

# **Stratfield Mortimer Parish Council**

**Full Council 14/11/2024**

## **Library Contribution**

**Agenda item 24/094 6: To resolve a financial payment of £3,997 as SMPC's library services contribution for 2024/25.**

### **Background**

An email has been received from West Berkshire Council's Libraries Manager requesting a voluntary financial contribution to the library service for the financial year 2024/25, as follows:

*We are very grateful for all the support parishes have given to the library service over the last few years – through financial contributions, by publicising libraries to your residents and by encouraging volunteering. I am writing to you now to share the West Berkshire Libraries Annual Report (2023-24) and to ask, whether you intend to make a financial contribution to the library service for this financial year.*

*Please find attached:*

- *West Berkshire Libraries Annual Report (2023-24).*
- *The most recent parish population data held by the council, published by the Office for National Statistics (ONS).*

### ***Request for financial contributions in financial year 2024-25***

*The library service has an annual budget shortfall of £93k to deliver the library service. In 2017 we proposed a contribution based on £1 per parish resident - or whatever contribution parishes wished to make. This is a donation/contribution, not a grant and so 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 are most used by your residents – for example, a particular branch library.*

### ***District Parish Council Conference, 29th October 2024***

*In 2025/26 we intend to offer additional library services to the town and parishes that can purchased, thereby improving the offering to residents and their families. More details about this will be shared at the District Parish Conference on Tuesday 29th October.*

### ***Providing a financial contribution***

*If you are considering contributing for this financial year, please email me so that I can arrange for an invoice to be raised.*

***Get in touch***

*Please let us know if you have any queries. We are always delighted to attend parish and town council meetings either virtually or in person to talk about library services and answer questions.*

*With our best wishes and thanks for all the support we have received. It is very much appreciated.*

Information supplied:

- 24-094 6.1 West Berkshire Libraries Annual Report 2023-24
- 24-094 6.2 The most recent parish population data held by the council, published by the Office for National Statistics (ONS).
- 24-094 6.3 Library Usage Data Per Parish for the past 3 years. (Please note, this data only relates to the borrowing of physical books and does not include e-library loans or other library services.)

## **Cost**

This financial contribution may be made under the Council's General Power of Competence. The SMPC 2024/25 budget for grants, from which the contribution for the library service is usually paid, is £7,000 of which £0.00 has been spent to date. The £7,000 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 2024, gives the population for Stratfield Mortimer at 3,997. This gives a proposed voluntary financial contribution by SMPC of £3,997.

## **Recommendation**

To approve the payment of £3,997.00 as SMPC's Library contribution for 2024/2025.

*Clerk 05/11/2024*