

NORTH CLAINES PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Parish Finance committee of the Parish Council of North Claines, held on Thursday 18th July 2024 at 11am in The Old Library Centre, Droitwich.

Present

Meg Farmer

Jean Robb

Sean Challoner

Peter Morgan

Clare Shinner

- 1. To receive apologies for absence and to approve reasons for absence.**
None received.

- 2. Declarations of Interest**
 - a) Register of interests; Councillors are reminded of the need to update their register of interests.
 - b) To declare any other Disclosable Pecuniary Interests in items on the agenda and their nature.
 - c) To declare any Other Disclosable Interests in items on the agenda and their nature.
 - d) Written requests for the council to grant a dispensation (S33 of the Localism Act 2011) are to be with the clerk at least four clear days prior to a meeting. Councillors who have declared an interest must leave the room for the relevant items as per the code of conduct and the North Claines Parish Council standing orders. Failure to register or declare a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest may be a criminal offence.
None were received.

- 3 Minutes from the last meeting of the Finance meeting of Parish Council**
 - 3.1 To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on Feb 5, 2024. These were confirmed and noted that they were signed at the July 2024 Meeting of the full Parish Council.

- 4 Internal auditor and external audit report to date.**
 - 4.1 Internal auditor review report – comments from DM.
It was noted that DM had suggested (under E- Income) a duplicate receipt book be used for receiving funds from events and the Clerk has purchased one accordingly. There were no further recommendations.
 - 4.2 Internal auditor for next year appt – new appointment.
It was noted that DM Payroll will not be providing internal audits and the Parish Council need to find a replacement. The Clerk will contact CALC for their recommended list of auditors and report to the finance committee at their next meeting. Councillors will not be expected to interview candidates.
 - 4.3 The Clerk noted that PKF – the external auditor had contacted her to ask that the public inspection notice was reduced to 30 days from 31 – which has been done accordingly.
As the £200,000 threshold has been crossed, the external auditors have asked for additional information and the Clerk has sent the finance minutes as requested to show consideration of “except for matters”

- 5 Review of accounts and expenditure to date**

A random selection of invoices was examined, and the reconciliation was checked against bank statements and signed by Cllr PM as correct.

6 Re the precept amount as commented by parishioner at annual parish meeting.

The finance committee examined the band D precepts across Wychavon parishes with similar populations/housing profiles. They were satisfied that the increase of 4.28% was appropriate and sat comfortably within its peer group.

£61.86 was noted as the band D amount for North Claines 2024-25

The previous year 2023-24 the precept was £59.15

The national average for 2024-25 was noted as £85.88

The Parishioner will be informed in due course that the review has taken place and that there were no adverse comments from our internal auditor.

7 Budget v actual

Examination of expenditure against budget.

- On track.
- It was noted that the additional costs for Top Cut for out of contract jobs were very high, and this was due to the payment of bills in April for work done in the previous year. The appointing of a new handyman may present a solution to this issue as they may be able to perform some of these tasks and will invoice monthly.
- It was noted that there had been a payment to the Council for CIL expenditure of £12,792. - this is a restricted fund as there are guidelines on what CIL can be spent on.
- The Clerk noted that the Parish Council may benefit from a restricted fund and will draw one up for discussion at the next finance meeting.
- Cllr PM to perform a budget v actual review.

8 Future expenditure

- Neighbourhood plan- at the current time, the NDP update was not proceeding due to uncertainty due to change of government and the potential usefulness of the updated plan.
- Pieces of play equipment replacement – Brum. Rospa has noted that the playground is safe. The Council noted that replacement of some items and a renewal of the surfacing was desirable. The Council agreed that a possible refurbishment of the whole play area may be more economical and that after at least 10 years the play area needed improvement. This could be discussed at full council.
- Pieces of play equipment – Bull Meadow. The Clerk noted that £20k was still held by Wychavon from the Community Legacy Fund and that to claim this, the Bull Meadow project needed to be completed including the installation of 2 items of play equipment. Cllr MF to action this.
- It was noted that tree cutting, and hedge trimming of Danes Green was the responsibility of the Parish Council and the Clerk will proceed with the work after quotes from a tree surgeon and Top Cut.

9 To agree the date of the next Committee meeting.

The next finance committee meeting will be held after the second quarter of the financial year in October 2024.

The meeting was closed at 12.20 hours.