



A Meeting of the Employment, Finance & Policies Committee was held on Monday 16th January 2017 at 7.30 pm, The Amesbury Room, Winscombe Community Centre.

Committee Members Present: Mr. Chris Ballard (CB), Mr. Archie Forbes (AF), Ms. Janet Corry, Mr. Kevin Joyce, Mr. Gerald Lloyd (GL), Dr Paul Watkins, Mr. John Westlake (JW), Mr. Mike Williamson (MW) (Committee Chairman).
Other Parish Councillors: Mrs. M Ballard

Members of Public Present: One

Clerk: Mrs Lynne Rampton (LR)

- 1 **Apologies for absence** were received from Ms. Cresten Boase
- 2 **Declarations of Interest.** Cllr Watkins declared a pecuniary interest in the setting of the parish precept as a council tax payer for the parish. Members were advised that any payment of, or liability to pay council tax does not create a disclosable pecuniary interest as defined in the national rules; hence being a council tax payer does not mean members need a dispensation to take part in the setting of the precept.
Cllr M Ballard advised that as she was unable to vote at this meeting, she would declare a non-pecuniary interest at the full meeting of the Parish Council on 23rd January as a member of Sandford Village Hall Committee and All Saints Church. Both groups had applied to the Parish Council for grant funding.
- 3 **Public Participation.** There were none
- 4 **Minute Update from the previous minutes dated 7th November 2017.**

Min 5a. Revaluation of WMRG Changing Rooms for insurance purposes. As instructed at the last committee meeting, further quotations had been sought for the revaluation for building costs of the parish council owned asset. These were considered by members.
As agreed at the November 2016 Parish Council meeting, a formal revaluation of the WMRG changing Rooms should be instructed at a cost of £350 by Cunningham & Lindsey, as recommended by the council Insurance brokers. Proposed by PW, seconded by JW, all in favour

Min 6c. Abandoned mini-bus in the WMRG car-park. Address details for the registered owner of the mini-bus are unknown to the Parish Council. A message has been passed to the keeper via the football club, but to date the vehicle remains in its abandoned condition in our car-park. As North Somerset Council and the Police are unable to intervene as the vehicle is parked on private property, **should the vehicle remain in situ at the end of January, the Parish Council should seek legal advice as to the next course of action.**
- 5 **2016/17 Budget Summary to 31st December 2016 *Annex 1***

The budget summary for the period, along with bank reconciliation to 31st December 2016 was examined by the committee with any deviations from budgets being explained to members. Unused grant monies for the Neighbourhood Development Plan Group would be repaid at year-end. Concern was expressed by a member that the new Unity Trust bank account appeared to be taking some time to open with it being explained that as soon as all signatures had been obtained from members, the mandate had been sent onto the bank.
- 6 **Staffing matters**
 - a. **To consider a request for a reduction in contracted weekly hours for an Orderly.** With the council having secured the services of a reliable cleaning contractor for the Woodborough Road Public Conveniences in the absence of the WMRG and General Orderly, it had been requested by the Orderly that weekly contracted hours are decreased by 3 hours per week, at a saving to the council of 50p per hour should the current contractor be engaged by the council on a permanent basis.
It is recommended to the Parish Council that the contract for the WMRG and General Orderly is decreased from 9 hours per week to 6 and that D Heal Cleaning Contractor is appointed to service the Woodborough Road Public Conveniences for 3 x 1hour periods each week with effect from 1st April 2017.
Proposed by GLI, seconded by AF, all members were in favour
 - b. **To consider the employment of a 'handy-man' Orderly on a casual contract.** With the WMRG & General Orderly wishing to decrease his overtime hours, consideration should be given to the engagement of a further Orderly that could assist/carry out general duties in the parish on an ad-hoc basis. With a suitable parishioner, previously interviewed by the council for the position of Winscombe Orderly and having a proven record of works by assisting on a volunteer basis, **it is recommended to the Parish Council that Mr D James is appointed as a casual orderly, paid at a rate of £10 per hour as and when works are required. Proposed by KJ, seconded by PW, all members were in favour**
 - c. **To consider holiday entitlement for the Office Assistant.** It is proposed to the Parish Council that the annual holiday entitlement for the Office Assistant is increased to four weeks (pro-rata) plus bank holidays.

Proposed by CBa, seconded by AF, all members were in favour

7 To agree regular payments from bank account to be made by standing order and direct debit.

To reduce time spent preparing regular cheques, it was proposed that these payments continue to be made directly from the bank account.

