Stratfield Mortimer Parish Council

Full Council 09/11/2023

Library Contribution

Agenda item 23/089 6: To resolve the payment of £3731.00 as SMPC's Library contribution for 2023/2024

Background

An email has been received from West Berkshire Council's (WBC) Acting Culture & Libraries Manager requesting a voluntary financial contribution to the library service for the financial year 2023/2024. They confirm:

> *The library service has an annual budget shortfall of £93k 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 contribution parishes wished to make. 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.*

Other information supplied:
- 23-089 6.1 West Berkshire Libraries Annual Report 2022-23
- 23-089 6.2 Library Usage Data Per Parish for the past 3 years. (This this data only relates to the borrowing of physical books and does not include e-library loans or other library services.)

Cost

This grant may now be made under the Council's General Power of Competence. The SMPC 2023/2024 budget for grants is £4,150 of which £0.00 has been spent to date. The £4,150 is in addition to the Community Grant Fund of £10,000

The most recent parish population data held by West Berkshire Council as published by the Office of National Statistics, September 2021, gives the mid-year population estimates for Stratfield Mortimer for 2020 at 3,731. This gives a proposed voluntary contribution by SMPC of £3,731.

Recommendation

To approve the payment of £3731.00 as SMPC's Library contribution for 2023/2024.

Clerk 03/11/2023