

Report of meeting of the Finance Working group (5th January) to Parish Council 10th January 2021

FWG met in the evening of 6th January on ZOOM, present were Cllr. Holdich, Cllr. Batty, Cllr. Skinner and Cllr. Spendelow and the Clerk Mr. Haste.

Audit reports from both the internal and external were considered in detail and the working group noted that in both reports the auditors confirmed the accuracy, completeness and compliance with accounting requirements. The group recorded their appreciation of this achievement by the clerk as Responsible Finance Officer.

Review of Cemetery charges. FWG considered our current charges in comparison to charges by the Church of England and by Peterborough City Council. It was noted that the city council had ceased to make a burial charge for the burial of a child up to the age of 16. This is in line with the policy of the Church of England. Accordingly it is recommended that the parish council follows this lead. It is thought that the financial impact of this move by the parish council would be negligible.

Other cemetery charges are recommended below and require the formal consideration and approval of the parish council.

Lawn Cemetery Charges - 2020/21

Changes subject to approval by Parish Council and effective from 1/4/2021

LAWN CEMETERY CURRENT FEES		C of E PAROCHIAL FEES effective 1st January 2021	CITY COUNCIL FEES effective 2nd January 2020	2021/22	Recommendation	increase / decrease	%
Fees for Burials (including cost of leveling and turfing)							
Burial of Childs Body	£230	(Nil for still born or within 16 years of birth)	£200 to £450 (0-5yrs) £226 to £527 (6-17yrs) all nil from january 2020	£230 ELIMINATE		(£230)	
Burial of Body of a person (whose age at time of death exceeds 16 years)	£390	(£320 up to £348) + £199 funeral service fee + £14 admin fee	£952 UP TO £1666	£400		£10	2.56%
Burial of Cremated Remains	£200	£162 + £195 funeral service fee +£15 admin fee	£294 - £584	£210		£10	5.00%
<i>Burial charges will be reduced by 50% where an exclusive right of burial is purchased or had previously been acquired.</i>							
Exclusive Right of Burial in earthen grave 6ft by 3ft – 75 years	£325	N/A	£1308	£340		£15	4.62%

Exclusive Right of Burial in earthen grave 3ft by 2ft – 100 years (cremated remains)	£220	N/A	£679	£230	£10	4.55%
Fees for Memorials						
For the right to erect a headstone / monument	£140	£144	£104	£140	£0	0.00%
Tablet, plaque or other marker (cremated remains)	£70	£76	-	£70	£0	0.00%
Small vase not exceeding 12"x8"x8"	£60	£76	£64	£60	£0	0.00%
Additional inscription on existing monument	£60	£29	£64	£60	£0	0.00%
Refund of Exclusive Right of Burial - admin fee	£50	-	-	£50	£0	0.00%
Searching of Registers of Burial (including the provision of one copy of any entry therein for up to 1 hour)	£30	£31 per hour + £15 per register copy	£31 + £12 for certificate	£30	£0	0.00%

Budgetary Control report was considered and will be reported to the parish council direct. It was noted that the potential increase in our reserves is in the order of £13,790, mainly due to a £10,000 government grant, through the city council; together with increase in VAT recovered and an increase in cemetery income which is impossible to forecast.

Draft Budget This has also been examined in detail and is commended to Parish council along with the recommended increase in the precept from £32 to £35 for a band D property. This still assumes £10,071 to be taken from reserves in order to balance the budget, however it was noted that this was less than the forecast addition to reserves in the current year.

Clerks Salary and conditions of service – The clerk reported the current position and it was agreed with the clerk that no further change in Salary was required at this time as the national pay award had been implemented and the salary progression already approved by the parish council.

FWG commended the following recommendations to the parish council in respect of conditions of service;

- a) The supply of a mobile phone – exclusively for use on parish council business and for publication on website, email footers, correspondence. This will have the added benefit of being a permanent number for continuity. £150 has been included in the current year for the acquisition of an unlocked and refurbished smart phone and a similar amount included in future years for a sim only contract
- b) The Clerk stores a cupboard containing Parish council documents. Following the house move there is not enough space for the volume currently held. However the following solutions are recommended

- I. A large proportion of the documents are copies of past planning applications. There continued storage is unnecessary as the plans and parish council official responses are available on the city council planning portal. Furthermore there is no statutory requirement for parish councils to retain those documents
- II. Statutory requirements do exist requiring the retention of:
 - i. Accounting prime documents to be retained for 6 years plus the current year.
 - ii. Annual returns are retained in perpetuity AND published on the website.
 - iii. Other financial records, including annual financial accounts, bank statements and reconciliations are retained in perpetuity as historical documents of potential significance
 - iv. Minutes retained in perpetuity – in practice I retain printed copy although in this digital age it arguably not necessary. I would certainly intend to retain (and ultimately bind) hard copy of minutes for eventual transfer to the county/ city archives
 - v. Agendas and all supporting papers, where links are provided on the agenda are retained electronically AND published on the website.
 - vi. Statutory records required in the administration of a burial ground and record of exclusive rights of burial are retained in perpetuity
- III. The clerk is of the view that ALL records that should be retained together with stationery for day to day requirements could be held in a three or four drawer filing cabinet and the large metal cupboard disposed