**Minutes of Finance Committee Meeting – 12th November 2024**

**Present:** Cllr M Woods (Chair), Cllr A Parrington, Cllr C Morgan, Cllr P Morris, and Clerk. Youth Rep Alex joined.

1. **Apologies for Absence** – Cllr R Shepherd and Cllr W Cleaver.
2. **Matters Arising**
3. Review of finance documents up until 31st October 2024 – The Clerk circulated the bank reconciliation and budget forecast up to 31st October 2024. These were discussed in detail highlighting some over and under spend within the current years finances. The figures highlighted were the spend of just over £6000 on Greenfields Park for works carried out in the previous financial year but paid in May of this one. There was already an overspend on street lighting maintenance as there had been some costs absorbed this year for the 3 and 6 yearly inspections of the street lights that were paid this financial year also in May. Where there had been some overspend in wages this was counter balanced with costs for Recreational grounds work that had been taken on by the Park Warden. Following the project for the toddler play area it was noted there had been a total spend of £54,500 altogether with a return of £38,066.77 in funding (plus an additional £2,250 from the Balfour Grant in the previous year) making the total spend from the earmarked reserves on the park £16,433 (or £14,183 with Balfour Grant). This was to be amended onto the future bank reconciliations. It was agreed that following a sit down with the Finance Chair and Community Agent to fine tune her exact needs for staying in the role, there would definitely be room in the budget for next year to increase the Community Agent wage to support her. This would be paid as an addition by Rossett Community Council to the funding provided by WCBC. There would be space in the budget to add this to salaries in the precept. It was also noted there was still room in the current year’s budget for the council to purchase new planters as some of the current planters needed replacing. Cllr P Morris mentioned the issue with the fencing at the Hwb/Toddler Park area where there was an area open that little ones could just run out to the path/road. It was suggested that the council purchase the materials to make a gate and fence there to keep the park area contained for safety reasons. Cllr A Parrington suggested the Park Warden, himself and some volunteers would be able to put this together. Cllr P Morris just informed that the compound hadn’t been officially handed over to Hwb-Yr-Orsedd yet and so work might not be able to happen straight away. It was also suggested that some temporary fences be placed there to help for now.
4. Precept – The Clerk had drafted up a version of the precept for the year 2025/26. This was circulated and the numbers gone through. The rate of inflation was at currently at 1.7% for September, dropping from 2.2% in the previous month. It was expected to be 2.5% for the year so it was agreed there would be a need to increase the precept by only 2.1% this year which was a large decrease on last years percentage. This would see the precept raised to £81,500 which would allow for increases to wages with the Living Wage increasing and natural salary increases for the Clerk and Community Agent. One point highlighted by the Clerk was that whilst the council had included the Employers Tax into the precept for the current year, it was going to be a definite overspend and so would need to be increased almost double this year. The Clerk would recheck through the levels for the precept and resend the draft to the finance committee for final amendments before going to the full council meeting this month for approval. **Action – Clerk to look through and redraft a few numbers.**
5. Donations – The Clerk had received only 6 donations this year, including 2 within the week following the closing date. It was decided these would still be considered. The Clerk had put forward the requested donation levels for each donation and a suggested amount. These were discussed and altered or agreed accordingly. The total budget for donations was £3000 and the agreed spend totalled £3040.
6. NALC Salary Scale Increases – The Clerk had received the new salary scales and presented these to the committee. These were for 2024-25 financial year but only just agreed in November 2024. The committee agreed and approved the new pay rate for the Clerk’s current salary scale (Scale 20). This would be back-paid to April and put through in December’s pay following agreement at the full council meeting. **Action – Clerk to add to November Agenda**
7. Living Wage Increase – The Clerk advised this would be increasing in the new financial year for 2025-26 and would affect the Park Warden and Street Warden Salary. It was agreed this would be accepted and payroll changed as appropriate.
8. **Any Other Business**
9. New Financial Regulations – The Clerk informed that the new financial regulations model had been circulated to councils from One Voice Wales and she was currently working through it to adapt it to Rossett Councils requirements. Cllr A Parrington asked that this be done and circulated to the wider council for the following full meeting and then given 2 weeks to read through and accept by email vote if they approved to adopt it. This was agreed. **Action – Clerk to finish New Financial Regs.**

The meeting ended.