



MINUTES

Meeting: FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE **Date:** 21st November 2012 **Time:** 1.30pm

Venue: THE JIM DAVIS ROOM, THE PARISH OFFICE, 138 HIGH ROAD, NORTH WEALD, ESSEX

PRESENT:

Councillors (10)

C Hawkins (Chairman), B Bartram, T Blanks, B Clegg, P Collins, B Eldridge, Mrs E Godwin-Brown, Mrs A Grigg, G McCormack, G Mulliner

Also in Attendance (2)

Susan De Luca – Parish Clerk
Adriana Jones – Finance and Administrative Officer

Members of the Public (0)

No Members of the public were present.

Members of the Press (0)

No Members of the Press were present.

F.1201 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (4)

NOTED that apologies had been received from Councillors Boalch, Spearman, Bedford and Stallan. Apologies for lateness were also received from Councillor Collins.

F.1202 OTHER ABSENCES (1)

NOTED other absences of Cllr Adams.

F.1203 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members **NOTED** that by virtue of the fact all Councillors live in the Parish, each one holds a discloseable pecuniary interest in the preparation of the Budget/Precept. However, as this Parish Council had adopted the Public Law Partnership, an automatic dispensation is in place which allows discussion. There were no further declarations of interest.

F.1204 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

NOTED there were no Members of the Public present.

F.1205 BUDGET AND PRECEPT 2013/2014

Members had been issued with Income and Expenditure papers which, following thorough investigation by the Finance and Administrative Officer, included suggested budget figures for 2013/2014. Members were asked to spend some time analysing these figures, and if any members have any questions, these could be individually discussed. The main points of discussion were as follows:

It was **AGREED** that going forward, any monies which are transferred to Earmarked Reserves should be clearly identified on the Expenditure sheet.

It was **AGREED** that going forward, an explanation should be given on the paperwork regarding why the expenditure for Weald Common is not budgeted for. A summary was given for members information.

It was **AGREED** that going forward, the Budget/Precept paperwork should be numbered or ease of reference.

When discussing the £500 addition sum for the Play Area Emergency Works earmarked reserves, members were informed of a recent issue with regard to the wetpour lifting under the playshell at Thornwood Play area. The F&A Officer stated that these works were out of warranty, and the cost to make good could be excessive. As these works had only been highlighted recently, quotes for repair had not yet come in. The Clerk stated she was extremely surprised that the Contractor who completed these works had not been more helpful, and was surprised that the warranty period was only one year. It was **AGREED** that the Clerk would investigate and report back.

Members discussed payments for the services provided by Allotment Wardens. Members recognised the outstanding commitment and difference the Allotment Wardens who manage the allotments in the Parish have made, and thanks were specifically given to Lisa Harman and Mac Montgomery who have worked tirelessly to ensure their allotments continue to grow and improve. It was also recognised that these individuals give so much of their time for free, but that they also incur expenses such as phone calls, correspondence etc, for which they should be reimbursed. The Chairman stated that it was his opinion that these costs should come from any monies saved via the allotment wardens management of their Grounds Maintenance budgets, however this was disputed by some other Members of the Committee. It was **AGREED** that the delegated power should be given to the Environmental Committee to manage any claims for expenses refunds by allotment wardens up to a maximum of £100 per allotment warden. It was **AGREED** that the F&A Officer would establish the correct rules for this process. *[subsequent to the meeting, the F&A Officer establish that Section 29.16 of the Charles Arnold Baker applied, relating specifically to the Small Holding and Allotment Act 1908, s29]*

Members discussed the Pear Technology Digital Mapping Software, stating that on face value it seemed this would be extremely helpful with managing the Cemetery. Cllr Blanks asked if the office staff had seen any examples of this software in practice, to which the F&A Office stated they had not. The Parish office staff had become aware of this product following exhibition stands at two corporate events. Cllr Collins stated that the 5 year payment plan was a good idea, to which Cllr Clegg disagreed stating that this would simply cost more money over a longer period of time. It was **AGREED** that the F&GP would recommend this product to full council subject to the company providing the details of other Parish Councils who use this product, so that the Members could establish it was fit for purpose for this Parish Council. Cllr Blanks agreed to manage this action.

