

WATERBEACH PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the **Finance Committee** of Waterbeach Parish Council held on 22nd January 2013 at 7.45 p.m. at the New Pavilion, Cambridge Road, Waterbeach.

PRESENT

Councillor M. Williamson, Chair

Councillors B. Bull, P. Johnson, N. Kay, A. Lloyd and J. Rabbett.

APOLOGIES

An apology for absence was received from Councillor K. Grant.

17/13 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 23rd October 2012 were signed as a correct record by the Chairman.

18/13 MEMBERS' INTERESTS

Councillor P. Johnson declared an interest in item **22/13 (Fees and Charges)** as a member of the Bowls Club.

19/13 FINANCIAL MONITORING

The Chairman introduced a statement of quarterly income and expenditure with a summary for the first three quarters of the year, the complete spreadsheet having been circulated to all Councillors prior to the meeting.

Members scrutinised each budget heading, noting the following items:

Office costs: under budget as rental of the old portacabin office was no longer payable.

Training: under budget, no training courses had as yet been undertaken.

Tree maintenance: under budget, the invoice for the work carried out in December appearing in the figures for January.

Recreation Ground Maintenance: over budget, includes items for which there are no suitable budget headings at present, such as street furniture and refuse sacks, also the part of the CCTV installation costs relating to the New Pavilion.

Insurance: under budget, due to the change of insurer, now through Suffolk ACRE.

Office equipment: under budget as the allocation for new computers is expected to be spent in the final quarter of the year.

Election costs: under budget, no election has been held.

Vehicle & equipment repairs and service: over budget, in order to maximise the efficiency, prolong the usage and maintain the roadworthiness, where appropriate, of machinery, regular maintenance is vital and a programme of maintenance has been initiated, resulting in increased costs.

Tools/workwear: over budget, in order to undertake the maintenance programme efficiently the appropriate materials were required.

Donations & Grants: under budget, no payments have been made as yet.

Tillage Hall Contribution: under budget, no money has been requested.

Legislative-RA/HSE: over budget, no budget had been allocated to this heading, but it was decided that, for greater clarity, items such as fire safety equipment and testing should be included under this heading.

Section 137: under budget, no payments had as yet been made.

Library: over budget, includes rent payable to the School and money for books.

Loan repayments (Parish Office): under budget as loan not as yet taken up.

Contingency: over budget, includes the cost of the Jubilee mugs (£1854.48) and possible ongoing legal expenses

New machinery: money allocated from S106 reserve

Buildings Refurbishment: project management costs to date for the Old and New Pavilions, allocated from Council reserves.

Members noted that for the year to date there was a surplus of income over expenditure but agreed that new budget headings, as being worked on at present by the Clerk, assistant Clerk and the Chairman of Finance, would better reflect the expenditure of the Council. It was therefore

RESOLVED

that it be recommended to Council that the existing budget headings be used for the remainder of this financial year but that new budget headings be approved for the next financial year.

20/13 BANK RECONCILIATION

The Committee received the bank reconciliation statement for the third quarter of the current financial year. These showed closing balances in the business saver account of £53,512.09,

the section 106 account of £50,504.60, the Cambridge Building Society Account of £50,000 and the Cambridge and Counties Bank of £50,000.

21/13 GRANTS

Members noted that a total of £8000 had been jointly allocated to the Donations and Grants and Section 137 budget and that to date no payments had been made. It was therefore

RESOLVED

that it be recommended to Council

(i) that notices be placed in the forthcoming newsletter and on the Parish Council noticeboard advertising the availability of grants and asking for applications, grants to be available up to approximately £1000 per application.

(ii) that as funds are strictly limited they should be given at the discretion of the Parish Council, taking into consideration the level of need and the proportionate benefit to the village and the community.

22/13 FEES AND CHARGES

A report had been submitted for discussion by Councillor Kay.

FINANCE MEETING, JANUARY 22 2013.

At the last meeting of the Finance Committee it was decided that I would make some recommendations regarding fees for the Sports clubs. What we had not realised at the time was that Roy had in fact written to all the clubs in 2012 and put them effectively on notice of an increase of 3.95% for 2012/2013. Based on the figures please note the following fees are recommended for this period.

Colts Cricket	from £120	rec. £124
Colts Football	from £650	rec. £675
Adult Cricket	from £1343	rec. £1396
Adult Football	from £1440	rec. £1496
Bowls	from £802	rec. £833

I am concerned about the Cricket Club fees because they only had 3 matches last year and it seems a little unbalanced if we consider how much the Colts Football uses every week. We don't, as a village, want to loose any sports clubs.

As an incentive to pay on time the Clerk and I discussed the following,

Full payment within 10 days discount 5%
Full payment within 30 days flat rate
Full payment 30 days + add 5%

Please note this is only a suggestion for discussion.

It should be noted that Waterbeach charge less than comparable Parish Councils. A lot of Councils take payment for each match paid at £40. Clearly if we consider the Football clubs, for instance First Team, Reserve Team and now a Veterans team, they are paying significantly reduced rates. In addition to matches they also have many training events and "warm-up" matches that are not factored in at all and currently do not seem to have an end of season and start of season meaning the pitches don't have time to be improved as our Grounds man recommends.

The Colts Football is extremely well attended and although not all the members are from Waterbeach, it is clearly a much used and valued resource. The charge (approx. £25 per session) is extremely reasonable when the number of children taking part and the number of pitches used is taken into consideration and should perhaps be carefully re-examined for 2013/2014.

The adult Football seems on the face of it to be under-paying as Roy calculated the charges based on 36 matches at £40 per match.

OPEN SPACES

I would suggest that the Finance Committee considers retaining Open Spaces fees for 2013/2014 at the rate set last year. Inclusive of electricity usage.

