



MINUTES

Meeting: FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE **Date:** 17th December 2018 **Time:** 7.00pm

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

PRESENT:

Councillors (11) A Buckley (Chairman), B Bartram, T Blanks, B Clegg, B Eldridge, R Spearman, Mrs S Jackman MBE, A Tyler, D Stallan, N Bedford, G Mulliner

Also in Attendance (2)

Adriana Jones – Principal Finance Officer, and Meeting Clerk
Jo Tyler - Senior Administrative Officer

Members of the Public (2)

Members of the Press (1)

F.1801 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (3)

NOTED apologies had been received from Councillors Mrs Grigg, Mrs Godwin-Brown and Stroud.

F.1802 OTHER ABSENCES (0)

NOTED there were no other absences.

F.1803 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr Spearman declared a pecuniary interest in any item concerning the Local Plan. Cllr Tyler declared a discloseable pecuniary interest in the pink item concerning the Parish Profiling exercise, confirming he would leave the meeting and not vote on this item if discussed.

F.1804 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

The Chairman welcomed the two members of the public present, however there were no questions.

F.1805 BUDGET / PRECEPT 2019/2020

Members had been issued with Income and Expenditure papers which, following thorough investigation by the Principal Finance Officer (PFO), which included suggested budget figures for 2019/2020, along with supporting notes. 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. In addition, a pre-budget meeting was held on 13th December 2018, at which a full line by line analysis of the paperwork and financial figures took place. A copy of the notes from the meeting of 13th December had been emailed to Councillors, and a hard copy tabled.

The Chairman asked those present if they wished to discuss any matters concerning the white paper, which detailed the prior year's income and expenditure, this year's expected income and expenditure, and a proposed budget figure for each heading for 2019/2020. Councillors had no questions, and these budget figures were **AGREED**, as detailed below:

2019/2020

BUDGET

| GENERAL ADMINISTRATION | | |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------|
| Income | | |
| 1080 | Miscellaneous Income | 0 |
| 1081 | Repayments and Refunds | 0 |
| 1178 | Grants Received - Other | 0 |
| Total Income | | 0 |
| Expenditure | | |
| 4001 | Staff Salaries | 64,855 |
| 4003 | Superannuation | 27,000 |
| 4004 | Overtime | 3,000 |
| 4005 | Temporary Staff | 4,145 |
| 4008 | Training | 750 |
| 4009 | Travelling Costs | 2,000 |
| 4013 | Rent | 6,000 |
| 4019 | Hospitality / Chairman Allw | 50 |
| 4020 | Misc. Expenses | 1,300 |
| 4021 | Phone Fax Internet | 1,850 |
| 4022 | Postage | 600 |
| 4023 | Stationery | 1,800 |
| 4024 | Subscriptions | 2,000 |
| 4025 | Insurance | 3,300 |
| 4028 | Books & Publications | 50 |
| 4029 | Photocopier Costs | 2,000 |
| 4040 | Equipment Maintenance | 200 |
| 4041 | Equipment & Small Tools | 350 |
| 4051 | Bank Charges | 130 |
| 4053 | Loan Capital Repaid (PWLb) | 1,841 |
| 4054 | Loan Interest Paid (PWLb) | 553 |
| 4057 | Audit Fees - External | 600 |
| 4058 | Audit Fees - Internal | 900 |
| 4070 | Tax and NI | 27,000 |
| 4075 | Website | 0 |
| 4152 | Agreed Additional items | 0 |
| Total Expenditure | | 152,274 |

| PRECEPT AND INTEREST | | |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------|------------|
| 1177 | Precept Support Grant | 0 |
| 1190 | Interest Received | 300 |
| Total Income | | 300 |

| CIVIC AND DEMOCRATIC | | |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------------|----------|
| Income | | |
| 1082 | Donations Received | 0 |
| 1178 | Grants Received - Other | 0 |
| Total Income | | 0 |
| Expenditure | | |
| 4019 | Hospitality / Chairmans allwnce | 150 |
| 4020 | Misc. Expenses | 3,500 |
| 4035 | Newsletter | 1,000 |