Members **NOTED** that a request for a new bus shelter along the High Road, North Weald near Thornhill had been received by a local resident. This was specifically as a result of two new bus shelters being located at the southern end of the village. Members **AGREED** that this bus shelter was still fit for purpose, and agreed to review this request again in the 2014/2015 Budget.

Cllr Godwin-Brown **PROPOSED** that a notice board be placed on this bus shelter, especially in light of the concerns of local residents that the Parish Council is not communicating with them effectively. This was **SECONDED** by Cllr Eldridge. A vote was taken, the results of which were as follows:

3 For
5 Against
2 Abstentions

Members **AGREED** they would be willing to contribute £300 towards a new notice board at Queens Road Allotments, which would cover the cost of a Parish Notice board; however allotment tenants were free to contribute to the cost of purchasing a larger one which would accommodate a section where members of the allotment community could place their own notices.

Members **AGREED** that for this financial year, any request for the use of the mobile security camera in the village should be directed to the Police Service, where the evidence of need can be clearly identified and its usage requested by the Police Service.

Councillors **AGREED** that the £8,000 precepted for last year for a Parish Plan should be reallocated into an earmarked fund entitled 'Future Planning'.

The Clerk and F&A Officer were asked to leave the meeting to allow Members to discuss any recommendations of the Personnel Committee. The following action was **AGREED** by majority vote:

- That an additional person is employed for 12 hours per week (9.15am to 1.15pm M, W, F) to enable the Parish Council to continue being proactive and maintain their excellent reputation for going above and beyond the call of duty for the benefit of North Weald Bassett parishioners.

9 For
1 Against (Cllr Mrs A Grigg)

These costs have been factored in the budget/precept expenditure costs.

NORTH WEALD BASSETT PARISH COUNCIL - 2013/2014 DRAFT PRECEPT		2013/2014 budget	
INCOME		SUGGESTED PRECEPT AMOUNT	
Budget Heading	Activity		
Interest	Current Account		0
	Deposit Account		50
	Treasurers Account		0
	<i>TOTAL</i>		50

VAT	VAT	0
	<i>TOTAL</i>	0
Miscellaneous	Donations	0
	Repayments and Refunds	0
	Grants	0
	<i>TOTAL</i>	0
Thornwood Village Hall	Hall Hire	13,500
Hall	Returnable Deposit	0
	<i>TOTAL</i>	13,500
Cemetery	Plot Purchase	1,000
	Interment	2,500
	Memorial	1,000
	Misc Funeral Costs	0
	Transfer Fee	50
	Grant or Right Renewal	0
	<i>TOTAL</i>	4,550
Open Spaces	Dog Bins Recharge	280
	<i>TOTAL</i>	280
Allotments	Allotments	1,549
	<i>TOTAL</i>	1,549
W/C Investments	Weald Common Investments	0
	<i>TOTAL</i>	0
Rem Sunday	Remembrance Sunday	1,000
	<i>TOTAL</i>	1,000
	TOTAL	20,929

**NORTH WEALD BASSETT PARISH COUNCIL -
2013/2014 DRAFT PRECEPT**

		2013	2014 Budget
		SUGGESTED PRECEPT AMOUNT	
Budget Heading	Activity		
General Admin	Telephones and Internet		2,000
	Stationery		1,750
	Maintenance and Equipment/IT		1,000
	Photocopier		3,928
	Postage		400
	Audit		1,655
	Books & Publications		50
	Training		700
	Insurance		4,400
	Subscriptions		1,700
	Accommodation		2,173
	Emergency Planning		50
	Community Day		0
	Hospitality Allowance		100
	Bank Charges		0
Website		300	
	<i>TOTAL</i>		20,206
Thornwood Village Hall	Rates		1,900
	Utilities		3,150
	General Maintenance		1,050
	Grounds Maintenance		1,500
	Miscellaneous		500
	Play Area Maintenance		500
	Bin Hire/Empty		750
	<i>TOTAL</i>		9,350
Salaries Office	Basic Salary - Admin		49,337
	Overtime		500
	Tax & NI - Admin		16,294
	Superannuation		15,833
	Travel and Subsistence - Admin		1,900
	Temporary Cover - Admin		0
	<i>TOTAL</i>		83,864
Cemetery	Utilities		0
	Grounds Maintenance		7,000
	Furniture		200

