

Stratfield Mortimer Parish Council

Full Council 14/10/2021

Library Contribution

Agenda item 21/071 9: To RESOLVE the payment under s137 of £3792.00 as SMPC's Library contribution for 2021/2022.

BACKGROUND

An email has been from Paul James, Culture & Libraries Manager, West Berkshire Council (WBC) requesting a voluntary financial contribution to the library service for the financial year 2021/2022.

He confirms:

The library service has an annual budget shortfall of £150k to deliver the service – 8 libraries, Mobile and At Home service, e-library. In 2017 we proposed a contribution based on £1 per parish resident - or whatever parishes wished to do. It is a voluntary donation/contribution, not a grant and is compliant with Section 137 of the Local Government Act. We have previously provided legal advice to clarify that. The council is not delegating any part of its statutory duty to provide library services or levying a charge on parishes. Contributions are ring-fenced for the aspects of the service that the data shows are most used by your residents – for example, a particular branch library. Each year we provide each parish with data about library usage by their residents. We welcome participation in library working groups to increase community engagement and feedback.

The Office of National Statistics mid-year population estimates for Stratfield Mortimer for 2019 and released in September 2020 is 3,792. Supplied by Mr James, this is the most recent parish population data held by WBC, giving a proposed voluntary contribution by SMPC of £3,792.

A contribution of £3,797 was made in 2020/2021.

The SMPC 2021/2022 budget for s137 expenditure is £15,000.

Other information supplied by Mr James:

- 21-079 9.1 West Berkshire Libraries Service Annual Report 2020-21
- 21-079 9.2 Library usage data for each parish for the past 3 years.