| | | |
|--------------------------|-------------------------|---------------|
| 4037 | Grounds Maintenance | 450 |
| 4040 | Equipment Maintenance | 200 |
| 4071 | Grants Other | 100 |
| 4102 | Notice Boards | 200 |
| 4105 | Vandalism | 0 |
| 4143 | Election Expenses | 250 |
| 4152 | Agreed Additional items | 9,087 |
| 4160 | Neighbourhood Plan | 0 |
| 4163 | Community Day | 0 |
| Total Expenditure | | 14,937 |

| REMEMBRANCE DAY | | |
|--------------------------|------------------------------|--------------|
| Income | | |
| 1041 | Remembrance Day Income | 1,100 |
| 1084 | Sponsorship | 0 |
| Total Income | | 1,100 |
| Expenditure | | |
| 4019 | Hospitality / chairmans Allw | 200 |
| 4142 | Remembrance Sunday | 1,600 |
| Total Expenditure | | 1,800 |

| GRANTS | | |
|--------------------------|-------------------------|---------------|
| 1178 | Grants Received - Other | 20,087 |
| Total Income | | 20,087 |
| 4152 | Agreed Additional items | |
| Total Expenditure | | 0 |

| CAPITAL AND PROJECT | | |
|----------------------------|----------------------|----------|
| 1080 | Miscellaneous Income | 0 |
| 1082 | Donations Received | 0 |
| Total Income | | 0 |

| PARISH HALL AT THORNWOOD | | |
|---------------------------------|------------------------------|---------------|
| Income | | |
| 1001 | Hall Hire - Regular Users | 11,000 |
| 1002 | Hall Hire - Occasional Users | 5,000 |
| 1003 | Hall Hire - Storage charges | 516 |
| 1007 | Hall Hire - Music Licences | 60 |
| 1009 | Hall Hire - Misc Income | 0 |
| 1082 | Donations Received | 0 |
| 1178 | Grants Received - Other | 0 |
| Total Income | | 16,576 |
| Expenditure | | |
| 4001 | Staff Salaries | 6,600 |
| 4003 | Superannuation | 2,500 |
| 4004 | Overtime | 1,500 |
| 4010 | Misc. Staff Costs | 0 |
| 4014 | Utilities | 3,550 |
| 4016 | Cleaning Materials | 400 |
| 4020 | Misc. Expenses | 3,000 |
| 4026 | Music Licence | 100 |
| 4036 | Property Maintenance | 1,200 |

| | | |
|--------------------------|----------------------------|---------------|
| 4037 | Grounds Maintenance | 400 |
| 4040 | Equipment Maintenance | 750 |
| 4041 | Equipment & Small Tools | 100 |
| 4049 | Litter Collection Contract | 950 |
| 4070 | Tax and NI | 400 |
| 4152 | Agreed Additional items | 0 |
| Total Expenditure | | 21,450 |

| CEMETERY | | |
|--------------------------|----------------------------|---------------|
| Income | | |
| 1011 | Cemetery Interment Fees | 5,000 |
| 1012 | Cemetery Memorial Fees | 2,000 |
| 1013 | Cemetery GOR Purchase | 0 |
| 1015 | Cemetery Transfers | 0 |
| 1080 | Miscellaneous Income | 0 |
| 1083 | Cemetery Plot Purchase | 4,000 |
| Total Income | | 11,000 |
| Expenditure | | |
| 4014 | Utilities | 50 |
| 4020 | Misc. Expenses | 2,000 |
| 4036 | Property Maintenance | 500 |
| 4037 | Grounds Maintenance | 6,000 |
| 4043 | Grave Digging | 1,500 |
| 4049 | Litter Collection Contract | 550 |
| 4073 | Cemetery Memorial costs | 500 |
| Total Expenditure | | 11,100 |

| WEALD COMMON | | |
|--------------------------|----------------------------|--------------|
| Income - NIL | | 0 |
| Expenditure | | |
| 4038 | Play Are Equipment | 0 |
| 4064 | Weald Com Play Area | 2,000 |
| 4074 | Weald Common Grounds Maint | 1,500 |
| 4152 | Agreed Additional items | 0 |
| Total Expenditure | | 3,500 |

