

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE HELD ON
13 DECEMBER 2023**

PRESENT. Councillors W Clouston, M J Stone, N M Oliver, M V Kemp

The Parish Councillors were saddened to hear of the sudden death of Councillor Mrs Joanne Neal. Joanne was a valued member of the Parish Council and her contribution to the community of Corbridge will be remembered with gratitude. Our thoughts and condolences are with Joanne's family and friends at this difficult time.

1. **REVIEW OF ACCOUNTS UP TO 30 NOVEMBER 2023.** The clerk had updated the accounts for the period ended 30 November 2023 for consideration by the Finance and General Purposes committee. Items to note: Forecast income for Parish Hall £30K, cemetery income £25K and social housing rent of £18,720. There are no major projects to budget for in 2024 however the Parish Council plans to increase resources for maintenance of the public realm. The forecast balance for the year ended March 2024 is £52,924. This figure is likely to be nearer £60K as most budget headings are overestimated.
2. **TO CONSIDER DRAFT BUDGET AND AGREE PRECEPT FOR 2024-2025.** The clerk had prepared a draft budget for consideration by the Finance and General Purposes committee. Items to note: Forecast income for Parish Hall £25K, cemetery income £25K, Community Housing rent £18,720 (based on rent of £90 per week per property). After discussion, it was proposed to increase the precept to £168,000. This equates to an increase of £5.17 per annum on an average Band D property.
3. **TO CONSIDER GRANT AID REQUESTS**
Grant Aid requests had been received from Great North Air Ambulance, Tynedale Hospice at Home and Escape Family Project. It was AGREED to propose the following grant aid:
 - a) Great North Air Ambulance - £270
 - b) Tynedale Hospice at Home - £350
 - c) Escape Family Support – declined.
4. **REVIEW OF PARISH HALL FEES 2024-25.** It was AGREED to propose no increase in the Parish Hall Fees for the coming year.
5. **REVIEW OF CEMETERY FEES 2024-25.** It was AGREED to propose an increase of 5%.
6. **TO CONSIDER TRANSFERRING WEBSITE TO A GOV.UK WEBSITE AND CREATE DEDICATED COUNCILLOR EMAIL ADDRESSES.**
A report had been prepared by the Clerk outlining the reasons to transfer the website to a gov.uk domain and adopting gov.uk email addresses for both the Clerk and Councillors. A copy of which is attached. After discussion, it was AGREED to recommend that Corbridge Parish Council adopts this approach.
7. **TO CONSIDER REQUEST FROM CORBRIDGE YOUTH INITIATIVE TO INCREASE GRANT AID.** After discussion, it was AGREED to recommend that the payment to Corbridge Youth Initiative is increased from £8000 to £9000 for the coming financial year.
8. **TO CONSIDER PURSUING AN ASSET TRANSFER OF THE LIBRARY BUILDING TO THE PARISH COUNCIL.** It was AGREED to complete the Expression of Interest form from NCC. This is the initial stage of the process however a decision to go ahead will be made once the Parish Council is aware of any restrictions NCC would place on the building. The Parish Council's interest would be to protect and maintain the Library and Youth Initiative Services.

CORBRIDGE PARISH COUNCIL

RECOMMENDATIONS TO BE CONSIDERED AT THE MEETING OF CORBRIDGE PARISH COUNCIL ON 24 JANUARY 2024

- a. **DRAFT BUDGET AND PRECEPT 2024-2025.** To accept the draft budget and levy a precept of £168,000 on Northumberland County Council.
- b. **REVIEW OF PARISH HALL FEES 2024-2025.** No increase recommended.
- c. **REVIEW OF CEMETERY FEES 2024-25.** To increase the cemetery fees by 5%.
- d. **TRANSFER OF WEBSITE TO A GOV.UK DOMAIN AND CREATE DEDICATED COUNCILLOR EMAIL ADDRESSES.** To transfer the Corbridge Parish Council website to a gov.uk domain and create dedicated email addresses for all staff and councillors.
- e. **GRANT AID REQUESTS**
 - Great North Air Ambulance £270
 - Tynedale Hospice at Home £350
 - Escape Family Support – declined.
 - Corbridge Youth Initiative – increase to £9000 per year.

