

Abbots Langley Parish Council

Council Offices
Langley Road
Abbots Langley
Herts
WD5 0EJ

13 December 2022

To Members of the Finance and Administration Committee

Councillors Sara Bedford, Liz Burns (Chairman), Jane Lay, Robin Powell, Owen Roe, John Swallow, and Jon Tankard.

The next meeting of the Finance & Administration Committee will be held at the above address on Monday 19th December 2022 at 6:00 pm, when your presence is summoned for the purpose of transacting the business outlined below.

The press and public are welcome to attend the meeting.

Isabel Montesdeoca
Chief Officer & Clerk to the Council

AGENDA

1. Apologies for Absence
To receive and accept apologies for absence.
2. Declarations of Interest
To receive declarations of interest in items on the agenda.
3. Public Participation
To note if any members of the public have requested to speak at this meeting, in accordance with the Parish Council's Public Speaking Arrangements.
4. To confirm the Minutes of the Meeting held on 28th November 2022. (Enclosed^[1])
5. Budget 2023-2024
 - i. To consider the current revision of the budget and agree any final updates and recommend its approval to the Parish Council. (Clerk's report item 1, 2023-2024 budget book v2.0 enclosed^[1])
 - ii. To consider the level of precept required to support the budget and recommend to the Parish Council.
6. Financial Grant SLA Award Annual Review
To note the following annual reports from ALPC Financial Grant SLA holders:
 - i. AIMS - (1 report enclosed^[1])
 - ii. Citizens Advice Service Three Rivers - (3 reports enclosed^[1])
 - iii. Henderson Hub - (3 reports enclosed^[1])
 - iv. St. Lawrence Church - (1 report enclosed^[1])
 - v. St. Paul's Church - (1 report enclosed^[1])
 - vi. Watford Lions - (2 reports enclosed^[1])
7. Financial Grants
To review grant requirements for both large and small financial grants. (Clerk's report item 2, Small Grants Application 2022-2023 v1.11, ALPC Financial Grant Application 2023-2024 v2.05 enclosed^[1])
8. Freedom of Information (FOI)

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To review and approve updates to the following policies

- i. FOI Guide to Published Information
 - ii. Data Transparency Policy, now referred to as Local Government Transparency Code (ICO Model Publication Scheme v1.2, ALPC Freedom of Information Guide to Published Information v2.01, ALPC Local Government Transparency Policy enclosed^[1])
9. External Audit Arrangements for 2022-2023 to 2026-2027
- To note the reappointment of PFK Littlejohn as External Auditor to smaller authorities in Hertfordshire for a period of five years effective from the 2022-2023 financial year. (Electronic Notification of External Auditor Appointment for the 2022-23 Financial Year for the 5 Year Period until 2026-27 enclosed^[1])

^[1] *Committee members only, other members on request*

[https://alpcouncil.sharepoint.com/sites/alpcbudgetsmeetingsplanning/shared documents/alpc meetings/alpc meetings 2022-2023/finance and admin committee/alpc-finance-&-admin-agenda-2022-12.docx](https://alpcouncil.sharepoint.com/sites/alpcbudgetsmeetingsplanning/shared%20documents/alpc%20meetings/alpc%20meetings%202022-2023/finance%20and%20admin%20committee/alpc-finance-&-admin-agenda-2022-12.docx)

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1. Budget 2023-2024

i. Changes since last review

Main changes since the last version shared include:

- o Reserves & Financials Sheet- Updates to ear marked reserves to reflect quotes received on proposed key projects in next financial year. Spend column added to more clearly communicate spend in current year.
- o Administration Sheet - Training budget increased to cover training costs for all Councillors after the election in May 2023.
- o Allotments Sheet and Bowling Green Sheet - Increases to Fees & Charges have been reflected in income.
- o Playing Fields Sheet - Increase to Christmas lights costs to reflect increased testing requirements from HCC. Increases to Fees & Charges have been reflected in income.
- o Vandalism Sheet - Increase in percentage of wages apportioned to vandalism to reflect current figures.
- o Manor House Sheet and Bar Sheet- Updated the ratio of Manor House venue vs bar income to reflect current actual ratio.
- o Precept Options Sheet - Updated Band D base number for Abbots Langley Parish as per TRDC Council Report published 8/12/2022 ahead of Council meeting on 15/12/2022 to approve.
- o Earmarked Reserves Sheet (new) - Sheet added to provide a clearer breakdown of proposed increments.

ii. Level of Precept

The 2023-2024 Band D base number for Abbots Langley published in a draft report for consideration at the next TRDC full Council meeting on 13 Dec 2022 is 8671.1 . This represents a 0.02% increase on 2022-2023.

Based on this version of the budget, the maximum I would recommend for the precept increase would be 10.2%, which would balance the budget for 2023-2024. If the Council is once again this year prepared to use reserves to cover some expenditure, the minimum I would recommend for the precept increase would be 4.4%, which would result in a deficit just below £50,000.

For the purposes of discussion, I have modelled 4.4%, 7.6% (equivalent to increase in budget) and 10.1% increases in the 'Precept Options' sheet of the budget.