*Norma Kay
Chairman
Waterbeach Parish Council.*

Councillor Kay stressed the importance of not losing any of the sports clubs whilst striving to be fair to all: the sporting facilities provided by Waterbeach Parish Council are excellent and it was gratifying to see them being so well used. Members discussed the current invoicing system and level of fees and it was

RESOLVED

that the following recommendations be put to Council:

- (i) that invoices for the financial year 2012/2013 be sent out as soon as possible
- (ii) that, although the clubs had been informed in May 2012 that fees would be increased by 3.95% , they be maintained at the 2011/2012 level
- (iii) that, in order to coincide better with the Council's financial year, invoices for 2013/2014 and all subsequent years be sent out in September and that the Sports Clubs should be informed of this decision when sending out the invoices for 2012/2013 in order to give them time to comply
- (iv) that fees for 2013/2014 be increased by 3.95%

(v) that, as recommended in the report, payment terms be added to the invoices, offering :

- (a) 5% discount on payment in full within 10 days
- (b) nett for payment in full within 30 days
- (c) 5% interest on late payment

It was also recommended that a meeting should be sought with a representative of the Colts Football Club to discuss the matter of professional football coaches holding unauthorised sessions, for which the children are charged, on the Recreation Ground.

The cemetery fees and those for the use of open spaces were not discussed.

23/13 BUDGET 2013/ 2014

The Chairman introduced a draft budget for consideration by the committee and highlighted the major areas of proposed change:

Office costs: reduced by £1000 as prior year actual included recruitment advertising

Training: increased by £1000, to cover costs for both the Clerk and assistant Clerk and the senior grounds man and the grounds man/handyman

Office Equipment: reduced by £1000, equipment to be purchased in 2012/2013

Vehicle Service and Repairs: increased by £1500, the budget figure for 2012/2013 was considered to be unrealistic and, whether work was carried out “in-house” or by contractors, machinery needed to be maintained

Loan repayment (480283): removed from budget as repaid in full

Loan repayment (Parish Office): £5000, estimated payments on a loan of £20,000 to be paid over 10 years (previously agreed by Council)

After discussion, it was suggested that the budget allocation for WILL be reduced to cover the rent payable to the school and that, as a very valuable community asset, WILL be strongly urged to apply for a grant to help towards the running costs and the following amendments agreed.

Donations and Grants: increased to £1600 (£1100 removed from Library budget)

Library: reduced to £2600, to cover rent payments to school

It was therefore

RESOLVED

That the Council be recommended to approve the budget, subject to the above adjustments

24/13 COUNCIL TAX PRECEPT

The members considered the report submitted by the Clerk.

PARISH PRECEPT

(Report by Clerk)

14th January 2013

Following major government changes to the welfare system, due to be implemented in April 2013, the process for setting the tax base has changed. These reforms will see the end of the current council tax benefit scheme through which the less well off residents have been able to get help towards the cost of meeting their council tax bill. Until now, council tax benefit has been funded entirely through national funds but the government has concluded that this system is too expensive in the current financial climate and that, in some circumstances, it operates as a disincentive to claimants to seek employment.

From April therefore, district councils will be required to design and implement their own localised council tax support schemes (LCTSS). Essentially, this will be done through the granting of discounts to the council tax bill. Under the legislation, the council is required to grant the equivalent discount in cash terms as benefit for pensioners, so they will not notice any change to their bills. South Cambridgeshire District Council has also decided, in principal, to grant equivalent discounts for certain vulnerable groups (principally the disabled, their carers and some families with very young children). All other claimants will receive discounts that are broadly equivalent to at least 91.5% of the current benefits receivable.

To partially offset the impact of the new LCTSS, the district council will take the opportunity to cease discounts granted to owners of second and empty homes.

Like the district and county councils, most parish councils, therefore, will see a reduction to their council tax base. This is because the granting of discounts is treated as a reduction to the amount chargeable as opposed to council tax benefit which is treated as a reduction to the amount payable by the claimant.

To fund these discounts the government will give the major precepting authorities a new fixed grant equivalent to 90% of the cost of the current benefit scheme. South Cambridgeshire District Council is planning to pay a share of this grant to parish councils from April to compensate for the loss in tax base. The estimated grant to Waterbeach parish council for 2013-14 is subject to approval.

For your information I have shown what these changes could mean in practice to Waterbeach.

(Please note that the following are illustrations only and are not intended to be recommendations as to the level of Precept required.)

Band D tax base 1520.8 1402.5 (estimated by SCDC)

Precept received £139,459 under consideration

Cost per household
(precept divided by
band D tax base)
LCTSS
(estimate)

£91.70
n/a

under consideration
£7318.00 (estimated by SCDC)

To keep payments the same (i.e. 0% rise in Parish Precept)
the following amount would need to be requested from
South Cambridgeshire District Council:

$£91.70 \times 1402.5 =$ £128,609
7,318 + (LCTSS)
£135,927

This is a reduction in income from the Parish Precept of: **£3532 or approx. 2.53%.**

To maintain the income from the Parish Precept the
following amount would need to be requested from
South Cambridgeshire District Council:

£139,459
7,318 - (LCTSS)
£132,141

This equates to an increase in Parish Precept of:

$\frac{£132,141}{1402.50} =$ £94.22
91.70 -
£ 2.52 or approx. **2.75%**

Members expressed concern over the impact that raising the precept could have on residents but also recognised that imposing a 0% rise would result in a substantial decrease in the income that the Parish Council would receive, at a time when demands on its finances were rising due to the current economic climate. It was therefore

RESOLVED

that the Council be recommended to

- (i) increase the precept by 1.99%
- (ii) receive an adjusted budget for the next Council Meeting .

There being no further business, the meeting was declared closed at 9.15 p.m.

Chairman

UNAPPROVED