

MILNTHORPE PARISH COUNCIL

c/o Parish Clerk, The Spinnery, Viver, Milnthorpe, Cumbria, LA7 7NF

Milnthorpe Toilets Request for Funding

Background

- The current Clerk/RFO took over the role in April 2020.
- Toilet grant received in 2020 and 2021
- Clerk was not made aware that the objective was to become self-funded by 2022. The previous Clerk and Chairman (both now resigned) did not make the full Parish Council aware and did nothing to become self-funded
- Clerk met with representatives of SLDC (via Teams) and made them aware that the Parish Council had made no headway and in November requested a reducing grant, totalling £10,500 over 3 years, during which the Council would become self sufficient
- After discussion with an SLDC Councillor this grant was changed to a capital grant. This made sense due to the change to a Unitary Council. In January I requested a capital grant of £7,000.

Update since January 2022

- The maintenance contract was due for renewal in June 2022 so I went out to tender with a very disappointing response. Responses were received from only two providers:
Healthmatic (current provider) said that the proposed model did not meet their business model and did not wish to consider
Danfo (who fulfil the contract for Arnside) responded - 'Danfo (UK) Ltd have taken the economic decision not to tender for this contract due to the current uncertainty of the financial market'
- We renewed the contract with Healthmatic on the current basis but with a view to changing a couple of things over the next 12 months, dependent upon the availability of any funding

Current Costs (net of VAT and per annum)

- Maintenance Costs (Healthmatic) - £6,500
- Water (Waterplus) - £400
- Electricity (Npower) - £400
- Sanitary Disposal (PHS via SLDC) - £100
- TOTAL - £7,400

Current Income

- Zero. Payment for use goes to Healthmatic. I am waiting for the latest figures, but up the June 2020 the average was circa £1,000 per annum.

Options

1. Maintain current position and increase precept to cover the loss of the SLDC grant of £6,000. This increase would be 20% of the current precept and difficult to explain to the taxpayer. However, spread over 3 years it is more manageable.
2. Manage the toilets ourselves (as Ulverston), costs would be similar but with the advantage of receiving income from the toilet use. If we increased the cost to 40p, this would see income of circa £2,000 per annum. This would need the door to become cash less and converted to take card payments, at a cost of c£4,000.

Solution to Options

1. The best solution would see a 3 year reducing grant of £6,000/£4,000/£2,000. It is accepted that a 3 year grant is not appropriate given the change in Council. A single grant for the full amount (£12,000) would be acceptable, but it is accepted that this is too high, especially given the lack of effort of previous incumbents to become self-funding. A lower figure of c£9,000 would be good and negotiations would need to take place with the maintenance provider over the cost of the contract if the cost of use was increased - Self-sufficient by end of 2024/25
2. The receipt of income from the use of the toilet would see less requirement to increase the precept on years 2 and 3. This reduction would be circa £2,000 per annum. However, if we see a capital outlay of £3,000 to convert the door in year 1. A 2 year reducing grant of £9,000/£2,000 would be required. Again, a single grant of £11,000 would be acceptable, but again it is accepted that this is too high. A lower figure of £8,000 would be good. This would see us through this year, allow us to change to a cash less system and make the changes to how the toilet is cleaned and maintained – Self Sufficient by end of 2023/24

Requirement

- The decision of option 1 or 2 must be made by the Council at a meeting, so I cannot definitely say which option they would choose. Option 1 is easier to manage, but option 2 would see a potential reduction in cost and hence lower cost to the village taxpayers.
- Given that there is a lower cost option it would be wrong to request the higher figure. This would make the Council decision immaterial
- I suspect that Option 2 will be selected and a grant would enable the door to be converted, the current maintenance contract to be honoured and the costs of changing to self-management to be absorbed

Request

- A request for a capital grant of £8,000 is made. This will enable us to reach the position of self-funding within the next 2 years. It will enable the Parish Council to make a decision that is acceptable to the taxpayers

