**Minutes of the Saddleworth Parish Council Finance Committee held on Thursday 24th November 2023 at 7pm at the Civic Hall, Uppermill.**

**Present**: Councillors: S. Al-Hamdani (Chairman)

G. Sheldon

K. Phillips

H. Bishop

 L. Dawson

K. Dawson

K. Barton

R. Blackmore

P. Walsh

 RFO: J Price; Clerk: K Allott

**601. Apologies for Absence:** None, all present

**602. Declarations of interest:** Saddleworth resident councillors are exempt from declaring an interest when discussing the budget and precept.

**603. Minutes from the last meeting on Thursday 23rd November 2023**

These minutes were accepted as correct and signed off at the meeting by the Chairman.

**604. To finalise the budget 2024-25**

The proposed budget had previously been shared by the RFO and it was discussed in detail.

Code 441 -advertising & promotions - overspend in current year due to increased advertising of the Civic Hall as a venue and this was discussed. It was decided that the budget for next year would be £1046.

Code 442 Copywriting – increase to £1000

Code 490 Miscellaneous - reduce to £750

It was agreed to add advertising and review of miscellaneous code to the next Communications Agenda.

The Environment Committee had agreed to keep their request the same as current year so these figures were amended on the budget sheet.

The Cemetery was discussed. Cllr Al-Hamdani questioned whether it should be self-funding. Cllr Sheldon replied that it is at the moment but there will come a time when we won’t be receiving much income but will still be paying maintenance costs etc, so may need to transfer available funds to reserves to cover this eventuality.

There was some discussion around refuse and pest control and it was agreed this would be added to the agenda of the next Asset’s Management meeting.

There was some discussion around the Civic Hall income. Cllr Blackmore advised he had heard we weren’t as competitive as other venues, ie rugby clubs etc. The Clerk advised that last year we had only put up the charges very slightly for local groups and offered a discount to charities. The issue was that other venues are able to offer a reduced price on room hire as they make their money on the bar. We don’t have that option currently. After some further discussion, it was agreed to keep the income figure as is, but this will be added to the agenda of the next Asset’s meeting.

Any agreed changes to the budget headings amounts were amended at the meeting and the figures fed into the spreadsheet. The final budget was agreed at £267, 339 (+8.8% on current year).

**605. To finalise the proposed Precept request**

There was some discussion around the precept request. It was agreed that we request a precept increase of 5.9% and that £6,747 be drawn down from reserves and the budget be recommended to full Council for approval.

Proposed Cllr Phillips, seconded Cllr Sheldon. 7 in favour, 2 absentions.

The proposed budget report will now be shared with all Councillors in advance of the Ordinary Council meeting on Monday evening.

**606. Chairman’s Allowance/Regalia**

This item was deferred to the next meeting

**607.** **Report on Councillor Expenses when deputising for the Chairman**

This item was deferred to the next meeting

**608. Items for the next agenda**

* Year End reserves figure
* Chairman’s Allowance/Regalia
* Report on Councillor Expenses when deputising for the Chairman

**Date of next meeting: Thursday 18th January 2024 @ 19.00hrs**