



A Meeting of the Employment, Finance & Policies Committee was held on Monday 18th January 2016 at 7.30 pm, The Amesbury Room, Winscombe Community Centre.

Committee Members Present: Mr. Chris Ballard (CB), Mr. Archie Forbes (AF), Mr. Gerald Lloyd (GL), Mr. J Westlake (JW), Mr. M Williamson (MW) (Committee Chairman).

Other Parish Councillors: Mrs M Ballard, Mr K Joyce

Members of Public Present: Two

Clerk: Mrs Lynne Rampton (LR)

- 1 **Apologies for absence** were received from Ms Cresten Boase, Mr V Slater & Dr P Watkins
- 2 **Declarations of Interest.** As all members are council tax payers for this parish, all councillors present declared a pecuniary interest in agenda item 11 (the localism Act 2011 repealed the general dispensation under article 10 of the former 2007 Code of Conduct permitting any councillor with an interest to take part in meetings relating to the setting of the parish precept).
To consider & decide upon any requests for dispensation from members to allow them to participate in a discussion or vote on a matter in which he/she may have a disclosable pecuniary or non-pecuniary interest. Dispensations are granted to Parish Councillors under section 33 of the Localism Act 2011 and the Parish Council subsequently delegated the power to grant dispensations (s 101 of the Local Government Act 1972) to the Clerk or appointed Deputy (see PC meeting 23.07.12 min 52 iv.)
In response to requests received, dispensation was permitted by the Clerk for this meeting only to all committee members as the council must set a precept and it was considered to be in the interest of persons living in the Parish that councillors were included in the debate and that committee members vote on this item. Dispensation was permitted by the Clerk to other Parish Councillors for this meeting only to speak only on agenda item 11
- 3 **Public Participation.** A parishioner spoke on her grant application made to the council to fund a 'Men Get Cooking' beginner's cookery course previously funded by AGE UK.
- 4 **Minute Update from the previous minutes dated 9th November 2015.** There was none
- 5 **Audit. *Annex 1***
 - a. ***New External Audit Arrangements for Parish Councils – to consider opting in to the Sector Led Body Audit procurement. It is recommended to the full Parish Council that Winscombe & Sandford PC DO NOT opt out of the Sector Led Body of external audit arrangements. Proposed by GLI, seconded by CBa, all in favour***
 - b. ***Notification of dates our appointed internal auditor is to visit the Parish Office and to receive a half year report to 30th September 2015 and Audit and Risk Assessment report 2015/16***
Our Internal Auditor will visit the parish office on the 19th January & 1st February to inspect accounts and records for the period to 31st December 2015. Councillors were encouraged to meet and ask questions of our auditor. With the report letter to be signed by our auditor and it being confirmed that insurance cover is appropriate at 3.3, ***the committee formally accepted the letter report for the first six month period from Parish Council appointed Internal Auditors along with the Audit Report and Risk Assessment to 30th September 2015. Proposed by AF, seconded by GLI, all in favour.***
- 6 **2015/16 Budget Summary to 31st December 2015 *Annex 2***
The budget summary for the period along with bank reconciliation to 31st December 2015 was examined by the committee with deviations from budgets being explained to members. Aside from the Environment Group overspend due to the one-off purchase of a trolley for the Winscombe Orderly and replacement of 2 no. grit bins that had been damaged, there were no overall areas of expenditure exceeding agreed budgets. A number of headings showing an underspend were examined in further detail.
- 7 **Staffing matters**
 - a. ***To consider staff contracted hours and pay scales and to recommend any amendments with effect April 2016.***
It was proposed that the hourly rate of pay for the Cemetery Orderly is increased from £9 to £10 with effect 1st April 2016. Proposed by CBa, seconded by JW, all in favour
It was proposed that the hourly rate of pay for the Office Assistant is increased from £10 to £11 with effect 1st April 2016. Proposed by AF, seconded by GLI, all in favour.
 - b. ***To agree additional hours for the Finance Assistant and Office Assistant for 2016 to cover changes to External Audit requirements and general office cover for the Clerk.***
Agreement for the Finance Assistant to work additional hours to cover works to amend the Asset Register for

External Audit purposes at the end of the 2015/16 financial year was given by members with the Office Assistant also being authorised to work up to an additional 10 hours per week to cover Clerk absence when on leave. Proposed by AF, seconded by GLI, all in favour.

- c. **To grant special permission for one staff member to carry forward unused holiday entitlement into the next holiday year.** The WMRG and General Orderly was granted permission to carry forward 21hrs of unused holiday entitlement into the 2015/16 holiday year as a special holiday was planned for this period. Proposed by AF, seconded by JW, all in favour.

8. 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 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 2016/17

DD	Public Works Loan	Frequency – half yearly
DD	BT telephone lines x 2	Frequency – quarterly
DD	Talk Talk – broadband	Frequency – monthly
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	Winscombe Comm Assoc – office rental	Frequency – half yearly
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 - annually
DD	NSC non domestic rates – Toilets	Frequency - annually
DD	BWBSL - water/sewerage rates – Toilets	Frequency – twice yearly
DD	Canon UK - photocopier lease rental	Frequency – quarterly
DD	Sita - emptying of bins @ WMRG	Frequency - monthly
SO	GB Sport & Leisure - play area inspections	Frequency - monthly
DD	Southern Electric - electricity supply @ Toilets	Frequency - monthly
SO	T Nyamunda – grass hedge cut & open of Toilets	Frequency - monthly

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

9. To consider future banking arrangements for the Parish Council following changes to the Financial Services Compensation Scheme (FSCS) to include small local authorities. *Annex 3*

The banking report was considered by members along with details of a community bank account with Co-op Bank. It was considered that the Parish Council should move towards on-line banking facilities and only those institutions offering a secure facility for this should be considered. HSBC and Co-op Bank were eliminated from further discussion due to the ability to allow a single controlled payment from the account and Lloyds Bank due to high bank charges.