It was proposed that the following payments be made by direct debit or standing order for the 2016/17 financial year:

Regular payments already made by direct debit or standing order – reaffirmed for 2017/18

DD	Public Works Loan	Frequency – half yearly
DD	BT telephone lines x 2	Frequency – quarterly
DD	Bristol Water WMRG	Frequency – twice yearly
DD	Bristol Water cem & allots	Frequency – twice yearly
DD	EDF – electricity WMRG	Frequency – monthly
DD	EDF – parish street lighting	Frequency – quarterly
DD	SSC – parish street light maint	Frequency – quarterly
SO	All staff salaries	Frequency – monthly
SO	GB Sport & Leisure – play area inspections	Frequency - monthly
DD	Information Commissioners Office - data protection	Frequency - annually
DD	NSC non domestic rates - Cemetery & Allotments	Frequency - monthly
DD	BWBSL - water/sewerage rates – Toilets	Frequency – twice yearly
DD	Canon UK - photocopier lease rental	Frequency – quarterly
DD	SSC - electricity supply @ Public Toilets	Frequency - monthly
SO	T Nyamunda – grass hedge cut & open of Toilets	Frequency - monthly

Proposed by AF, seconded by KJ, all in favour.

8. Budget Planning for the 2017/18 financial year & to agree a precept figure for recommendation to the full Parish Council *Annex 2*

Projected expenditure January – March 2017.

Lights on Mead Lane are all very old and SSE has provided a price to fit and install 5 x refurbished Cosmopolitan lanterns including new pole brackets and labour at a cost of £500 plus VAT. Members were in favour of proceeding with this course of action

There were no further areas of expenditure identified by members other than those detailed on the circulated list.

Draft budget proposals for 2017/18 circulated with the agenda papers to the meeting were fully discussed with a careful examination of the figures making up the proposed Precept request taking place.

The main points of note being:

- a. It is now known that the NSC Council Tax Support Grant will be reduced each year until complete withdrawal of this by 2019/20. For the forthcoming year, the grant has reduced from £5,938 to £3,521.
- b. **Skate-park half-pipe.** When constructed some 10+ years ago, an area was left for future expansion of the skate equipment. Following an approach by some young parishioners and initial investigations by the Play Area & Skate Park Working Group, it was recommended in 2016/17 budget deliberations that the skate-park is completed by the addition of a half-pipe ramp and a sum of £3,000 was included towards the project. With planning consent having been granted in 2016, tenders have been sought and four quotations received for the installation of a half-pipe in the existing skate-park at the War Memorial Recreation Ground. **It is proposed to the Parish Council that Radi-Ramps are instructed to construct and install a 12m x 6m x 1.5m half-pipe in the existing skate-park at a cost of £15,995. A post installation inspection report is also recommended. Proposed by GLL, seconded by AF, all members were in favour**
- c. **Adult Exercise Equipment, WMRG.** A request has again been received for provision of outdoor gym equipment at the grounds at a cost of around £10,000. This would address an age group in the parish that some members consider to be under-catered for and a sum of £3,000 had been included in the 2016/17 budget calculations towards this. Tenders have been sought and two quotations received for the installation of six pieces of exercise equipment to be installed on the grassed area to the front of the football pitch and adjacent to the car park.
It is recommended to the Parish Council for approval that Mant Leisure are instructed to provide and install six pieces of adult exercise equipment and grass matting at the WMRG at a cost not exceeding £10,500. The lower back bench should be substituted with a seated bench press. A post installation inspection report is also recommended. Proposed by AF, seconded by KJ, 7 members were in favour with 1 voting against due to concerns for vandalism.

d. Fees and charges for the forthcoming year were considered:

Cemetery fees as recommended by the C&A Committee were agreed with no change in 2017.

Allotment fees are to increase from £14.50 to £15.00 per annum for a half plot with effect September 2017
WMRG sports pitch rental charges and changing room maintenance contributions from sports clubs

A steady increase has been applied over recent years and it was proposed that this trend continues for both contributions for use of the grounds and towards changing room maintenance.

Sports clubs contribution for the use of the grounds should increase from £450 to £500 per annum for each club using pitches. Sports clubs contribution towards changing room maintenance should increase from £450 to £500 per annum for each club using the facility.

