



Appleton Parish Council

Minutes of the meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee at Appleton Parish Hall on Monday 10th December 2018.

Present

Councillor P Walker (Chair), Councillor S Bengler, Councillor S Harris and Councillor B Axcell.

Mrs J Monks (Clerk)

1. Welcome and apologies for absence

The chairman welcomed the members of the committee to the meeting

2. Members Code of Conduct

None declared.

3. Matters Arising

None

4. Budget and Precept for 2019/2020

Budget for 2019/2020

The clerk had circulated a proposed budget with proposals for the precept and these were discussed in detail. In addition to this Councillor J Walker has produced an amended budget and proposals for the Environmental Committee.

It was **recommended** that;

The budget for 2019/2020 was amended as follows;

The clerk was asked to amend expected hall hire income to £1400.00 as bookings have decreased and this has resulted in less income.

The clerk was asked to remove the separate website budget of £1000.00 and put the amount of £1000.00 into the Media budget. The clerk was asked to increase the Media budget to £5,500.00 to include the costs of a new website.

Staff costs were to be increased to £70,000.00.

Annual Subscriptions were to be increased to £800.00.

Training was to be increased to £1,000.00.

Civic Service and Events budget of £2,200.00 was to be removed.

Parish Hall Gardens and Village maintenance budget of £5,250.00 was to be removed.

Environmental Schemes budget was to be £1,900.00 and this would include sub-sections of contingency earmarked funds, regular maintenance works and contracts and general Environmental Schemes.

The PSCO budget was increased to £17,000.00.

General Contingencies budget was to be increased to £1,000.00.

Events committee budget was to be increased to £1,500.00.

The clerk was asked to amend the figures accordingly and to send a draft with the Parish Council meeting agenda. The amended budget will have to be approved by the Parish Council at the Parish Council meeting on Tuesday 18th December.

Precept for 2019/2020

The clerk has received a letter dated 8th November 2018 from Warrington Borough Council with regards to the arrangements for the parish precepts for 2019/2020.

Warrington Borough Council has confirmed that the number of Band D equivalent properties for 2019/2020 is 4066. The Council Tax base before reduction for Council Tax Support scheme is 5026, which is one less than 2018/2019. However, Warrington Borough Council has reduced this to 4066. There is a reduction of 160 in the Council Tax base relating to the Council Tax Support Allowance.

The figures were discussed at length. In order to achieve the same level of income as 2018/2019 the Parish Council would have to increase the precept by 3.93%. This was due to the Council Tax support scheme responsibility for which has been transferred to local government by Westminster.

It was **recommended** that;

The precept for 2019/2020 is set at £153,912. The band D amount payable would therefore be £31.63. This would be a 10.02% increase.

5. Parish Hall renovations and Wren grant work

The clerk said that she had contacted Building Control and they had confirmed that no further building regulations were required. Building Control recommended that the internal doors were put back on and that the Parish Council instructs an outside company to undertake a Fire Risk Assessment. There is equipment which the builder has left outside the Parish hall which he has promised to remove.

At the Parish Council meeting on 16th October 2018 the Parish Council approved the following;

The Parish Council would pay the additional cost for a disabled access door opening system on the front door at the cost of £1245.00 plus VAT.

The Parish Council would contribute £142.50, which was half the cost of the second skip.

During a meeting in early November, Councillor S Harris and Councillor P Walker met with the builder to discuss this together with other issues. Photos of the skip were available which clearly showed items other than building related items had been placed in the skip, either by Parish Hall users or persons unknown. Cllrs Harris and Walker agreed that in that event, the Parish Council would pay the whole cost of the additional skip. They also discussed the patchy painting of the ceiling in the main hall. The builder acknowledged that there had been a miscommunication on his part and he agreed to rectify this.

The Parish Council has also received additional invoices from the builder for the following.

- Cost of a skip to the value of £342.00.
- Additional work to the value of £570.00.

The clerk advised that the builder has already been overpaid by £694.80.

During the last meeting (December 3) with the builder, this overpayment was identified as being money in the original project quotation for Building Regulations, which in the event was not required. This amount was used for the fire doors but it appears that the amount for Building Regulations was not removed from accounts. During a meeting with the builder, Cllrs Harris and Walker, at which the clerk was present. the builder said he would need to check his own records but agreed that he had probably been overpaid and would offset this against outstanding invoices, leaving a balance owing to him of £217.20. He has subsequently confirmed this.

At the Monday December 3 meeting, Councillor S Harris and Councillor P Walker confirmed that, in view of the breakdown in communications between the PC and the builder, they had been asked to become involved in early October to ensure that the project work continued and was brought to a conclusion. They had worked from figures supplied by the clerk. They confirmed that the builder would not be undertaking the additional work at the Parish Hall; he was no longer prepared to do any further work. In this event, it was deemed pragmatic for the Parish Council to commission any additional electrical work directly with another contractor.

Both Cllrs Harris and Walker were concerned to protect the wellbeing and reputation of the Parish Council and all negotiations with the builder were to avoid any further upset, but making sure the project was completed. It should be noted that the builder was extremely efficient in producing the more detailed invoices as requested to facilitate the WREN grant payment and both Cllrs were of the opinion that the payment of £217.20 should be made to the builder to conclude this very difficult situation. The Clerk has stated that 'The financial regulations can only be used for expenditure in an emergency or when the expenditure is necessary. Paying the builder does not fall into this category. Both Cllrs Harris and Walker felt the payment should be made immediately as this situation (where the Parish Council's reputation is at risk and the

need to provide accurate invoices to WREN before their deadline) did in fact constitute an emergency. However the Clerk's advice was accepted.

The clerk confirmed that any additional expenditure would have to be agreed by the full Parish Council.

It was **recommended** that;

A payment of £217.20 is made to builder.

This had been calculated as follows;

Payment for the full cost of a skip, approved 50% of this)	£342.00 (The PC has already
Payment for additional work (invoice 226/13),	£570.00
Less amount overpaid to the builder,	£694.80
Due to the builder,	£217.20.

The Parish Council to **note:**

that the already approved £1245 for assisted opening to the front door will be carried out using another contractor.