



MINUTES

Meeting: FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE **Date:** 21st December 2015 **Time:** 6.35pm

Venue: NORTH WEALD LIBRARY, 138 HIGH ROAD, NORTH WEALD, ESSEX

PRESENT:

Councillors (11) C Hawkins (Chairman), B Bartram, T Blanks, B Clegg, B Eldridge, A Buckley, Mrs E Godwin-Brown, Mrs A Grigg, G Mulliner, R Spearman, D Stallan

Also in Attendance (1)

Adriana Jones – Principal Finance Officer

Members of the Public (0)

No Members of the public were present.

F.1501 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (4)

NOTED apologies had been received from Councillors Mrs Jackman, Mrs Adams, Tyler and Bedford.

F.1502 OTHER ABSENCES (0)

NOTED there were no other absences.

F.1503 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr Spearman declared a Pecuniary Interest by virtue of being a supplier to the Parish Council of general outdoor and garden related items. Cllr Godwin-Brown and Cllr Bartram declared a non pecuniary interest in any item relating to the Queens Hall Charity.

F.1504 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

NOTED there were no Members of the Public present.

F.1505 BUDGET AND PRECEPT 2016/2017

Members had been issued with Income and Expenditure papers which, following thorough investigation by the Principal Finance Officer (PFO), included suggested budget figures for 2016/2017. Members had been advised to review these figures prior to the meeting, and if any members had any questions, these could be individually discussed at the meeting.

Councillors noted that advice had been received from EFDC that the Parish Support Grant could possibly be reduced by 16.6% against the 2015/2016 grant award, however this was dependent on a number of factors including changes in the Council Tax Base. Draft figures were emailed to the Clerk earlier in the day, which confirmed that this Parish Council was one of only two who could expect to receive an increase in the grant award of £10,541. This was subject to agreement by EFDC in January 2016.

Cllr Mulliner informed members that it was worth noting that the Police had already indicated they would be increasing their precept for 2016/2017 by the maximum

allowable without a referendum. Cllr Blanks stated that he had read somewhere that EFDC would be increasing the council tax by 2.5%, however Cllr Stallan and Cllr Mrs Grigg stated that EFDC had not yet considered their precept for the 2016/2017 financial year. The meeting clerk confirmed that ECC had indicated they would be increasing their element of taxation too.

Councillors **NOTED** the detailed income and expenditure figures as attached to the agenda. The meeting clerk advised that Cllr Blanks had contacted her regarding a couple of errors and queries, all of which had been rectified or answers to the queries given, to which Cllr Blanks was reasonably satisfied. Councillors **AGREED** the suggested budget figures for 2016/2017 as detailed below.

BUDGET 2016/2017		
Item	Income	Expenditure
Bank Interest	400	-
Miscellaneous	10,541	-
<i>Donations</i>	0	-
<i>Repayments and Refunds</i>	0	-
<i>Grants (Inc Parish Support Grant)</i>	10,541	-
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Parish Hall	15,127	19,085
<i>Hall Hirer (Regular - Own Ins)</i>	8,000	-
<i>Miscellaneous</i>	0	1,000
<i>Returnable Deposit</i>	1,000	1,000
<i>Music Licence</i>	111	111
<i>Hall Hirer (occasional)</i>	5,500	-
<i>Hall Hire - Storage</i>	516	-
<i>Rates</i>	0	-
<i>Utilities</i>	0	3,400
<i>General Maintenance</i>	0	2,000
<i>Bin Hire / Empty</i>	0	870
Salaries		
<i>Basic Salary - P/Hall</i>	0	5,054
<i>Superannuation - P/Hall</i>	0	2,550
<i>Travel & Subsistence P/Hall</i>	0	-
<i>Temporary Cover - P/Hall</i>	0	-
<i>Tax & NI - P/Hall</i>	0	100
<i>Overtime - P/Hall</i>	0	3,000
<i>Structural Repairs Fund</i>	0	-
Cemetery	8,000	8,150
<i>Plot Purchase</i>	3,000	-
<i>Interment</i>	4,000	-
<i>Memorials</i>	1,000	-