	Miscellaneous	0	
	Memorial Purchases	500	
	Bin Hire / Empty	370	
	<i>TOTAL</i>	8,070	
Salaries - TWVH	Salaries - TWVH	4,950	
	Overtime	3,000	
	Superannuation	1,812	
	Travel & Subsistence - TWVH	0	
	Temporary Cover - TWVH	0	
	TWVH - Tax and NI	150	
	<i>TOTAL</i>	9,912	
Street Lighting	Electricity	2,850	
	Light Maintenance/new lights	2,000	
	<i>TOTAL</i>	4,850	
Open Spaces General	Bluemans End Rental	215	
	Bluemans End Maintenance	800	
	Dog Bins	1,240	
	Notice boards	100	
	Bus Shelter Maintenance	75	
	Vandalism	1,600	
	Norwegian Memorial Grounds Maintenance	800	
	Public Seats	100	
	School Green Lane Play Area	800	
	Village Sign & Grass Cutting	400	
	Misc	100	
	Pike Way	600	
	Thornwood Nature Reserve	200	
	<i>TOTAL</i>	7,030	
Allotments	Utilities	1,050	
	Grounds Maintenance	1,000	
	Miscellaneous	400	
	<i>TOTAL</i>	2,450	
Weald Common	Grounds Maintenance	0	
	Play Area	0	
	<i>TOTAL</i>	0	
Bassett Millennium Walks	Leaflets and Marketing	0	
	Furniture and Signage	0	
	<i>TOTAL</i>	0	0

Rem Sunday	Remembrance Sunday	1,400
	<i>TOTAL</i>	1,400
PWLB	Public Work Loans Board	2,394
	<i>TOTAL</i>	2,394
Grants & Donations	Grants and Donations	0
	<i>TOTAL</i>	0
Elections	Elections	250
	<i>TOTAL</i>	250
Miscellaneous	Miscellaneous	3,000
	<i>TOTAL</i>	3,000
TWVH	Field Fund	750
	Internal and Structural Repairs Fund	3,000
	<i>TOTAL</i>	3,750
	TOTAL	156,526

ADDITIONAL ITEMS / ITEMS TO CONSIDER

	<u>Item</u>	<u>Amount</u>	
1	Recoup monies used for Cemetery Works	1,000	In 2008/2009, £31,132 was taken from Earmarked Reserves (£26,000 Capital Projects, £5,132 Cemetery) to pay for major works at the Cemetery, with an agreement that these monies should try and be recouped over time. For the past 2 financial years, £1,000 per year has been put back into the Cemetery earmarked fund. Members AGREED to precept a further £1,000 of funds for earmarked reserves.
2	Play Area Emergency Works Fund	500	Following major works to the play areas in 2009/2010, it was agreed that a separate fund would be set up to plan for any future major works. For the past 2 financial years, £500 each year has been allocated to this fund. Members AGREED to precept a further £500 to earmarked reserves.
3	Newsletters	1,000	AGREED continued advertising in North Weald Village Life
4	Repayment of PWLB	0	AGREED to look at next financial year.
5	Play in the Park	200	Members have contributed the sum of £50 for each play in the park session run by EFDC over the past 4 years (4 sessions per year - 2 Easter, 2 Summer). Members AGREED these are very worthwhile and well attended events, and should continue to be supported.