| OPEN SPACES | | |
|---------------------|-------------------------|------------|
| Income | | |
| 1031 | Dog Bin Recharge Income | 280 |
| 1084 | Sponsorship | 500 |
| 1178 | Grants Received - other | 0 |
| Total Income | | 780 |
| Expenditure | | |
| 4013 | Rent | 0 |
| 4020 | Misc. Expenses | 2,250 |
| 4036 | Property Maintenance | 300 |
| 4037 | Grounds Maintenance | 50 |
| 4040 | Equipment Maintenance | 100 |
| 4066 | Thornwood Play Area | 7,800 |
| 4102 | Notice Boards | 0 |
| 4104 | Bus Shelters | 50 |
| 4105 | Vandalism | 200 |

| | | |
|--------------------------|---------------------------|---------------|
| 4106 | Dog Waste Bins | 1,750 |
| 4107 | Street Signs & Furniture | 50 |
| 4148 | Bluemans End Rental | 215 |
| 4149 | Bluemans End Maintenance | 1,300 |
| 4150 | Norwegian Mem Grnds Maint | 1,050 |
| 4152 | Agreed Additional items | 0 |
| 4153 | Play in the Park | 0 |
| 4155 | Pike Way | 1,000 |
| 4156 | Village Sign | 700 |
| 4157 | Thornwood Common | 2,000 |
| 4159 | SGL Play Area | 7,300 |
| Total Expenditure | | 26,115 |

STREET LIGHTING

Income - Nil

Expenditure

| | | |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------|
| 4068 | Street Lighting Maintenance | 2,500 |
| 4072 | Street Lighting Electricity | 6,100 |
| 4152 | Agreed Additional items | 0 |
| Total Expenditure | | 8,600 |

ALLOTMENTS

Income

| | | |
|---------------------|-------------------------|--------------|
| 1021 | Allotment Rents | 2,200 |
| 1022 | Allotment Key Deposits | 0 |
| 1178 | Grants Received - Other | 0 |
| Total Income | | 2,200 |

Expenditure

| | | |
|--------------------------|-------------------------|--------------|
| 4014 | Utilities | 650 |
| 4020 | Misc. Expenses | 700 |
| 4036 | Property Maintenance | 100 |
| 4037 | Grounds Maintenance | 1,000 |
| 4040 | Equipment Maintenance | 100 |
| 4041 | Equipment & Small Tools | 0 |
| 4051 | Bank Charges | 0 |
| Total Expenditure | | 2,550 |

TOTAL BUDGETED INCOME 52,043

TOTAL BUDGETED EXPENDITURE 242,326

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

Play Area Emergency Works Fund

Councillors felt that £4,000 in this EMR at this stage was sufficient, especially in light of the grant for new equipment for Thornwood and SGL Pay Areas received via the Essex County Council Community Initiatives Fund, but that this should be considered again for 2020/2021.

Weald Common Fund

It was **AGREED** that in light of the current issues and expected possible expenditure concerning the possible closure of North Weald Library and a possible need to relocate the Parish Council office, this should not be precepted for this year, but reconsidered for 2020/2021.

Everything Epping Forest Publicity

This should be moved to the general running costs of the Parish Council, and should not be considered as an additional item going forward.

Bus Shelter, Thornwood

Councillors **AGREED** that due to the current unknowns concerning the library and the future of the Parish Council office and associated costs, this item should be deferred, and reconsidered in 2020/2021.

Neighbourhood Plan

Councillors felt that for the next 12 months, the current expected earmarked reserves would be sufficient to fund the expected Neighbourhood Plan works, however suggest that a figure is included for the 2020/2021 precept. It was noted that the NPSG was not expecting to be represented at the EFDC Local Plan Examination. Thanks were formally recorded to the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group for their continuous hard work and effort with the Neighbourhood Plan.

Speed Gun

It was **AGREED** that a Speed Gun would be purchased for use by the Community Speed Watch Teams in all three villages in the Parish. North Weald and Thornwood already had active Speed Watch groups, and a group of Hastingwood residents had agreed they wanted to create a new Speed Watch group for their area. It was **NOTED** there would be an additional cost to calibrate the gun once per year.

