WARNDON PARISH COUNCIL – FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING

Minutes of a meeting of the Finance Committee meeting of Warndon Parish Council, held virtually at 11.00 am. on Thursday 27 October 2022 via Zoom.

The Meeting commenced at 11.16am

Present: Cllrs D Carney, A Cross, L Hodgson, R Norfolk

In attendance: the Clerk

1. **Apologies**

   There were none.

2. **Declarations of Interest** and consideration for requests for Councillor Dispensations in line with S33 of the Localism Act 2011

   Cllr Hodgson advised of membership of Worcester City Council and the Board of Lyppard Grange Trust

   Cllrs Hodgson and Cross advised of membership of the Board of Lyppard Grange Trust.

3. **To consider Internal Audit arrangements 2022/23**

The Clerk confirmed that the audit has been scheduled for 1 February 2023 with Duncan Edwards of DKE Audit Services. There have been no advised changes to rules, regulations or conduct of the annual audit.

4. **To review Budget 2022/23**

In the absence of indications from portfolio holders, the Clerk highlighted accounts where possible budget savings/spare funding might be located. The Committee agreed the following:

Cost Centres

4100 – 4125 (administration) will not be affected.

4305 Community engagement: potential £500 unallocated spare funding could be re-allocated in conjunction with 4310 Parish Projects: potential spare funding allocated for costs of foodbanks/ foodbank leafleting.

4315 Miscellaneous initiatives: this will be removed from future budgets

4340 Defibrillators: there is potential £500 unallocated spare funding

4350 Website: the is potential £300 unallocated spare funding

4355 Speed gates – based on revised costs indicated by Cllr S Hodgson, there is potential £2,500 unallocated spare funding which could be re-allocated. Cllr Hodgson to provide paper for November council. Two new VAS units may be sufficient

4370 Fabric Enhancements: the committee to check with Cllr Merriman for clarification of what the budget entails. If no longer necessary it can be withdrawn from future budgets.

3275 Table Tennis Tables: there is potential £2,000 unallocated spare funding

4385 Heritage Trail: this can be rolled together with Parish Projects – there is potential £510 unallocated spare funding. No need for future separate budget

4395 Charitable donations: there is potential £1,500 unallocated spare funding which can be re-allocated to the Lyppard Hub for Christmas initiatives This budget to be withdrawn in 2023-24

4405 S137 Grants: this budget duplicates 4395 Charitable Donations

A potential total of £ 17,612 unallocated spare funding was identified in the 2022-23 budget

This might fund some activities for public participation at the Lyppard Hub (rather than say funding a 'warm' room). Provision of Christmas school meals was also considered although previous initiatives of providing food parcels for primary school pupils did not achieve a significant take-up. – not good take-up.

Funding an advice 'drop-in' initiative at the Hub/St Nicholas Church/Woodgreen Church to help parishioners facing difficulty during the economic crisis might prove a worthy project. The committee to recommend the initiative for consideration by Council at its November meeting.

The Clerk to identify portfolio holders against budgets and request that holders re-examine their current year funding commitments.

5. **To consider Budget 2023/24** and recommend to Full Council meeting on 5 December 2022

The Committee agreed not to specify an annual 2% increase on budgets but to decide year on year for portfolios. Only the Administration budget to be subject to specified percentage increase in line with government inflation (7.5% in 2023-24).

Portfolio budgets to remain at 2022-23 levels in 2023-24 unless otherwise specified.

1076 Precept: this budget will remain unchanged in 2023-24. Parishioners should be aware that it will increase at some point but for 2023-24 will not be increased in order not to place additional hardship on parishioners with budgeting.

Additional services supplied by Worcester City Council will rise for 7.5% in 2023-24

4200 Estate Management (1): £ 14,987

4230 Dog Bins: £ 4,937

4240 Environmental Warden: £ 22,753

4301 Allotments: look at purchasing additional allotment sites in 2023-24. – use unspent from 2022-23.

4355 Speed gates: possibility of adding provisional funds for an additional third VAS unit in 2023-24

6. **Grants policy**

(i) Large grants

The Committee considered the Clerk's suggestions with regard to revising the current Grants Policy document. This document only covers to small grant provision, but there is currently no provision for large grants.

It was agreed that the Grants Policy should accommodate the following:

Small grants - £1 - £999

Large grants: - £1,000 - £4,999

An Extraordinary Grant - £5,000+ - provision should be added.

There will be no provision for rolling year-on-year grants, and time-completion guidelines will be set and rigorously applied.

A fixed budget will be set in advance of the tax year, but applications may be made at an point in a previous tax year for projects to be completed within the future tax year period to end 31 March.

Finance Committee to recommend the revised Grant Policy / Application document to Council for approval.

(ii) Lyppard Hub

The Committee considered the current agreement and grant funding of the Lyppard Hub.

Cllr Hodgson advised that Worcester City Council reviews its funding allocation annually but will likely need to make savings in future funding budgets – the Lyppard Hub may possibly be one of the community funding projects affected. It was agreed that WPC cannot meet any potential shortfall if City funding drops. The Hub to liaise with WCC if their funding is reduced or withdrawn.

WPC ultimately needs to have a good understanding of how its money is being spent in the community (i.e. the Hub) in line with its Grants policy and recommended practice, and must be confident in the Hub's allocation of this funding, as it is answerable to the parish.

No decision on setting the level of the grant was made, but it was agreed that WPC should organise an informal quiet meeting with Hub manager and any members of the Hub Board of Trustees in order to raise any issues and ask appropriate questions before deciding on future funding levels. The Committee agreed that the Hub needs to produce a report outlining on how WPC grant money is spent / allocated in the same way as they report currently to WCC.

7. Date of the Next Meeting: to be decided - late January 2023

The Meeting closed 12.50 pm

Signed:……. Date:…….

(Chair)