6	Flower Bed	250	New flower bed using sleepers located on the green outside the shops in the centre of North Weald Village to act as deterrent for vehicles parking in this area - AGREED subject to approval by land owner
7	Joint Standards Committee	500	Following the introduction of the Localism Act, and the abolition of the Standards board, in July 2012 this Parish Council signed up to the Public Law Partnership and agreed to affiliate with the Epping Forest Joint Standards Committee. This Committee (in conjunction with EFDC) will deal with any complaints regarding Councillors. The associated cost of these complaints will be borne by the Parish Council about which the complaint refers. The average cost of a complaint is between £3,000-£5,000. Councillors AGREED that these funds should be built up over time.
8	Clearance of Ditch at Cemetery	1,240	The Parish Council had been advised that due to the overgrowth in the ditch adjacent to North Weald Cemetery, a number of plots are now waterlogged, and some new plots are now unavailable for use. Members NOTED that these works were essential, and had been agreed by Parish council already, however it was considered correct to precept for these costs to reimburse for the works.
9	21ft by 7ft Junior size FA Approved Goal Post	800	Following consultation with local residents, Members AGREED to the purchase of 1 x junior size FA approved goal post, including ground anchors, for installation at Bluemans End Recreation Ground.
10	Allotment Warden	0	Members AGREED that any expense claims should be dealt with by the Environmental Committee up to a maximum of £100 in each financial year.
11	Replacement Fire Safety Doors, Thornwood Village Hall	3,600	Members considered the replacement of two sets of fire safety / exit doors in the main hall at Thornwood Common Village Hall as urgent under H&S. It was AGREED that two further quotes should be obtained.
12	Grants for local organisations	0	For many years, this Parish Council has budgeted an amount of money to award to local organisations as grants (historically £8,000).
13	Possible recommendations from Personnel Committee	-	As recorded in the minutes, these costs have been factored into the expenditure costs above.
14	Campaign to Protect Rural England	0	
15	Pear Technology - Mapping Software	1,360	This software allows a more robust, efficient management system for the maintenance of records associated with allotments, cemeteries and Parish assets. Pear also offer a five year payment plan at £380 per year. Members AGREED to recommend this, subject to an investigation by Cllr Blanks to approve it would provide added value to the Parish Council.

16	Replacement Bus Shelter between Emberson Way and Thornhill	100	Members NOTED that a complaint had been received by a resident stating that the bus shelter at this location is not of the same visual amenity, is out of keeping and is lacking in character following the recent installation of timber bus shelters at points throughout the village. Members AGREED to consider this request in the 2014/2015 budget, and to allocate a sum of £100 to paint the bus shelter this year.
17	Voluntary Action Epping Forest Befriending Project	200	Members NOTED the request received for a donation of £500 towards this weekly service which is currently used by 8 residents of North Weald. Members AGREED this was a worthwhile service, and agreed a donation of £200.
18	Bulb Planting 2013/2014	150	Bulb planting project for next year to improve the environment for all local residents AGREED .
19	Notice board Queens Road Allotments	300	Members NOTED that the notice board at Queens Road allotments has broken, and that the allotment warden has requested a double sided board so that one side can be used by the allotment community to place their own notices about excess veg / advice etc. Members AGREED the cost of a basic notice board, but allowing allotment tenants the opportunity to contribute to a larger one if they so wished.
20	Notice board outside Library	800	Members AGREED this would be a suitable position, but that it is subject to ECC agreement.
21	Wooden Posts for allotment numbers NW	150	Members NOTED that for the past 2 years, the allotment warden and office have been trying to get allotment tenants to number their plots. This is however not their responsibility, and in order to make the identification of plots easier for allotment wardens, it was AGREED that a £150 sum should be precepted for these works.
22	Repairs to pathway leading up to Thornwood Play Area.	500	Following on from an Environmental Committee meeting, members visited Thornwood Play Area, where it was noted that the paving slabs on the pathway are starting to lift. As a pre-emptive measure, it was suggested these paving slabs should be relayed to stop any further lifting. AGREED .
23	Fridge/Freezer	0	Request from Thornwood Village Hall Committee - current fridge freezer is over 13 years old. Members concluded that as the current fridge works, there was no need to replace at this time.
24	Decorate Hall	250	Decorate bottom half of main hall and entrance hallway, and possibility of installing a dado rail in the hall thereby ensuring that only the bottom half of the hall would need to be decorated on a regular basis (no formal quote received in time for the agenda). AGREED that the Community Payback Team should be approached to complete these works.
25	Fire Resistant Filing Cupboard	600	AGREED
26	Security Camera	0	Members AGREED the Police should be approached should there be a perceived need for use of this camera.
27	Drain covers outside hall	50	Remedy issues of open holes by drains which need constant cleaning out due to becoming blocked by leaves. AGREED
28	Stop Cock	130	Stop cock which feeds Thornwood Village Hall needs replacing. AGREED