Parish Hall Works

a) Replacement PIRs - It was suggested that if these works were felt necessary by the Parish Hall at Thornwood Committee, the cost (£565) should be taken from the Structural Earmarked Reserve, and not specifically precepted for. It was suggested that perhaps a remote mobile phone linked activation / deactivation system should be considered by the Committee for the Alarm, as this would save money in the long run. It was noted that the new front doors had been fitted, and it was **AGREED** that the Parish Hall Committee should go back to the hall hirers who were unable to manage the alarm system, asking them to try again.

b) New Blinds - It was suggested that if these works were felt necessary by the Parish Hall at Thornwood Committee, the cost (£1,950) should be taken from the Structural Earmarked Reserve, and not specifically precepted for.

c) Replacement Internal Lighting - Councillors discussed this issue at length, including the reason for the need for this new lighting. Cllr Tyler advised that costs of a full change of the lighting system would be recouped back over a relatively short period time by way of the electricity cost saving. It was **AGREED** that £2,000 should be taken from the Brent House Farm S106 funds to be put towards the cost of replacing the internal lighting at a future date, and that this should be considered again at the 2020/2021 budget meeting.

d) Painting

It was **NOTED** the Committee wanted to repaint the entire inside of the hall, giving the example of recent works to Hastingwood Village Hall and how good the hall looks. It was suggested that the cost (£3,000) of such works should come out of the Structural Earmarked Reserve, and not

specifically precepted for. Consideration should also be given to the potential future lighting works, and the possible need for redecoration as part of the lighting change.

North Weald Library

It was **AGREED** that as a provisional and temporary measure, and in light of the expected public support for retention of the library in North Weald, the cost to run the library building for a period of 1 year should be precepted for. This would be a short term fix whilst a more permanent solution was found. It was **NOTED** that at this stage, it was unclear what the future of the library was, and whether or not the provision of a Parish Council run community library/hub was even a possibility with Essex County Council. A working group had been set up to establish how best to publicise the current consultation with local residents, and their first meeting would take place at 7pm on Wednesday 2nd January.

Handy Person

Councillors recalled that the Clerk had applied for funding via the ECC / EALC Local Services Fund, for a Handy Person to complete various jobs throughout the Parish, the grant requested being for £15,000 over a three year period, with the expectation that the Parish Council would match fund this. The meeting Clerk confirmed that this Parish Council had been awarded a grant for half of that applied for, £7,000, over a three year period. In light of this, Council **AGREED** that this should be match funded with the Council precepting £2,500 per year for the next three years. Questions were raised as to how the Handy Person appointment would work, if it would be a contractor, and what jobs they would be asked to do. It was **AGREED** that the remit and details regarding the Handy Person scheme should come to Parish Council to be agreed before an appointment is made.

Special Police Constable

It was **NOTED** that a document had been received signed by over 40 people in support of a Special Police Constable for this Parish. Councillors discussed this at length, with some Councillors expressing concern that the Parish Council would be taking on, and financing, the function and responsibility of the Police authority. It was noted that it would take between 3-18 months to train a Special Constable, and that the Parish Council would be responsible for advertising and sourcing Special Constable Volunteers for appointment. The Special Constables would be in the Parish a minimum of 16 hours per month, and the Parish Council would only pay for their expenses whilst they were in the Parish, up to an expected annual maximum of £1,000. Councillors enquired as to how the scheme would work, asking whom the contract would be with (the Police or the Parish Council), how and when the officers would be deployed, if they would have access to a police vehicle, if they could be called off duty from the Parish and deployed elsewhere, etc. Cllr Stallan expressed concern that these individuals could potentially be doubling up on the work being undertaken by EFDC in terms of policing, and suggested this be clarified. The Chairman advised that himself and the Clerk had met with the newly appointed Specials Supported Policing Coordinator regarding this scheme, and that some of these points were yet to be agreed. A copy of the details of the scheme had been emailed to all Councillors. Despite there being some concern, it was **AGREED** by way of majority vote that funding should be precepted for two Police Special Constables going forward, and that the points raised should be clarified.

