



**Central Milton Keynes Town Council**  
**Meeting held on 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2013**  
**At Centrecom, 602 North Row, Central Milton Keynes**

**Present:** Rebecca Kurth (Chair)  
 Charles Ashbury  
 Ken Baker  
 Andre Brady  
 Linda Inoki  
 Andrew Thomas  
 Elizabeth Rowell-Tinsley

**Apologies:** Paul Cranfield (Clerk)

**Absent:** Ramo Erdogan

	<b>Minutes</b>	<b>Actions</b>
1	<b>Welcome &amp; Apologies.</b>	
2	<p><b>Budget Discussions</b></p> <p>The Chair outlined the purpose of the meeting to revenue expenditure for the forthcoming financial year.</p> <p>Summarised, the items for discussion included:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identifying areas where there is potential to increase or review spending</li> <li>• Details from the last meeting held on 10<sup>th</sup> January 2013 provided a summary of items to be considered</li> </ul> <p>A copy of the CMK Town Council 2013/14 Budget was circulated and then considered by all present.</p> <p>The estimated actual spend to 31/3/2013 was first to be considered. The Chair noted that Room Hire would normally average approx £500-£600 per annum. The reason for the increased cost was due to CMK Alliance meetings.</p> <p>IT charges for each councillor amounted to £33 per year.</p> <p>Costs of £1500 for leaflet/letter printing and distribution were highlighted. It was suggested that this could be reduced, although printing by councillors and high volumes needed to be considered. It was estimated that the cost of mailing to each household was some 50p per copy.</p> <p>The Chair noted that the current baseline figure (estimated actuals up to 31/3/2013) totalled not more than £33k, which would result in an underspend of approximately £8k. It was noted that this underspend was due in part to a reduced number of events held during the year.</p> <p>Under Item 2, the Chair proposed the creation of a digital shared library, known as a 'Drop-box', between Councillors, at a cost of £1000 for the</p>	