Miscellaneous	0	-
Transfer Fee	0	-
GOR Grant Renewal	0	-
Utilities	0	100
Grounds Maintenance	0	6,000
Furniture	0	-
Bin Hire / Empty	0	550
Grave Digging Fees	0	1,500
Open Spaces	280	10,474
Dog Bins	280	1,404
Bluemans End Rental	0	215
Bluemans End Maintenance	0	1,200
Noticeboards	0	200
Bus Shelter Maintenance	0	50
Vandalism Contingency	0	200
Norwegian Memorial	0	900
Public Seats	0	5
School Green Lane Play Area	0	1,350
Village Sign and Grass	0	600
Miscellaneous	0	100
Pike Way	0	900
Thornwood Nature Reserve	0	400
TW Field Fund	0	-
TW Grounds Maintenance	0	1,600
TW Play Area Maintenance	0	1,350
Allotments	2,000	2,400
Rent	2,000	-
WFG Key Deposit	0	-
Utilities	0	1,000
Grounds Maintenance	0	800
Miscellaneous	0	600
Weald Common	0	3,600
Grounds Maintenance	0	1,000
WC Play areas	0	2,600
Remembrance Sunday	1,200	1,600
General Admin	200	17,273
Telephones & Internet	0	1,850
Stationery	0	1,600
Maintenance & Equipment	0	1,000
Photocopier	200	2,000

Postage	0	400
Audit	0	1,300
Books & Publications	0	50
Training	0	1,000
Insurance	0	3,100
Subscriptions	0	2,000
Accommodation	0	2,173
Emergency Planning	0	50
Community Day	0	500
Hospitality Allowance	0	200
Bank Charges	0	-
Website	0	50
Salaries - Office	0	85,838
Basic Salary - Admin	0	51,933
Tax & NI - Admin	0	14,705
Superannuation - Admin	0	16,000
Travel & Subsistence - Admin	0	1,700
Temporary Cover - Admin	0	-
Overtime - Admin	0	1,500
Street Lighting	0	6,200
Electricity Supply	0	3,200
Light Maintenance	0	3,000
Bassett Millennium Walks	0	0
Elections	0	250
Miscellaneous Contingency	0	2,000
Public Works Loan Board	0	2,394
Newsletter costs	0	1,000

Councillors reviewed the proposed Additional Items, the main points of discussion included the following:

Weald Common

Cllr Blanks stated that he felt the Weald Common fund was already a healthy size, and that no further funds should be precepted for works relating to this area. Cllr Mrs Grigg explained the history regarding the Weald Common funds, in that previously when the interest rates were better than they were at present, Weald Common was funded by the interest received from this earmarked reserve, however since the interest rates have fallen, this fund has been eaten into, and it was important to ensure there was enough money in the fund for any essential works that were needed for Weald Common or the associated facilities. Cllr Mulliner stated

that the position regarding who actually owns the car parking spaces at the Village hall needed to be clarified. Cllr Grigg stated that her understanding was that the Parish Council were allocated 8 of the spaces, and the Village Hall 2. Following a vote, it was **AGREED** that the Clerk would obtain the appropriate documents to confirm exactly who owned what car parking spaces. Results of vote were:

8 - For 2 - Against

Councillors noted that the surface to the entrance to the new Weald Common Play Area was extremely muddy, and that either the path should be extended to include this area, or something else done to ensure the entrance is more solid. Council **AGREED** that the Earmarked Reserves for the Weald Common Path should be used to provide a more solid and durable surface from the end of the current path into the Play Area. Councillors noted that advice had been received from the contractor who installed the path stating that regular maintenance would be needed, suggesting twice per year at an estimated cost of £360 each time to fill any holes and make good any rutts etc. Cllr Spearman suggested that a better long term solution would be to create an earmarked fund to tarmac a path in this area. Cllr Mulliner stated that the path itself is fine, and it was just the point where the path stops that there are issues. After discussion, it was **AGREED** that £720 could be used from the Earmarked Reserve for the WC Path towards its maintenance for 2016/2017.

