**GRAVENEY WITH GOODNESTONE PARISH COUNCIL**

**Minutes of the Finance Working Group meeting, held remotely 14th January 2024 at 2pm**

**Present:** Cllr Alan Stewart, Cllr Catherine Wilkinson and Lisa Stiffell (Clerk)

Cllr Alan Stewart opened the meeting. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss a draft budget for the financial year commencing 1st April 2024 for presentation to the full Council at the meeting scheduled for 15th January 2024.

1. **Apologies for absence – None.**
2. **Draft budget**

A draft budget schedule had been prepared prior to the meeting by the Clerk and discussion took place around this, discussing each item in turn.

1. Clerk’s salary

It was proposed that this should be budgeted to allow for an expected 5% uplift as proposed by KALC from £4125 to £5,000 per annum.

1. Office rental

It was proposed that this should now increase from £300 to £360 as the budget has been set at £300 for many years and the cost of running home office is more expensive now.

1. Office expenses

It was proposed that this would remain the same as previous year at £100 as office expenses have reduced in previous years but aware that there will be some expense in 2024 to 2025 as stationary will be required.

1. Travel expenses

It was agreed to keep the budget at £75 to allow for any travel to training meetings.

1. Lighting energy

To remain at £700 for the year as current costing patterns are below that figure.

1. Lighting maintenance contract

Proposed to reduce to £550 which will give a 10% uplift based on current year spend.

1. Lighting maintenance repairs

This was discussed and it was felt that this budget should be reduced from £1,000 to £500 as the lights have now all been replaced and so the expected expenditure is minimal.

1. Newsletter

Cllr Catherine Wilkinson confirmed that a normal Newsletter run will be done four times per year which should come in at an approximate cost of £1,000. The budget was proposed to be set as £1,000.

1. Subscriptions

Action with Communities in Rural Kent (ACRK) is sadly no longer running and so the only subscriptions currently running are for KALC and CPRE. It was proposed that the budget be lowered from £350 to £250 due to the loss of ACRK.

1. Training

It was suggested that the training budget remain at £350 for the year to offer a healthy training budget.

1. Audit

The audit figure has increased annually, so it was proposed that this should show a slight uplift of 4% to a total budget of £400.

1. Insurance

The insurance figure was due to arrive shortly. A budget figure of £800 to offer a 8% increase was proposed to allow for an increase of costs in line with inflation.

1. Website

It was proposed that the budget for the Website be reduced from £400 to £225 as training was not required in 2023 as the Website and support from the Chairman has reduced costs.

1. Village Hall Hire

It was agreed to discuss this further at the meeting however, it was proposed that an increase to £14 per hour be suggested for Village Hall Hire giving a budget of £420 plus a proposed contribution for running costs of £580 giving a total budget overall of £1,000. It was also proposed that the Budget heading be changed from Village Hall Hire to Village Hall.

1. S137

A proposal of £120 was given as £10.81 per elector was considered to be sufficient as not aware of any future expenditure.

1. Chair’s Allowance

Although not claimed in previous and current years, it was proposed to retain this as a nominal amount of £100.

1. Repairs and renewals

This was discussed and it was felt that it would be unlikely that there would be a need for major expenditure. Therefore, it was proposed that this figure remains the same as the current year at £500 to allow for the repair of noticeboards and Bus shelter.

1. Miscellaneous

As there was not any knowledge of expected large expenditure it was proposed that a budget of £500 be put in place to incorporate the Footpath Warden expenses.

1. Election expenses

No budget was entered as not applicable this year.

1. Highway Improvement Plan

A budget of £500 proposed as there has not been any expense to date, and surplus is available that has been budgeted but unused in previous years. To be discussed further at the parish meeting.

It was agreed to present this budget for discussion and approval at the parish council meeting of 15th January 2024.

1. **Precept**

The proposed figures for the 24/25 budget give a total of £13,030, generally in line with budgets for previous years. This would give a precept of £12,565. On a new SBC Council Tax Base of 185.39. this would then equate to a payment of £67.776039 for a Band D equivalent property.

1. **Close of Meeting**

There being no other business, the meeting was closed at 3.00pm.

Signed…………………………………………………….

Date……………………………………………………….