2. Financial Grants

There has been some confusion regarding which requirements apply to small vs larger financial grants therefore I thought it would be prudent for this committee to review the requirements in both policies and come to a clearer understanding going forward. The key question we need to address is if Small Grant Applications are subject to the same rules as the Larger Grant applications, or not.

For convenience, the table below summarises all of the requirements included in the relevant policy documents. I have outlined in red / red text those criteria included in the larger grant policy that I think may require inclusion in the small grant policy.

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Small Grants (max £250)	Larger Grants (up to £2,500)
The Parish Council's Smalls Grants scheme is specifically for "one off" grants, to support the cost of small community projects or events which are open to all residents of the Parish.	<p>Assessment Criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fit to the vision • Filling gaps in provision • The assessment of the projects viability • The robustness or sustainability of the project • <u>The significant majority of those who will benefit from the grant should be residents of the Parish</u> • Availability of Parish Council funds for grants • Availability of applicants own funds and access to other external funding • If applicable, an exit strategy which outlines how the project will continue in future years without recourse to a grant from the Parish Council
Applications from businesses will not be considered, but charities and unincorporated groups may apply.	Grants will not be considered, or awarded if previously considered, if the applicant has any monies overdue to the Parish Council, such as hall or pitch hire costs.
The grant will normally be awarded to organisations that already have a bank account. If that is not the case the Parish Council will withhold any award and reimburse expenditure on the production of receipts.	Applications will not normally be considered from individuals.
The Parish Council will only consider one small grant application per applicant each year. The small grants process is specifically for "one off" projects and events, so <u>cannot be used for any recurring annual expenditure.</u>	Applications will not be considered from organisations intending to support or oppose any particular political party, or to discriminate on the grounds of race or religion.
Any organisation that has benefited from a Parish Council Financial Grant (main grant scheme) will not be eligible to apply for a small grant in the same financial year.	Applications will not be considered from private organisations operated as a business to make a profit or surplus.
Small Grants will not be awarded to any commercial organisations, political or campaigning groups, health, education or welfare organisations whose services should be provided by statutory funding.	Applications will not be considered from "upwards funders", i.e. local groups whose fund raising is sent to their central headquarters for redistribution.

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<p>If arranging an event, the Parish Council will not grant fund food or drinks.</p>	<p>Applications will not normally be considered from national organisations or local groups with access to funds from national "umbrella" or "parent" organisations, unless funds are not available from their national bodies, or the funds available are inadequate for a specified project.</p>
	<p>Applications from religious groups will be considered where a clear benefit to the wider community can be demonstrated, irrespective of their religious beliefs. Compliance with this requirement will need to be demonstrated throughout the project.</p>
	<p>Applications from education, health or social services establishments may be considered where the organisation can demonstrate that it is working in partnership with other groups and where there are benefits to the wider community.</p>
	<p>The organisation must have clearly stated aims and objectives.</p>
	<p>The organisation must provide a written Constitution that has been formally adopted by the members of that organisation, or a similar document of agreement between individuals where their association is less formal.</p>
	<p>The organisation must provide, or propose to provide, an activity or service that is believed to be clearly needed by the local community, or by a particular group of residents.</p>
	<p>The organisation is required to submit audited accounts or accounts that have been independently examined by a suitably qualified person, for the previous two financial years or, in the case of a newly formed organisation or less formal group, a comprehensive budget and business plan.</p>
	<p>The organisation is required to have a bank account in its own name with at least two authorised representatives required to sign each cheque, or similar robust financial control system.</p>
	<p>In the case of an advance payment, written confirmation may be required stating that the money will be used for the purpose requested, as well as a monitoring and evaluation statement at the end of the project period or the financial year, whichever is the sooner.</p>

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	Grants will not be awarded retrospectively, for costs incurred in the past. Grants can only be applied to future funding requirements.
	Organisations that receive a grant will be required to acknowledge Abbots Langley Parish Council's contribution on all publicity and printed material.
	Organisations that are registered charities will be expected to have submitted all annual returns and accounts required by the Charity Commissioners.
	<p>To reduce organisations becoming over reliant on continuous grant funding, with effect from Financial Grants awarded in 2018-2019 the Parish Council will be introduced a "Repeat Grant Application" clause.</p> <p>The Parish Council will only award a maximum of two Financial Grants in any four-year period to the same organisation.</p> <p>A year is defined as the Parish Council's financial year which runs April to March.</p>

Isabel Montesdeoca

Clerk to the Council
12th December 2022

[https://alpcouncil.sharepoint.com/sites/alpcbudgetsmeetingsplanning/shared documents/alpc meetings/alpc meetings 2022-2023/clerks report/f&a/alpc-clerks-report-f&a-2022-12.docx](https://alpcouncil.sharepoint.com/sites/alpcbudgetsmeetingsplanning/shared%20documents/alpc%20meetings/alpc%20meetings%202022-2023/clerks%20report/f&a/alpc-clerks-report-f&a-2022-12.docx)