29	Use of Rubbish Truck at Community events	500	Following a successful community clean up event at North Weald Village Hall, councillors AGREED the cost of hiring a rubbish truck for 2 events per year.
30	New Dog Bin Weald Common	700	Following vandalism destroying the Dog Bin on Weald Common, Members AGREED to the purchase of 2 new dog bins - one on Weald Common, and one at North Weald Village Hall
31	Street Lighting Electrical and Structural Inspection	1,100	In 2010 the Street Lights throughout the Parish were inspected at a cost of £1,044. The majority (not all) street lights are due for inspection again this year. AGREED as essential H&S Works

Total Additional Items	15,980
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Members then looked at the total anticipated expenditure for 2013/2014 against income in order to establish what the precept for this period should be. Members **NOTED** that District Council would not be increasing Council Tax for 2013/2014. Please see Table 1 below.

Councillor Mulliner expressed his concern that if EFDC are not increasing their Council Tax, then any increase in precept agreed by this Parish Council would need to be borne by the District Council. Councillors understood that in times of austerity careful consideration should be given to increasing the precept, however it was felt by some Members that the level of service offered by this Parish Council benefits the entire Parish, and an increase would be justified.

Councillor McCormack **PROPOSED**, and Councillor Eldridge **SECONDED** a 10% increase.

Councillor Bartram **PROPOSED** an amendment to 9.5%, which was **SECONDED** by Councillor Collins

A vote was taken, the results of which were as follows:

9.5% INCREASE 6 For
 4 Against (Cllr Grigg requested her vote against was recorded)

There being no further proposals, the proposal of a 10% increase fell following a vote. Therefore, a recommendation will be put to full Council for a 9.5% increase in precept for 2013/2014 at **£152,002**

With there being no further items to discuss, the meeting was closed.

Meeting closed

Signed

Date

Table 1

Balance Sheet								
	2013/2014							
Total Expected Income	£20,929							
Total Expected Expenditure (excluding additional items)	£156,526							
Total Income over Expenditure	£135,597							
Total anticipated Additional Items for 2012/2013 where costings are available	£15,980							
2013/2014	£151,577							
Total expected in General Reserves	£151,222							
Of which the following are Earmarked	£133,086							
	Nil Increase	2.5% increase	5% increase	7.5% increase	8% increase	9% increase	9.5% increase	10% increase
2012/2013 Precept Amount	£138,815	£138,815	£138,815	£138,815	£138,815	£138,815	£138,815	£138,815
2013/2014 Precept Amount	£138,815	£142,285	£145,756	£149,226	£149,920	£151,308	£152,002	£152,697
Shortfall between 2013/2014 estimated costs and precept	-£12,762	-£9,292	-£5,822	-£2,351	-£1,657	-£269	£425	£1,119
Any shortfall would need to be taken from General Fund, which as at 31/3/13 are expected to stand at:	£18,136							
Annual Increase on 2012/2013 per household (£)	£0.00	£1.32	£2.64	£3.95	£4.22	£4.74	£5.01	£5.27
Cost per Household 2012/2013 (2634)	£52.70	£54.02	£55.34	£56.65	£56.92	£57.44	£57.71	£57.97