The income and expenditure for the remainder of 2023/2024 was then discussed.

The bank balances as at 31/12/2023 were confirmed.

Expenditure that was due to be paid out between 01/01/2024 and 31/03/2024 was detailed as a breakdown, as was the expected income figure.

The proposed budget sheet was then presented to reflect the discussions and agreements by councillors. The figures confirmed included the staff costs, grounds and assets, communications, and community costs, and legal and contingency.

Councillor Atterwill then talked through the projected income figure.

This includes allotment fees, football pitch income, the nominal sum from Norfolk County Council for the delegated grass cutting agreement, Higher Level Stewardship for Mill Common and the Village Hall grass cutting element.

The Nationwide savings account breakdown was shared with Councillors. This details a breakdown of how the s106 money from a developer is being used. This account also generates annual interest. Money from this account will be used to pay for some expenditure items shown in the budget.

Following this discussion, the budget figure that was arrived at was £105,592.

Councillor Atterwill proposed the budget for 2024/2025 is set at £105,592 seconded by Councillor Venworth and carried

7. To Agree the 2024/2025 Parish Council Precept

The tax base for the village has increased for 2024/2025 to 792.20.

The precept figure that was arrived at for 2024/2025 was £99,384

Councillor Atterwill proposed that the precept figure is set at £99,384 seconded by Councillor Venworth and carried

The Meeting Was Suspended for Further Comment from the Public

No public were present

The meeting closed at 8.41pm

_____ (Chairman) _____ Date