Barriers outside shops

It was **NOTED** that further damage had been caused to the wall outside the shops in North Weald, and that the CCTV at this location had been unable to identify the culprits. The Chairman had obtained a quote to fix the damage, and install some additional barriers to act as a buffer to the wall. Councillors **NOTED** that the wall was not the responsibility of the Parish Council, and there was some considerable objection to any further funds being spent on a wall which was not the responsibility of the Parish Council. It was noted that the owner of the wall

had stated he was not prepared to spend any money on fixing the wall. After further discussion, it was **AGREED** that the Parish Council would pay for just one further fix of the wall, plus the additional barriers and some further vertical indicators to show there is a wall there. After this time, no further funds should be spent on fixing the wall.

The final agreed figures for additional items for 2019/2020 are as follows:

| <u>Item</u> | Agreed to precept | From Earmarked Reserve |
|---|--------------------------|---|
| Play in the Park - two events in 2019 | £170.00 | £0.00 |
| Everything Epping Forest - Publicity | £900.00 | £0.00 |
| Street Lighting full structural and electrical testing due | £1,700.00 | £0.00 |
| Speed Gun | £805.00 | £0.00 |
| Parish Hall - replacement of PIRs | £0.00 | £565.00 |
| Street Lighting - Rolling Replacement Fund | £5,000.00 | £0.00 |
| New blinds for Parish Hall at Thornwood | £0.00 | £1,950.00 |
| Painting of Parish Hall at Thornwood | £0.00 | £3,000.00 |
| Parish Hall - replacement of internal lighting | £0.00 | £2,000 (From S106 Brent House Farm Funds) |
| Future provision of Parish Council office - 1 year | £15,000.00 | £0.00 |
| Essex & Herts Air Ambulance | £50.00 | £0.00 |
| Handyman - Match Fund from Local Services Fund grant award for next three years | £2,500.00 | £0.00 |
| Special Police constables (2 no.) | £2,000.00 | £0.00 |
| Barriers around Wall o/s Shops | £1,500.00 | £0.00 |
| Total Additional Items | £29,625.00 | £5,515.00 |

Parish re-profiling exercise and staff salary increases

Councillors were reminded that at the 19th October 2018 Personnel Committee meeting, Councillors agreed that a Profiling Exercise would be undertaken in conjunction with the Essex Association of Local Councils in order to clearly establish the profile of the Parish Council and as such which scale range banding the Parish Council should be placed into. This exercise was undertaken, and other than two points, the Parish Council falls into Profile 3 (Scale LC3), that of a Large Parish / Small Town. At the 13th December pre-budget meeting, consideration was given to the suggested profile change and changes in the Scale Points for all staff members effective 1st April 2019. These would be in conjunction with new amended scale points as notified to the Parish Council by the National Association of Local Councils on 7th December 2018. Cllr Tyler confirmed he would leave the meeting at this point. Cllr Mulliner advised that this issue had been fully discussed at the 13th December meeting, and **PROPOSED** that the full recommendation including the Parish Profile change to Profile 3, and the changes to staff salary, be agreed. This was **SECONDED** by Cllr Mrs Jackman. A vote was taken as follows:

10- for

0 - against

1 - Abstention (Cllr Tyler)

MINUTES

Parking at the Parish Hall at Thornwood Car Park

Councillors **NOTED** that it was agreed at the July 2018 Parish Council meeting that the parking of vehicles at the Parish Hall in Thornwood by residents who book the hall for 1 hour per day would be considered for continuation at the budget/precept meeting (refer to minute reference C18.065). It was **NOTED** there hadn't been any issues over the past 6 months, and Councillors **AGREED** this agreement could continue going forward.

Councillor Mulliner **PROPOSED** a 19% increase in the precept for 2019/2020, equating to approximately an additional £13.00 per year per household - an increase of just over £1 per month. This was **SECONDED** by Cllr Stallan. Cllr Tyler **PROPOSED** a 20% increase was needed. There was no seconder for this proposal. It was **NOTED** the main reason for this large increase was due to a number of major projects for the coming year, including the uncertainty of the future of the library and the Parish Council office. A vote was taken on the proposal of a 19% increase, the results of which were as follows:

- 11 - For
- 0 - Against

The Council therefore **RESOLVED** to put a recommendation to full Council to request a precept of £219,256 for the period 2019/2020.

Meeting closed

Signed

Date