

**KIRKBURTON PARISH COUNCIL**

**MANAGEMENT & FINANCE COMMITTEE**

**Minutes of the Meeting on 30 January 2025 at Burton Village Hall.**

Present: Cllr J Taylor in the Chair

Cllrs B Armer, R Bray, P Brook, J Cowan, D Hardcastle, D Knight, B Smith, P Taylor and C Voyce.

Officer in attendance:

Mrs N Whitelaw, Minute Clerk, Kirklees Governor Clerking Service

**MIN MF16 Apologies and Declarations of Interest**

No apologies had been received.

There were no declarations of interest.

**MIN MF17 Public Participation**

No members addressed the Committee in advance of the meeting.

**MIN MF18 Admission of the Public**

**Resolved:** To hold the meeting in the public session.

**MIN MF19 Accounts 2024-25**

Members noted the budget statement covering the period 1 April 2024 to 31 December 2024, which had been circulated prior to the meeting.

The Chair explained that the statement presented projected spend to year end. The Chair invited comments and questions on the budget statement.

Members noted the overspend in small grants. The Chair explained that this was due to paying the grants out early. The aim was to continue paying grants out by December each year.

**(a) Insurance**

The Chair explained that there was one area of adjustment required on the accounts. There was a projected overspend of 10% on insurance, which was outside of regulations. This had occurred due to the way insurance was paid. The full insurance amount was paid in March for the following year. 70% of that was then reimbursed by Shelley Village Hall but not until December. This meant that when looking at the accounts the full premium had been paid on March 2024 for the following year but that would be netted off by the money paid by Shelley Village Hall.

The Chair recommended that £150 be vired from employment costs to ensure that there was enough budget to allow insurance premiums to be paid in March

**Resolved:** That £150 be vired from employment costs to insurance to allow the premium to be paid in March. All members agreed.

**MIN MF20 Chains of Office**

The Chair thanked Cllr D Hardcastle and Cllr B Smith for their work on preparing the report for the meeting. This had been circulated to members prior to the meeting.

Cllr D Hardcastle showed the Chains of Office to members and explained that all medallions and roses were currently full. He had estimated that a new full set of Chains of Office would last a minimum of 48 years.

Cllr D Hardcastle and Cllr B Smith had investigated options available to members in order to repair or replace the Chains of Office. Cllr D Hardcastle reported that they had approached Fattorini's of Birmingham. They could replace the old medallions with new to allow current Chairs to be represented, however this came with a considerable ongoing cost. It was felt to be more cost effective to buy a new set of Chains. Fattorini's could supply this at a cost of £15400 for the Chains plus the engraving of 23 past Chairs to bring the Chains up to date. Having a new set of Chains also meant that the old Chains could be put on display.

Members discussed whether this was a viable option. It was noted that there had been considerable employee cost savings this year due to Cllr J Taylor undertaking the clerk role.

Some members felt that the Chains of Office were an important symbol of office and something to be proud of. People were pleased to see them at events, and they were a record of the history of the Parish Council. It was discussed whether it was necessary for the Chains to be worn at monthly meetings, as wearing them only at official events might reduce the likelihood of further breakage. Cllr B Smith reported that the Chains were in poor repair, so repair work was required whether they were worn regularly or not. Most members agreed that wearing the Chains was an important tradition and a mark of respect for the Chair. Two members disagreed and felt that the Chains should be retired in order to save £15400.

The Chair outlined the recommendations from the report:

- Inclusion in the 2025-26 budget of £14800 to cover the costs of acquiring new Chains of Office
- Annual provision of £1000 to be put in each year's budget that can be moved to allocated reserves. This would allow a sufficient sum to accrue for when new Chains would next be required, estimated 2043.
- The past Chairmen's names be engraved on the reverse of their medals with years of service.
- That Cllr D Hardcastle and Cllr B Smith be authorised to continue work on purchasing new Chains and to arrange for the necessary engraving of the medals with past Chairmen's names.

**Resolved:** That the 2025-26 budget include £14800 to cover the costs of acquiring new Chains of Office. All members agreed apart from two who opposed and one who abstained.

**Resolved:** That annual provision of £1000 to be included in each year's budget to allow for purchase of the next set of new Chains, in approximately 2043. All members agreed apart from two who opposed and one who abstained.

**Resolved:** That past Chairmen's names should be engraved on the reverse of their medals, along with years of service. All members agreed apart from two who opposed and one who abstained.

**Resolved:** That Cllr D Hardcastle and Cllr B Smith be authorised to continue work on purchasing new Chains and to arrange for the engraving of medals with past Chairmen's names. All members agreed apart from two who opposed and one who abstained.

Cllr J Cowan advised members that a new portrait of King Charles III had been sent by the government and was now hanging in the office.

#### **MIN MF21 Proposed Budget 2025/26**

The proposed budget had been circulated prior to the meeting. The Chair thanked Cllr J Cowan for his work on producing the additional notes.

The Chair noted that the budget for Kirkheaton Churchyard was now incorporated into maintenance. He explained that any budget not spent goes into reserves. The exception was when there was any commissioned work for April or May when it would go into allocated reserves.

Members discussed whether the capital budget could be used for the Churchyard. The Chair explained that there were strict regulations about the spending of capital funds, so it had been decided to wait for the appointment of a new Clerk, who could fully investigate these.

Members discussed whether the current maintenance spend on Kirkheaton Churchyard could be reduced through rewilding some areas and using volunteer groups instead of paying for maintenance. It was noted that this had been previously investigated. Rewilding needed to be carefully planned and would incur costs. Health and safety would also need to be considered. It was felt that this was something worth investigating.

**Action:** To include discussion of Kirkheaton Churchyard at the next Land and Management Committee.

The Chair outlined that the precept had been held at the same level last year. He had spoken to the Kirklees council about the number of new houses built in the area. Keeping the precept the same would have led to a small increase in income of £154 325. It was important to build reserves, so it had been proposed to raise the precept by 4% to £159000. Taking the new houses into account, this meant a rise in Band D payments from £16.16 to £16.36, which was a rise of only 1.1% for each household.

The Chair thanked Cllr J Cowan for his work on the budget. He noted the accounts for the third quarter period included a very helpful break down of the closing bank balance. This allowed members to see the current position very clearly and to be confident in the finances.

Cllr J Cowan asked members to note the unrepresented cheques in the statement, which amounted to £1349. He reported that as of January, most of this had been cleared and at the end of the financial year unrepresented cheques should only be a few hundred pounds.

The Chair recommended that the 2025/2026 budget be approved to present to the Council. This was proposed and seconded.

**Resolved:** That the proposed budget for 2025/2026 be presented for approval to the full council. All members agreed.

#### **MIN MF22 Meeting Date**

The Chair confirmed that he would circulate the date of the next meeting via email shortly.

The Chairman then closed the meeting.