**Minutes of the Saddleworth Parish Council Finance Committee held on Thursday 14th November 2024 at 7pm at the Civic Hall, Uppermill.**

**Present**: Cllr S Al-Hamdani (Chairman)

Cllr G Sheldon (Vice Chairman) Cllr K Barton, Cllr H Bishop, Cllr R Blackmore,

RFO: Mr J Price, Clerk: Mrs K Allott

**667. Apologies for Absence:** Cllr L Dawson, Cllr K. Phillips, Cllr L Thompson, Cllr P Walsh

**668. Declarations of Interest:** Cllr Bishop non declarable interest on a budget item, Chairman’s Allowance.

**669. Minutes from the meeting held on Thursday 26th September 2024**

The minutes were accepted as correct and signed at the meeting by the Chairman. Proposed Cllr Al-Hamdani, seconded Cllr Sheldon.

**670. Budget 2025-26**

The RFO shared the provisional budget which had already been populated with the proposals from the Communications, Environment and Assets Management Committees. These were discussed.

Communications proposal only increase on code 440 by 6%; other budget codes no change from current year.

Environment proposal no change from current year.

Cemetery, it was agreed that profit from the cemetery income be transferred to code 289 Cemetery reserves.

Income from Allotments to be populated under code 831.

Salaries were discussed, and the additional costs incurred due to the change in Employer NI payment calculations from April 25. The Clerk advised that NALC had written to the Government asking them to re consider, due to its impact on small Town and Parish Councils.

Hall income, budget code 720, was discussed and confirmed at £60k. Repairs and maintenance, budget code 307 was discussed. It was noted this was already overspent this current year due to essential health & safety works that had been carried out. Assets Management Committee were requesting a draw down from reserves to cover this overspend.

The Clerk advised the estimated recurring annual costs, including reactive maintenance, were £20-22k. Urgent priorities still to be carried out were discussed, and it was agreed that the Finance Committee request the Assets Management Committee review their budget proposal on code 307 repairs and maintenance, and revisit the projected income from the hall hire.

It was agreed the Clerk/RFO would provide confirmation of these recurring annual costs on code 307, along with estimates for all essential and non-essential work required for the Assets Management meeting on Monday 18th November*. (post meeting note, this was prepared and presented).*

All other budget codes were discussed and some amendments made:

Code 106 recruitment advertising increased from proposed £400 to £600.

Code 112 Chairman’s regalia was reduced from proposed £1100 to £900

Code 101 Chairman’s Allowance. It was agreed no increase required, remain at £1,850

It was agreed that the budget sheet be populated with all these changes and discussed at the next Finance meeting in December. Once the Committee agree the budget, it would then be recommended to Full Council at the meeting 16th December.

It was noted that a request to draw £22,182.62 from reserves to cover the shortfall between the insurance settlement figure and the agreed tender for rebuild of the unsafe car park wall had already been notified to Council under Financial Regulation 3.4 and the Clerk also wished to notify the Finance Committee of the same.

Concern over a further reserves drawdown was discussed and it was agreed that Reserves and Precept Request would be added to the agenda of the next Full Council meeting 25th November so these concerns could be shared.

**671. Community Toilet signs (budget 2024-25 request from Environment Committee)**

This was discussed and it was agreed there was no funding availablein the current budget year but that consideration would be given to add this into the Asset Management proposed budget for 2025-26.

**672. Assets Management request to draw down reserves to cover essential works** **(current financial year).**

This agenda item is covered under point 670.

**673. VAT consultancy written report**

The RFO confirmed that a site visit with the VAT Consultant was proposed for early in the New Year.

**674. Report on car park wall**

This agenda item is covered under point 670.

**675. Bank account progress**

This agenda item was deferred to the next meeting.

**676. Updated Financial Regulations**

This agenda item was deferred to the next meeting.

**677. Report on Councillor Expenses when deputising for Chairman**

The Clerk confirmed that £18.90 had been recorded this month, a total of £18.90.

**678. Items for the next agenda**

* To finalise the Budget 2025-26
* To agree the proposed Reserve’s draw down and Precept request
* VAT consultancy update
* Bank account progress
* Updated Financial Regulations
* Report on Councillor Expenses when deputising for Chairman
* Items for the next Agenda

**Date of next meeting: Thursday 12th December @ 19.00hrs**