

MIDDLETON-ON-SEA PARISH COUNCIL
Minutes of the Finance Committee Meeting
Wednesday 20th November 2024

PRESENT – Councillors Mrs Haywood (Chairman), Allsopp, Mansfield, Newton, Mrs Pendleton and the Clerk

1. APOLOGIES – None.

2. MINUTES – Approval of the minutes of the Finance Committee meeting held on the 2nd October 2024 were proposed by Mr Allsopp and seconded by Mr Newton and agreed unanimously by members following approval the minutes were signed.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST – Councillor Mrs Pendleton declared a non-pecuniary interest Item 5.2 being a Trustee of The Friends of Middleton Pond & Green.

4. PUBLIC DISCUSSION PERIOD – No members of the public were present.

5. MATTERS ARISING

1) Update on actions from previous meeting – There were none

2) Review of Draft 2025/2026 Budget

Members discussed in detail the draft budget which recommended an increase to £87.2k. General Administration costs were projected to increase by 2.5% to £35.6k, with former General Purpose Committee items increasing by 7% to £7.5k mostly as a result in website maintenance and computer/internet charges. The contribution to the Friends of Middleton Pond and Green is to reduce by £500 to £1k.

The largest increase is recommended by the Parish Land & Property Committee where Shrubbs Field maintenance is being increased by £3.5k to £10k because of a significant fall in the bank balance of the last 3 years due to ongoing losses. Whilst there has been an uplift of £1.2k in Felpham Colts contribution to £3k, ongoing costs of grass cutting, tree and playground maintenance have severely impacted the bank balance.

Additional provisions of £5k each are being made for specific reserves relating to the Shrubbs Car Park, Playground and Toilets refurbishment together with £3.5k for any potential legal costs. (The background for this is the possible acquisition of the car park from ADC in due course, the known condition of the playground equipment and ADC flagging up a toilets refurbishment which may be forthcoming. The parish council will be expected to contribute a third of the costs). All these uplifts take the requirement to £33.35k from £8k.

Councillor Newton said there was a need to get real and understand that costs are ever rising and that provisions had to be made. Councillor Mansfield raised the ongoing contribution to the Pond and Green and Councillor Mrs Pendleton agreed that it needed to be reduced over time. After some further discussion all members agreed that the

contribution will be reduced to £1k in 2025/26 and then reduced by £500 per annum over the following two years. If the Friends of the Pond and Green experience any financial issues thereafter it was unanimously agreed that they could approach the council on an 'exception basis' to seek funding.

3) Agreement on 2025/2026 Precept

Councillor Allsopp proposed that the precept for 2025/2026 be increased to £87.2k and this was seconded by Councillor Newton and agreed nem.con. In real terms, based on the 2024/2025 Tax Base Band D cost of £22.58 per annum, the 2025/2026 cost will rise to £35.41 per annum which represents an increase of £1 per month or 25p per week.

6) ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There being no further business the meeting closed at 7.25 p.m. The date of the next meeting is Wednesday 2nd April 2025.