

Minutes of an Extraordinary Meeting of the Parish Council held on Tuesday 22nd January 2019 in the Small Hall of the Village Hall, Gilberts Drive, East Dean, commencing at 6.30 pm

Councillors present: Cllr P Seeley (in the Chair), Cllr T Bryant, Cllr K Godden and Cllr P Hill

In attendance: K Larkin (Parish Clerk)

There were two members of the public present.

PUBLIC SESSION

The Chair and Secretary of the Bowling Club requested the council to consider giving the Club financial support over the next 2-3 years. Due to essential capital outlay on improving the quality of the green, making the steep track to the premises more accessible, and maintaining trees, plus rising annual maintenance costs, a shortfall was projected in the Club's finances. It was emphasised that the club was a valuable social facility for residents, nearly all the members being local.

The Chair stated that the draft Budget for 2019/20 which the meeting was about to consider included the allocation of an additional £1,000 to the council's grants budget which would bring it to £3,000 for the year. Local clubs and societies would be invited to submit applications for funds between 1st March and 30th April, and decisions would be made by the council at its May meeting. The Bowling Club's request should be considered as part of this process.

In further discussion, the Club's representatives stated that the immediate shortfall would be due to the rising cost of maintenance, up by £1,300 pa. The Club's premises and the access way to it were owned by the Gilbert Estate and the section of the track in need of improvement was shared with a residential property. Negotiations were ongoing between these parties and it was not expected that a grant from the council would be applied to these works. Members suggested that the club might also ask the Residents' Association for support. The Chair confirmed that the club's request would be considered by the council at its May meeting.

The Chair closed the Public Session and opened the meeting

C.696 Acceptance of apologies for absence: - Cllr N Day, Cllr M Keller

C.697 Declarations of Interests: - None

C.698 MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN 2019/20 to 2021/22

The council considered Report 3 from the Lead Member for Finance, setting out the proposals from the Budget Working Group for the Budget, Capital Programme and Precept for 2019/20. Cllr Godden stated that the budget had been set in the context of continued public sector austerity which impacted on the services provided by the County Council, District and Borough Councils within the villages, including litter bin collections and verge cutting. The parish council had a number of new members and the opportunity had been taken to develop a budget using a “zero based budget process”. Accordingly, the Group had reviewed, analysed and reported on each individual budget requirement, the guiding principles being to invest in the community, provide value for money, support services and protect assets. There would be elections in May 2019, and the council did not wish to fetter any future administration’s ability to make changes to its priorities. However, the draft Budget included a number of key growth areas which should be taken forward and supported by the village. At the same time, savings had been identified on maintenance, equipment, minor asset replacement and signage, and it had been decided to keep a number of areas of the budget under review including the cost of mowing village greens in private ownership.

In summary the following areas of budget growth were proposed:

- Churchyard maintenance - £1,000
- Council grants scheme – up from £2,000 to £3,000
- Investment in council assets – refurbishment of bus shelters (£500); new fencing at the Recreation Ground (£1,000); refurbishment of the pavilion (£5,000); and moving the Cricket pitch (up to £5,000 dependent on external funding contributions from Wealden District Council and the Gilbert Estate)
- Neighbourhood Plan - estimated to cost circa £28,450 before grant funding over the next two years. This investment would see the development of a Neighbourhood Plan which would give the community direct power to develop a shared vision for our neighbourhood and shape the development and growth of our Parish and villages.
- Appointment of an Administrative Assistant – important for the development of the Neighbourhood Plan

During the year the council had split the cost of its capital projects from its day to day expenditure. Two commitments for the coming year would be:

- Refurbishment of the War Memorial railings - £2,500
- The ‘Friston Build-out’ - a pedestrian safety scheme at the top of Friston Hill 50% funded by East Sussex County Council. The total cost was expected to be circa £12,000 and a report would be brought back to Council to finalise the scheme prior to its commencement.

The relationship between the Capital Programme and the Council Tax was the amount of revenue budget needed to finance all the capital projects, net of grants

and third party contributions. For 2019/20, it was anticipated that the level of revenue support to cover the Councils share of the capital projects would be circa £8,500. In terms of the Net Cost of Services in 2019/20, the sum of the council's statutory, contracted, base services, and asset maintenance would be £40,376 with the subsequent year's figures being marginally lower at £38,307. The Budget also included a revenue contribution to capital at £8,500 and inflation of circa £1,320 to provide a Net Cost of Services before any growth of £50,196. Adding growth shown in Appendix 3 totalling £27,725 provided a total Budget Requirement of £77,921 but it was proposed to use £17,668 of cash reserves to provide a **Net Budget Requirement for Council Tax calculations of £60,233**

The funding of this Net Budget Requirement would come from Council Tax. In order to calculate the share of Council Tax over the parish, the Council Tax precept was calculated as an amount per Council Tax Band D Property. The tax base provided for the parish by Wealden District Council was 1,000 and therefore the Net Budget Requirement of £60,233 divided by 1,000 provided a **Council Tax precept at Band D per dwelling of £60.23.**

In discussion, members approved the Budget proposals as set out in the Report, and thanked Cllr Godden and Cllr Day for their work in drawing up the recommendations for the Budget Working Group.

RESOLVED – That the Report from the Budget Working Group setting out the Budget, Capital Programme and Precept for 2019/20 be noted

RESOLVED - That the Revenue Budget for 2019/20 be approved

RESOLVED – That the Capital Programme for 2019/20 be approved

RESOLVED - That the Precept for 2019/20 be approved in the sum of £60,233 (£60.23 per Band D dwelling)

RESOLVED - That the financial impact of the Budget on subsequent years be noted

C.699 Date of next ordinary meeting – Thursday 7TH February 2019 at 6.30 pm in the Village Hall.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 6.56 pm.

Signed..... (Acting Chair)

Date.....