CORBRIDGE PARISH COUNCIL BUDGET	2023/24 BUDGET	2023/24 ACTUAL TO DATE 31.12.23	VARIANCE	2023/24 ESTIMATED END OF YEAR	DRAFT BUDGET 2024/25
INCOME					
Parish Hall Hire	25000	28906	-3906	32000	30000
Bank Interest & Dividend	175	722	-547	800	350
Cemetery Fees	25000	25122	-122	27500	25000
Lodge rental	6000	4000	2000	6000	6000
Allotment site	1200	135	1065	1200	1200
Miscellaneous	5000	4214	786	5000	7500
Community Led Housing	41050	41025	25	41025	0
Precept	150000	150000	0	150000	168000
Play Areas	0	0	0	25678	0
Social housing rent	21020	9825	11195	14505	18720
TOTAL [Credit]	274445	263949	10496	303708	256770
EXPENDITURE					
Admin					
Advertising	0	0	0	0	0
Audit Legal Bank charges	1500	1785	-285	1900	2000
Postages, telephone and stationery	2000	1895	105	2000	2000
Lease of office equipment & renewals	750	896	-146	1000	1000
Subscriptions Travel Training	2000	1680	320	2000	2000
Insurance	7500	8239	-739	8239	8500
Newsletter and website	12000	11178	822	13270	14250
Staff wages inc pension contributions	32037	25816	6221	32037	35888
Sub	57787	51489	6298	60446	65638
Community Support					
Grant Aid	2000	250	1750	1000	2000
Corbridge in Bloom	2500	2500	0	2500	2500
Corbridge Youth Initiative	8000	8000	0	8000	9000
Remembrance Day	350	350	0	350	350
Christmas Lights	1000	0	1000	1000	1000
Sub	13850	11100	2750	12850	14850
Parish Hall					
Refuse collection	600	0	600	600	600
Heating Lighting Water – Parish Hall	4500	2780	1720	4500	5000
Cleaning & Consumables – Parish Hall	2500	2831	-331	3500	3500
Repairs & Maintenance premises	2500	2500	0	2500	5000
Miscellaneous	2500	2171	329	2500	2500
Staff wages inc pension contributions	22600	18927	3673	22600	25590
Sub Total	35200	29209	5991	36200	42190
Property/Land/Open Spaces					
Corchester Playfield	1000	20165	-19165	20500	2000
Closed Churchyard	500	0	500	0	500
Stanners wood	0	0	0	0	0
Riverside to Well Bank Green	0	0	0	0	0
Play Areas inc skateboard park	1000	3064	-2064	1000	1000
Allotment Site	500	656	-156	750	750
Maintenance of Seats/ Shelters/Signage/Plants	2500	1398	1102	2000	2500
Groundworks inc outsourcing	45000	23991	21009	48000	50000
Tree works	2500	463	2037	2500	10000
Litter bins	2500	1846	654	1846	2500
Misc	3000	1544	1456	5000	3000
Public toilets	2000	0	2000	2000	2000
Sub	60500	53127	7373	83596	74250

Cemetery					
Skip Hire	475	0	475	475	1000
Cemetery Chapels - Repairs & Maintenance	2500	2265	235	2500	2500
Cemetery Lodge - repairs/refurbishments	500	145	355	500	500
Cemetery - Heating and Lighting	450	241	209	450	450
Cemetery Chapels - rates	1800	1472	328	1472	1650
Miscellaneous	500	486	14	500	750
	6225	4609	1616	5897	6850
Community Led Housing	12500	56100	-43600	56100	0
Fixtures and fittings	0	11930	-11930	11833	0
Maintenance costs @ £500 per property	2000	645	1355	1000	2000
Management costs @ £500 per property	2000	0	2000	2000	2000
Sinking fund - long term	2992	0	2992	2992	2992
	19492	68675	-49183	73925	6992
Handyman/equipment	8000	3816	4184	5000	10000
Contingency/Capital	10000	9577	423	10000	15000
Street Lighting	10000	0	10000	0	10000
Sub Total (DEBITS)	28000	13393	14607	15000	35000
VAT					
TOTAL (DEBITS)	221054	231602	38635	287914	245770

Cash in hand at this date [per balance sheet] 31.12.23				100943
Actual expenditure at this date	<u>231602</u>			
Expected expenditure at year end	<u>287914</u>	-56312		
Actual income at this date	<u>263949</u>			
Expected income at year end	<u>303708</u>	39759		
Balance of funds at year end 31.03.24				84390

Miscellaneous Income		Earmarked Reserves	
Corbridge Matters Advertising	4067	CLH Sinking Fund	2992
Cemetery wayleave	35	Street Lighting	10000
Refunds	112		
	<u>4214</u>		<u>12992</u>

Precept 2023-2024	£150,000		£83.16
Charge of an average band D property		£150,000/1901.83	£78.87
		£160,000/1901.83	£84.12
		£168,000/1901.83	£88.34