- e. **Salaries** – A budget for projected expenditure was set by the meeting. Any increases to salaries would be considered by the committee on an individual basis throughout the forthcoming year and consideration could be given to an increase in contracted hours for the Office Assistant.
- f. **Photocopier.** The current 5-year lease agreement expires May 2017; therefore three proposals had been sought for a new contract that were considered by the meeting.
It is recommended to the Parish Council that on expiry of the current contract, a new 5 year lease contract is entered into for a Toshiba photocopy machine with lease and copy costs as detailed in these papers. Proposed by PW, seconded by GLI, all members were in favour
- g. **Website and mobile app** – when investigating the introduction of a mobile app in 2016, it was ascertained that the current PC website is not mobile friendly or responsive and therefore money would not have been best spent at that time. The committee were asked to decide if they wished to upgrade the current website into a mobile responsive form, before considering if they wished to proceed with a mobile app. A quotation to upgrade the current website with our existing support company had been included in the draft budget along with a sum for the mobile app. The committee did not find favour with this request and therefore both figures were removed from the budget for the current year. It was suggested that the community could be asked how valuable the PC website was to them through an article in the Occasional Newsletter.
- h. **Grants and donations.** A list of regular donations as well as grant applications received has been included within the budgets. Members supported payment of grants/donations to Winscombe Youth Club, NSC Strawberry Line (for maintenance works in this parish), Churchill & Langford mini-bus Society, Millennium Green Trust, Royal British Legion (for the purchase of two poppy wreaths for armistice Sunday), and Winscombe Rugby Club (or other organisation to man road closure points for the Christmas Shopping Evening). It was recommended that an application for blinds for Sandford Village Hall is refused due to the small contribution to be made towards this by the applicant and the general level of reserves held (5 in favour, 2 against, 1 abstention). **Members were divided in their opinion regarding an application for café improvements for All Saints Church (4 in favour, 4 against) and therefore this had been left within the budget head with the full Parish Council to determine the outcome of the application.** An amount was included within the budget head for small grant applications.
- i. **Parish Council borrowing.** It had been thought it would be necessary to seek borrowing approval to enable projects for the skate-park (installation of a half-pipe skate ramp) and the War Memorial Recreation Ground (adult exercise equipment) to take place in the 2016/17 financial year. Due to the need for planning permission for the half-pipe, the project had been somewhat delayed and therefore entire costs for the project had been included within the recommended budget.
- j. **Cemetery & Allotment Working Group.** The group has requested an advance of £500 from the 2017/18 budget to allow a cut back of the allotment hedge before the start of the growing season in March 2017
- k. **Parish Street Lighting** – In recent years, provision has been made within earmarked reserves towards a replacement lighting programme. The Parish Council is responsible for just over 100 street lights in the parish, most of which are of nearing the end of their useful life with replacement parts no longer available as they fail. Due to other budget requests recommended by the Finance Committee, earmarked reserves should remain the same for the forthcoming financial year.
- l. **War Memorial Recreation Ground Advisory Committee** – existing pitch barriers for the first team football pitch are in a poor condition with the football club wishing to replace these with new metal barriers. As landowners, the Parish Council was not in favour of this type of barrier and subsequent advice from a Health and Safety Adviser recommended a UPVC type post and rail fence. This has increased costs from £3,000 to £8,000 and therefore the committee have included £4000 in their budget request towards this with the football club contributing the remaining 50% costs. Fence to be installed by volunteers.
- m. **Community fund and miscellaneous expenditure.** The Parish Council has over the past two years included a section of the budget for community projects, or to help out when assistance such as NSC funding for school crossing patrols been withdrawn – the council may wish to continue with this funding and therefore an amount the same as the previous year's budget been included for consideration. A request has been received that the Parish Council purchase a strimmer with a more powerful engine than the two currently owned. These would be for use by Orderlies and Parish Council volunteers for use on the Award Land as well as the Recreation Ground and public rights of way. The request for the strimmer did not find favour with the committee and therefore removed from the budget.
- n. **Play Areas.** Although weekly checks should still take place, it is no longer an insurance requirement that a suitably qualified person inspects the play areas on a monthly basis. It is however considered good practice

to have the play areas and skate park inspected more than once a year by a qualified playground inspector. Members considered that monthly reports provided by a reputable play area inspection company to be of considerable value and wished to continue with the current levels of inspection. A number of long-standing play area 'medium rated' issues should now be addressed through repairs to the wet-pour surfacing that has shrunk back from its edging.

The Employment, Finance & Policies Committee recommend to the full Parish Council that the projected forecast figures (2016/17) and budget as detailed is approved. This would result in a Precept figure for the 2017/2018 financial year to be increased from £125,000 to £130,000 and would mean a Local Council Element of Headline Council Tax per D Band property increase from £64.99 to £66.49 which is equivalent to a 2.3% increase per 'D' band equivalent on the current financial year.

Proposed: Cllr A Forbes Seconded: Cllr K Joyce 7 in favour, 1 against

9. Matters for Information – either points of information or subjects for discussion at next meeting.

 There were none

Meeting Closed: 10.00 pm

Signed Employment, Finance & Policies Committee Chairman

Date