Public Works Loan Board

Councillors noted that the cost to pay off the full loan would be in the region of £21,000. Cllr Stallan asked if the Queens Hall were in a position to take over these loan payments, to which Cllr Bartram stated they were not. Cllr Stallan then asked if the Queens Hall Charity had been asked to contribute to the payments, and if they haven't then they should be. It was **AGREED** that the Loan would not be paid off at this time, and that the Clerk would write to the Queens Hall Charity asking them to contribute to the loan payments. Cllr Grigg abstained from this decision as details regarding the finances of the Queens Hall were not available to ascertain their current financial status.

CCTV Outside Shops North Weald

Cllr Stallan asked if the shops had been asked to contribute towards the cost of the CCTV, to which the meeting clerk stated they had not. Cllr Stallan asked who would be getting any income from the CCTV, for example by way of costs charged to insurance companies who want images. The meeting clerk stated that her understanding was that although the Parish Council could fund the CCTV, it would be managed by EFDC, and as such she assumed EFDC would receive any such income. Cllr Stallan stated that he would support a small contribution towards CCTV, providing there was a similar contribution from the shops, and subject to clarification from EFDC as to who would receive any income, stating it should be the Parish Council. Cllr Mulliner stated that he felt the Parish Council should not be paying for CCTV, stating that it doesn't solve the problems, and suggested all the funding should come via the shops. Cllr Clegg stated that he felt this issue had emerged following the recent antisocial behaviour at Halloween, most of which wasn't anywhere near the shops, and as such he would support the CCTV providing it was funded by the shops themselves. Cllr Godwin-Brown stated that following the recent public gathering at the Library by a number concerned residents, it was important the Public knew the Parish Council supported and understood their concerns, and suggested precepting £1,000 towards the CCTV. Cllr Buckley queried the amount suggested in the budget, stating that the Clerk has suggested a figure of £3,600 at a recent meeting. The meeting clerk informed Councillors that the correspondence she had received from EFDC stated an estimated cost of

£5,000. It was **AGREED** that the Parish Council would precept £1,000 towards the cost of the CCTV, and that the Clerk would write to the shops in the vicinity of the CCTV inviting them to contribute the remainder.

CCTV Weald Common Play Area

Councillors were very encouraged by the great community spirit shown by the North Weald Mums who are actively fund raising for CCTV at the Weald Common Play Area, however Council felt that generally CCTV was not the answer to the antisocial issues that occasionally occur in the Parish and as such did not agree to contribute funds toward this project.

PCSO

Councillors felt that policing in the Parish was not the responsibility of the Parish Council, but of the police, and as such did not agree to precept towards the cost of providing funding for 1 PCSO. The meeting clerk stated that she had spoken with the Clerk who had suggested an alternative option would be to hire the services of a private security company on certain dates throughout the year, the cost being approx £45/hour. Cllr Godwin-Brown asked about precepting an amount for the services of such a security firm, however after discussion it was agreed not to precept any such funds.

Part Night Street Lighting

Councillors noted that firm figures had not yet been received from ECC regarding the cost to light 1 street light per year, and the number of street lights in the Parish. The meeting clerk stated that an approximate cost was £7.00 per year for 1 street light, and there were roughly 580 street lights in the Parish affected by the part night lighting program, meaning an approximate cost to keep them on was £4,060 per year. Councillors noted that there were four different suppliers of street lighting in the Parish - the Parish Council, the District Council, private developers, and Essex County Council. This Part night lighting was only applicable to Essex County Council owned lights. Cllr Godwin-Brown asked if ECC could be asked to turn on the lights in the trouble areas, to which Cllr Stallan stated that the police already have the power to ask ECC to keep certain lights on. After discussion, it was **AGREED** not to provide funding for this project.