It is recommended to the Parish Council that a bank business current account is opened with Unity Trust Bank plc for every day banking purposes with an initial balance of £250. Proposed by GII, seconded by AF. All in favour

It is recommended that the Parish Council retains the HSBC instant access savings and Youth Council account.

Proposed by CBa, seconded by JW, all in favour.

It is recommended that a Business 95 day saver account is opened with Nationwide Building Society with an amount of £70,000. Proposed by AF, seconded by GLI, all in favour

10. To update adopted Parish Council Model Publication Scheme *Annex 4*

The updated model publication scheme is recommended for adoption by the Parish Council. Proposed by AF, seconded by CBa, all in favour.

11. Budget Planning for the 2016/17 financial year & to agree a precept figure for recommendation to the full Parish Council *Annex 5*

Due to the manner in which the council tax base is calculated, the number of 'equivalent D band properties' in this parish has increased by 25.9 therefore decreasing the % precept levy for each property. As a result, the grant to mitigate the effects of the collection method used since 2013 has decreased by £454 on the previous year. It is unknown if NSC will continue to pay over this grant in future years.

Fees and charges for the forthcoming year were considered:

Cemetery & Allotment fees as recommended by the C&A Committee were agreed with no change in 2016.

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 £400 to £450 per annum for each club using pitches. Sports clubs contribution towards changing room maintenance should increase from £400 to £450 per annum for each club using the facility.

Proposed by AF, seconded by CBa. All in favour

Projected expenditure January – March 2016. There were no further areas of expenditure identified other than those detailed on the circulated list.

Draft budget proposals for 2016/17 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. **Legal costs.** With all areas of parish council owned land now being voluntarily recorded with Land Registry, a nominal sum only should be included within budgets.
- b. **Sale of Green Garden Waste Sacks** – with this service likely to be withdrawn from April 2017, unless a smaller number of bags than the usual 200 order can be made, the council should sell off existing stock only.
- c. **Health & Safety support** – this has been moved from the annual subscription section of the accounts into 'admin' and will be charged at an hourly rate as it was considered to be most cost efficient for the council.
- d. **Publications** – The Occasional Newsletter was considered to be a valued communication and the current quarterly production of this should be retained.
- e. **Queen's 90th Birthday celebrations** – should any community celebrations be arranged, the Parish Council could consider funding towards these from the Community Section of the budget.
- f. **Neighbourhood Planning** – Grant funding is not guaranteed towards the next year costs for the development of a plan for the parish. Should the application not be successful, the shortfall of £4,900 should be deducted from general reserves.
- g. **Community Resilience** – it was noted that the entire budget for 2015/16 remains unspent but the budget was retained as work on the plan may re-commence following completion of the NDP.
- h. **Dog bins** – a number of councils including W&S appointed a new contractor to carry out this service at reduced costs from the previous NSC service. An excellent service has been provided since April 2015 and therefore the committee did not wish to change the current arrangement even though details of a cheaper, more local person had been provided for consideration.
- i. **War Memorial Recreation Ground Committee** – Budget for drainage investigation works for the car park area were agreed and members noted the repeated request for provision of outdoor gym equipment.
- j. **Replacement skate park ramps** – a written quotation for further works has been received and included.
- k. **Winscombe village Christmas trees** – an amount was entered into the budget figures for the purchase of small Christmas trees and decoration for the parish to encourage increased trader participation in the Christmas festivities.
- l. **Grant Applications & donations.** Grants were agreed for NSC Strawberry Line, Winscombe Youth Club and Churchill & Langford Mini-bus Society along with a small donation to Millennium Green Trust and a s137 payment to the Royal British Legion (poppy wreaths). Proposed by AF, seconded by GLI, all in favour.
Grant applications for the 2015/16 and 2016/17 financial years from 'Men Get Cooking' were refused as members considered that as the council has not previously provided 'learning courses' for parishioners, this would set a precedent for as large number of organisations to make grant applications. Proposed by GLI, seconded by CBa, all in favour.
- m. **MOOT Account** – payment of monies within this account had been made to the local Scout Group in 2014 and the account now removed from budgets.
- n. **Sandford School Crossing Patrol** – should the service be withdrawn during the next financial year, and the school not able to fund continuation of this service from an alternate source, the Parish Council would consider this matter at the relevant time.
- o. **Parish Street Lighting** – an increased provision has been made within earmarked reserves towards a replacement lighting programme.
- p. **Winscombe Skate-Park** – When constructed some 10+ years ago, an area was left for expansion of the skate equipment. Following an approach by some young parishioners and initial investigations by the Play Area & Skate Park Working Group, it is now recommended that the skate-park is completed by the addition of a half-pipe ramp.

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, it is recommended that the Parish Council seeking borrowing approval from the Secretary of State for a loan of £20,000 repayable over a 5 year term and a report should be submitted to the council to that effect.

The Employment, Finance & Policies Committee recommend to the full Parish Council that the Precept figure for the 2016/2017 financial year is increased from £122,000 to £125,00. This would mean a Local Council Element of Headline Council Tax per D Band property increase from £64.30 to £64.99 which is

equivalent to a 1.08% increase on the current financial year.

Proposed: Cllr G Lloyd

Seconded: Cllr J Westlake

All in favour

- 12. To consider production of a forward plan for this Parish Council to 2020.** A suggestion from a member was put to the meeting along with example business plans produced by some other Town & Parish Councils. Members considered current budget planning forward plans for known areas of expenditure and that a separate business plan is not necessary. Proposed by AF, seconded by GLI, all in favour.
- 13. 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