

WATERBEACH PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the **Finance Committee** of Waterbeach Parish Council held on Wednesday 22 January 2014 at 7.30 pm at the Old Pavilion, Cambridge Road, Waterbeach.

PRESENT:

Councillors Bull, Grant, P Johnson, Kay, Lloyd, Rabbett and M Williamson

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillor Smith

IN ATTENDANCE:

Parish Clerk E Jones, Councillor Smart, Councillor Cornwell

40/13 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 19 November 2013 were agreed and signed as a correct record by the Chairman.

Proposed: Cllr Bull. Seconded. Cllr P Johnson. Unanimous.

41 /13 MEMBERS' INTERESTS

No interests were declared by Members in respect of items appearing on the agenda for the meeting.

42/13 GRANT APPLICATION PROCEDURE

Cllr M Williamson presented a proposal for a Grant Application Procedure and Form. Having looked at several other councils' procedures, the proposed version was based on that used by Milton Parish Council. It was agreed that this covered everything necessary and should be recommended to the next Parish Council meeting.

It was suggested that although ad hoc grants may be made during the course of the year, an annual advertisement should be placed to encourage organisations to apply during February so that most decisions can be made in March.

It was also pointed out that we should define a clear decision-making process.

43/13 DEPOSIT ACCOUNTS

The account with Close Bros is now open and £50,000 will be deposited in there from the Barclays Bank Savings Account.

There is also £50,000 in the Cambridge and Counties Bank plus some interest and £51,327 in the Cambridge Building Society including interest

It was agreed that accrued interest should be transferred to Barclays in order, as far as possible, to maintain Parish Council policy of not more than £50,000 being kept in one institution

The Clerk will prepare an information note for the committee detailing what is held where, including details of s106 funds.

44/13 BUDGET REPORT TO END DECEMBER 2013

The question of income was discussed including the fact that invoices will shortly be issued to the sports clubs. Income figures have not been received at recent monthly parish council meetings and the Clerk agreed that in future this would be done

Account headings had been reviewed and it had been agreed that they are adequate going forward.

Cllr M Williamson explained Appendix 2 of his report dated 22 January 14, which shows expenditure for the year to end December 2013. Budget figures are shown pro-rata at 75% of the budgeted total for the year, the exceptions being insurance budgeted in the first quarter and grants in the final quarter.

The question of the cost of salaries was raised and it was pointed out that it was in 2009 that the Clerk's salary had been increased by £10,000 per annum and an Assistant Clerk had been appointed that same year.

The Precept increased significantly between 2008/9 and 2009/10. Since the current council was elected the precept has increased very little.

It was suggested that on occasions it may be appropriate to use contractors for specialist work, rather than use staff time but it was also noted that there is often a significant mark-up for external labour.

There was a suggestion that we might analyse costs by method of delivery – staff vs contractors - but currently we analyse by task and location.

Cllr M Williamson checked and acknowledged that there was an error in the election cost figures shown in the report. The actual cost of the election following the resignation of Cllr Ball was £3,700 and not £6,000.

There are a number of concerns about the cost of electricity in all areas:

- It may be that significant costs are incurred during the Beer Festival and it has already been agreed that the meters should be read before and after that event.
- It is difficult to get users to turn the power off when leaving the New Pavilion.
- The sewage digester pump to Tillage Hall is on the New Pavilion circuit. The Clerk agreed to speak to an electrician about the options for controlling or separating this.
- All electricity meters will be monitored for a while and their accuracy checked.
- The possibility of installing a time clock for one or more of the buildings was raised.

We are under budget on Machinery and Servicing spares. The figure listed under equipment cost is high due to the replacement of items stolen and will be largely offset by insurance repayment. Cricket square maintenance is over budget, partly caused by vandalism at the start of the season. It was agreed that the headings of Playground and Skate park equipment and maintenance should be moved to appear in future under the Recreation ground heading

It was agreed that the costs of maintenance of the recreation ground car park be charged to reserves.

The cost of office water seems high and it was agreed this be checked and monitored.

It was agreed that the office refurbishment be charged to reserves.

The amount allocated to the Library is to cover rent and miscellaneous costs. Additional funding will come under the grants and donations heading – usually £1,000.

The amount shown under legal costs is to be offset against the contingency heading,

It was confirmed that we have approval from South Cambridgeshire District Council for the s106 expense on the tractor. The Clerk agreed to check that this was in writing - also for other s106 spending.

There is shared responsibility for both servicing and replacement costs for the sewage pump for the New Pavilion and Tillage Hall. It was felt that the Parish Council is probably responsible for around 75/80% of the use and thus the costs.

Overall we are within budget so far and expect to still be so by the end of the Financial Year.

It is hoped that at the Year End around £7,500 in surplus will be able to be transferred to reserves, the budgeted surplus being £4,809. It was agreed in future to split the s106 reserves into different categories.

45/13 BUDGET FOR 2014-15

The question of usage and deterioration of both machinery and play and adult fitness equipment was raised and whether reserves need to be topped up further to allow for eventual replacement. The budget for office equipment and office maintenance has been reduced in 2014-15 as computers were purchased and the office refurbished recently.

Salary costs include 29% pension contributions.

Amendments to the draft budget were agreed as follows:-

- Add casual part-time staff allowance of £2,500
- Increase New Pavilion maintenance to £2,500 as it needs painting
- Increase Machinery Store Equipment to £3,000
- Reduce Machinery Store Maintenance to £2,500
- Increase Machinery Store Water to £ 250
- Increase Cemetery maintenance to £1,500
- Reduce Cemetery rates to £250
- Add Play areas equipment - £1,000
- Add Play areas maintenance - £1,000
- Increase Library to £2500
- Increase Legal and professional to £1500
- Increase meeting costs to £250

There was a discussion regarding the effectiveness of the vertidrain and grass seeding on the sports pitches and whether to continue. The amount was kept in the budget but it was agreed that the Clerk would investigate whether other councils had found the programme effective. The access road needs repair as does the car park – for which a contribution should be requested from Tillage Hall.

In total the Budget for 2014-15 will be in deficit by about £5/6000 against the precept so the balance will be allocated from reserves.

There are cumulative general unallocated reserves of £67k which is approximately 6 months' expenditure which is in the recommended range.

Because of the withdrawal of Council Tax support grant, if the precept were maintained at the same level, the Parish Council share of Band D Council Tax would go up by 6%

Our intention is to reduce the precept by 3% and cover the difference from reserves.

It was agreed that we the revised draft budget be put to the council for approval.

If we were to get agreement from The County Council for the pedestrian crossing, the Parish Council share of the costs could be covered by a loan with repayments spread over 10 years.

The probable total cost would be £31,500 and currently such loans are available at 3.02% interest rate.

It was suggested that we might spend on the bus information system and the Clerk agreed to check the costs.

At 21.40 the meeting was suspended to allow members of the public to ask questions. In answer to a question it was explained that costs for the skatepark are not in budget as it is hoped to finance this from grants and s106 money. The likely cost is £75,000.

At 21.45 the public were excluded in order to enable the meeting to discuss salaries. Cllr Rabbett declared an interest and left the meeting.

46/13 STAFF SALARIES BUDGET 2014/15

The salaries budget was agreed at a reduced amount of £67,500. The details appear in the confidential minutes.

There being no further business, the meeting was declared closed at 22.06 pm.

Chairman

UNAPPROVED