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Finance Committee Minutes

For the meeting held in the Moot Hall

Monday 9th December 2024 at 7.05pm

Present:

Cllr Chalmers (Chair)
Cllr Anderton
Cllr Curley
Cllr Davidson
Cllr Heap
Cllr Pape
Cllr Potts

Also in attendance:

Cllr Connell
Cllr Hilsden
Cllr Kemp
Cllr Turnbull

Town Clerk and Clerk's Assistant

F1/12/24 Apologies for Absence

There were no apologies received.

F2/12/24 Declarations of Interest

Cllr Anderton declared an interest in the Appleby Grammar School grant application, due to being a Governor.

Cllr Connell declared an interest in the Appleby Grammar School grant application, due to being a Foundation Governor.

Despite not being on the committee, Cllr Turnbull declared an interest in the Appleby Archaeology Group grant application, as her husband had submitted the application.

F3/12/24 Actions from the Previous Minutes

- **Change of Banking Arrangements**

The process of changing banks will be started in the new year. Personal details for Councillors are needed for mandates and the process is quite time consuming.

- **Change Utility Services Provider**

The contract has been agreed with BritishGasLite for the new gas supply and this will come into effect on 01/04/2024.

- **Salary Awards for 2024-25**

The Salary Awards for 2024-25 were implemented in November's salary payments, backdated to April.

- **Charity accounts – formalise administration of meetings**

The Clerk is liaising with trustees of the two Charity Accounts to organise the Annual General Meeting for both charities.

F4/12/24 Chairman's Report

There was no Chair's report in respect of this meeting.

F5/12/24 Management Accounts

The Chair presented the Management Accounts for November 2024. The Clerk reported that expenditure is forecasted to come in underbudget at year end.

The Management Accounts for November 2024 were accepted and **RECOMMENDED** to Full Council.

F6/12/24 Budget and Precept for 2025-26

The Budget and Precept request is normally presented in December's Finance Committee Meeting and then accepted and recommended in the January meetings, however Westmorland & Furness Council have asked for precept requests early, so it was discussed and agreed with the Chair to bring this forward to December's meeting.

The Clerk explained that there is a slight change to the budget breakdown from the one that was distributed to Councillors, as Westmorland & Furness Council have confirmed that there will be no charge to Appleby Council for footway lighting for either 2024-25 or 2025-26.

The Parish Council Tax is calculated on the Precept request divided by the Council Tax Base. The Council Tax Base is based on the number of Band D households paying Council Tax in the parish. As this has increased by 73 households for next year, this means that based on the Council's budget and precept request, there will be no increase in the Parish Council Tax for 2025-26.

Cllr Anderton raised concerns about potential issues with Council owned properties and whether there was enough to cover emergencies. The Chair and Clerk both confirmed that the Council hold sufficient reserves to cover unplanned, but essential costs.

It was agreed to make the residents aware of why there had not been any increase, so people could stay well informed.

The Budget and Precept request for 2025-26 was agreed and **RECOMMENDED** to Full Council.

F7/12/24 Grant Applications from Charity Accounts

- **Appleby Grammar School – Post-16 / Community minibus**

There is no transport provided for Post-16 students to get to/from to school, instead they have to apply for empty spaces on buses, and if there isn't any, they have to make their own way to school from outlying villages. Currently, the school are hiring a mini bus to collect sixth form students who otherwise wouldn't be able to get into school. The school would like to purchase a second-hand bus, which will also be used by Appleby Primary School for trips and be available for use as a community bus. The Clerk explained that the school have requested £4,000, but the maximum grant that can be given by either of the charities is £2,000.

Cllr Chalmers suggested that the school also ask other local Parish Councils in the surrounding villages for a small contribution, as the pupils benefitting will live outside of Appleby. Cllr Potts seconded this suggestion and also suggested the school should contact local businesses, as they might be interested in sponsoring the bus.

It was **RECOMMENDED** to Full Council that the trustees of the Hannah Kennington charity approve the application and decide an appropriate amount.

- **Appleby Archaeology Group – Excavation of Castrigg Roman fortlet, Appleby**

The grant application is to support the Group's next planned project at Castrigg Roman forlet. Costs of the project include professional supervision, training activities and other essential fieldwork costs. Cllr Potts asked whether any artefacts that are discovered are kept locally, but it was explained it is not up to the group what is kept in Appleby and they are bound by higher law.

It was **RECOMMENDED** to Full Council that the trustees of the Hannah Kennington charity approve the application and decide an appropriate amount.

Cllr Pape asked about the Section 137 grants and why these couldn't be used to support requests for funding from local groups. The Clerk explained that S137 grants are not additional money that can be applied for and comes from the Council's Precept. It is essentially a "power of last resort" and allows Councils to spend money not otherwise authorised under their powers and Appleby Council make no provision in their budget for any S137 grants.

Cllr Chalmers commented that maintenance of Council owned buildings is the Council's priority, and the purpose of the charities is to award grants.

F8/12/24 Councillors' reports and items for future agendas

There were no items for future agendas.

F9/12/24 Next Meeting

To note that the next meeting of the Finance Committee will be on **Monday 13th January 2025** at **7.15pm**, or at the rising of the Planning and General Purposes Committee in the Moot Hall.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 7.53pm.

At the Council Meeting held on **Wednesday 20th December 2024**, the Chairman of this meeting was authorised by the Committee to sign these minutes, to confirm they're being a true and accurate record:

Cllr Heap