Marquee

The meeting clerk apologised to the Chairman as the proposal via the chairman was for the hire of a large marquee, and not the purchase of one. The Chairman explained the thinking behind the idea was that all community groups could be housed in one large tent at community events and the Community day at the Airfield. The meeting clerk reminded members that 2016 was the 100th Anniversary of North Weald Airfield, and a community day would be held by EFDC at the Airfield. Cllr Stallan asked if contributions towards the cost of the tent would be obtained from the relevant community groups. The Chairman stated that the success of the use of the marquee would be based on the number of community groups who wished to be within the same tent, and that it was not the intention to source contributions from such groups. After discussion, Councillors felt that the purchase of large marquee would be a good idea, as would the invitation to community groups to join the Parish Council in the marquee at public events, and as such **AGREED** to precept £600 for this item.

Bulb Planting

Councillors decided to wait and see how the bulbs fared in the spring of 2016, as there was concern that they hadn't been planted deep enough, before deciding

whether or not to plant any the following year. If it is decided to plant more, the funds will be taken out of the General Reserves.

The final agreed figures for additional items for 2016/2017 are as follows:

ADDITIONAL ITEMS

<u>Item</u>	<u>Proposed</u>	<u>AGREED</u>	
		Precept	Earmarked
1 Play Area Emergency Works Fund	£ 500.00	£500	
2 Weald Common	£ 400.00	£400	
3 Repayment of PWLB	£ -	£0	
4 Play in the Park	£ 130.00	£130	
5 Joint Standards Committee	£ 500.00	£500	
6 Grants for local organisations	£ -	£0	
7 Maintenance of Weald Common Path	£ 720.00	£0	£720
8 Essex Air Ambulance	£ 50.00	£50	
9 Seat on Village Green, North Weald	£ 500.00	£500	
10 School Green Lane Play Area	£ 2,199.00	£2,199	
11 CCTV Weald Common Play area	£ 1,000.00	£0	
12 CCTV North Weald Shops	£ 5,160.00	£1,000	
13 Cemetery Memorial Tree	£ 4,000.00	£0	
14 Neighbourhood Watch	£ 500.00	£500	
15 Bulb Planting 2015/2016	£ 150.00	£0	
16 Mile stones	£ 200.00	£200	
17 Audio Recording of Meetings	£ 150.00	£0	
18 Street Lighting Works	£ 3,670.00	£3,670	
19 Replace Window Parish hall at Thornwood	£ 500.00	£0	£500
20 PCSO / Security	£ 34,000.00	£0	
21 Everything Epping Forest - Publicity	£ 900.00	£900	

22	Night Street Lights	£ 4,060.00	£0	
23	Large Marquee	£ 600.00	£600	
Total Additional Items		£ 59,889.00	£11,149	£720
			£11,869	

Councillor Bartram **PROPOSED** a 0% increase in the precept for 2016/2017. This was **SECONDED** by Cllr Blanks.

Councillor Hawkins **PROPOSED** a 5% increase in the precept for 2016/2017. This was **SECONDED** by Cllr Eldridge.

Councillor Mrs Godwin-Brown **PROPOSED** a 1% increase in the precept for 2016/2017. This was **SECONDED** by Cllr Eldridge.

A vote was taken on the first proposal of a 0% increase. Cllr Stallan requested a recorded vote. The results were as follows:

8 - For (Cllrs Clegg, Bartram, Buckley, Grigg, Mulliner, Stallan, Spearman, and Blanks)

3 - Against (Cllr Hawkins, Eldridge and Godwin-Brown)

The Council therefore **RESOLVED** to put a recommendation to full Council to request a precept of £172,034 for the period 2016/2017. This amount would allow the Council to increase its General Fund in light with the recommendation of the Internal Auditor.

F.1506 BRENT HOUSE FARM SECTION 106

Council **AGREED** that the £20,000 earmarked for the Hastingwood Village Hall in the 2015/2016 Budget should go back into the Parish Councils reserves when the 2nd tranche of Section 106 monies was received.

Meeting closed 20.06

Signed

Date