	<p>software and £500 for a laptop to provide administrative access.</p> <p>The Chair then discussed the costs of a potential Administrator, working 10 hours per week for CMK Town Council under a job share arrangement, with another community-based organisation. Under the assumption of these hours, a pro-rata salary of £5k per annum was budgeted, together with shared office running costs of around £150 per month.</p> <p>It was suggested that any Administrator be employed on a self-employed basis. Concerns were expressed that this would limit the quality of applicants and would cause issues with regard to tax and NI. Another option would be the potential to share the costs with another community based organisation for office space and provision of administrative work, perhaps based at Acorn House.</p> <p>The Chair noted that it was proposed that £2k be spent on improvement of the CMKTC website, migrating provision to Drupal or WordPress to give a more user-friendly design for both visitors and councillors.</p> <p>The Chair stated that the Total Budget final figure was actually £13,300 and not £25,760 as recorded.</p> <p>The Chair advised that the households transferred from Campbell Park Parish Council were included within the 2012/13 precept request. She reminded councillors that since April 1<sup>st</sup> 2012, Campbell Park grid square residents have paid less parish precept.</p> <p>The Chair clarified that 2013/14 Running Costs + Committed Funds was not negotiable, and that the discretionary sum was available for allocation as agreed upon.</p> <p>Comparisons with neighbouring parishes were drawn. It was noted that there was no trend across other parishes in respect of sums of precept requested.</p> <p>The Chair then suggested the meeting consider the Milton Keynes Council produced leaflet on Council Tax and parish precepts. It was noted that the average Band D precept across Milton Keynes was £62.21. The average for Central Milton Keynes Town Council was £25.41, less than half the Milton Keynes average, but similar to Great Linford Parish Council. Campbell Park Parish Council residents paid around £125.</p> <p>The Chair asked the meeting what future direction the Town Council should take. It was noted that the largest proportion of costs relate to administration, but a councillor noted that both the Chair and Town Clerk carry costs personally, and that the Town Council should appropriately fund and account for those costs.</p> <p>It was agreed that costs associated with CMK Alliance should be allocated separately for clarity.</p> <p>The Chair then gave each Councillor time to consider items for inclusion into the discretionary segment of the budget.</p> <p>The following matters were raised by councillors:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Making comparison with a neighbouring parish council it was noted that the majority of its expenditure is not on administration, but on project support and delivery. Therefore a “project organiser” would be a suitable role to establish within the Town Council, at a suggested figure of £5k per annum.</li> <li>• A contingency fund should be established, with a significant sum</li> </ul>	
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	<p>reserved.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An accommodation fund should be established, with the aim of having a Town Council unit or office accommodation. The cost of this was estimated to be some £12k per annum.</li> <li>• A legal expenses fund should be established of some £10k per annum.</li> <li>• The communication budget be doubled to around £3k per annum.</li> <li>• It was suggested that a wide brief should be set for the administrator role to include graphic design/illustration to aid communications material in getting the Town Council's message across to residents. Some councillors suggested that these skills could be procured on an 'as required' basis, to keep costs down. A suggestion that the role should extend to working with other organisations was not supported. However, a councillor maintained that a "project champion" on a salary of £25k per annum (Full Time Equivalent of £50k pa) would ensure a high quality candidate with sufficient gravitas.</li> <li>• A comment was made that the noticeboards were below standard and not attractive enough to raise attention. Campbell Park in particular did not have notice boards.</li> <li>• Provision of business cards for CMKTC Councillors, at a cost of £100 in total.</li> <li>• Funding for a surveyor to assist in finding suitable office space. The Chair suggested this could be funded from Section 106 monies. A mobilisation fund for property, with around £10k allocated was proposed.</li> <li>• Funding to join membership of other organisations. The Chamber of Commerce (at £500) and Rotary Club (at £250) were suggested. The meeting agreed that the Rotary Club was important and successful, and the proposal was supported. £1k was budgeted, with sums remaining for other organisations.</li> <li>• It was suggested that flyer distribution could be more cost effective, however, a councillor was of the view that post would have more reach. It was debated what items were sent out to residents and the frequency they should be sent. It was suggested estimates be sought for bulk postage, as the rising costs could mean estimates of £7k spent on postage in future.</li> <li>• It was proposed that Councillors should be reimbursed for reasonable costs such as parking in CMK and elsewhere. The Chair asked for clarification on this – to be investigated, but agreed that reasonable costs should be covered. It was agreed that a figure of £10 per month would be a reasonable sum, if this was allowable within current guidance.</li> </ul> <p>The Chair noted that the cost of the items proposed amounted to approximately £80k (of which £25k was formed of a reserve fund).</p> <p>The Chair and Councillors then revisited the list to agree on costs and items for inclusion. The following was agreed:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Business Cards - £100</li> <li>• Postage - £5k</li> <li>• Legal fund - £6k</li> <li>• Administrative position regarded as a priority to assist the Chair and Town Clerk.</li> <li>• Graphics/illustrator to be procured on an 'as required' basis.</li> <li>• Project champion/Town Ambassador – to be deferred for a later financial year.</li> <li>• Accommodation/office – The Chair suggested use of Acorn House,</li> </ul>	
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	<p>and estimates to be obtained. Estimates of £3k per annum for a two-person space were suggested. Total figure of £8k or less agreed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Councillors' allowances agreed under 'administration costs' – total £1k p.a.</li> <li>• IT and laptop - £1.5k, plus printer at £100 – total £1.6k</li> <li>• Website upgrade –Total £2k agreed</li> <li>• Additional communications (flyer/newsletter) - £2.5k agreed</li> <li>• Other memberships (CMK Rotary Club) – agreed £500 initial total</li> </ul> <p>Revised overall total £37k. The Chair advised that £20k had already been allocated, resulting in an overall spend of approx £57k. To raise precept to £60k would mean raising the average precept 50%, giving a CMK average for residents of approx £38 per annum.</p> <p>The Chair closed the meeting, noting that further work needed to be done outside of the meeting.</p>	
3	<p><b>AOB</b> Councillors Ashbury and Baker noted that they were to attend the Environment and Transport Select Committee meeting.</p>	
	<p><b>The meeting closed at 7.00pm</b></p> <p><b>Next meeting to be held on Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> February at Centrecom at 6pm</b></p>	