

## **CHANDLER'S FORD PARISH COUNCIL – POLICY AND FINANCE COMMITTEE**

**19 January 2015 7.00pm**

### **MEETING ROOM Hiltingbury Pavilion, Hiltingbury Recreation Ground**

**COUNCILLORS PRESENT:** Councillor Grajewski (Chairman), Councillors, Atkinson, Boyes, Broadhurst, Cox, Johnson, Luffman, Pragnell and Scott.

**In Attendance:** Duncan Murray (Parish Clerk), Councillors Duguid, Hughes, Jolly and Simmonds.

#### **Public Participation:**

Cllr Hughes made a brief presentation on the request for financial support towards the costs of the Fryern Funtasia event due to the uncertainty of sponsorship at the present time. He then withdrew from the meeting so as not to unduly influence the Committee's decision.

#### **1. APOLOGIES**

There were none.

#### **2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Cllr Grajewski having checked with the Clerk made a disclosable declaration of interest on the Fryern Funtasia Agenda item as her husband's company would be supplying artwork/banners at cost. As no gain or financial reward was to be made it was non-pecuniary. Members agreed they were happy with her remaining as Chair but not taking part in debate or voting. Cllr Boyes also declared a disclosable interest due to being a lead volunteer for the proposed event and stated that he would not take part in any debate or vote.

#### **3. TO NOTE THE MINUTES OF THE MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING HELD 17 NOVEMBER 2014 AND PREVIOUSLY AGREED AT THE FULL COUNCIL MEETING OF 1 DECEMBER 2014.**

Members noted the minutes it was noted Cllr Broadhurst had been present.

At this point Cllr Scott asked if he could make a statement. Following agreement by the Members present Cllr Scott proceeded to make a profound apology to the Members, Cllr Atkinson, the Clerk and all who had been present, for his behaviour towards the Clerk and Chairman of the Council at Council's meeting of 1 December 2014. The apology was accepted by the Clerk; Cllr Atkinson accepted the apology and thanked Cllr Scott. Cllr Luffman also expressed his thanks for the apology being made to Members.

Thanking all who had just spoken, including Cllr Scott for his apology, the Committee's Chairman moved to the next item on the agenda.

#### **4. MATTERS FOR RESOLUTION**

- a) **TO DISCUSS AND AGREE A THE DRAFT BUDGET AND RESULTING EXPECTED PRECEPT DEMAND, NOTING THE RECOMMENDATION FROM THE ASSET MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE OF 12 JANUARY 2015 WITH REGARD TO THE RESERVES FUNDS AND COUNCIL WITH REGARD TO THE STAR PROJECT PRESENTATION AND TO MAKE AN AGREED PRECEPT RECOMMENDATION TO FULL COUNCIL FOR ITS MEETING OF 26 JANUARY 2015**

The Chairman started this item by thanking the Clerk for preparing the draft budget, briefing and other materials. The Chairman also commented that the Asset Improvement and Replacement, Play Area and Contingency Funds were not for debate at this meeting as they had been discussed and agreed as a recommendation from the responsible committee Asset Management.

The Motion was proposed by Cllr Atkinson and seconded by Cllr Boyes. The Chairman asked the Clerk to brief Members.

The Clerk précised the budget briefing report that had been previously circulated commenting that this represented his views, as Responsible Financial Officer, of what needed to be done considering the transfer of assets and thus the responsibility this imposed, as a liability, to the Council and its Members.

Members debated the issues presented by the proposals and a Member made the comparison to other Parishes which were Burial Authorities needed higher Precepts and that Fair Oak and Horton Heath Parish had bought land for a new cemetery. Comments included the thoughts that a 68% rise in one year was excessive. Although the need for reserves was understood. One Member expressed surprise that the cost of running a cemetery could be considered in excess of a Precept contribution of £30 per band-D dwelling per year.

Other Members commented on the need to raise the Precept this year as otherwise the Council's hands would be tied for many years to come and agreement that the transfer of assets to the Parish Council had indeed brought with it a need to cover the costs of running, maintaining and improving those assets. It was also mentioned that when you are starting with a small base such as an existing precept of £29.92 p.a. that you had to have a large percentage increase to make any real difference to the funds being received.

This was echoed by another Member as '68% of not-a-lot is, not-a-lot'.

The Precept increases made by other Parishes in 2010-2011 were mentioned with examples of Botley at 75% and Hedge End 84% amongst other high increases that year.

Discussion moved onto staffing resources and it was commented that perhaps Asset Improvements Funds should be termed as Asset Management and Improvement Funds.

The debate having concluded at 8.00pm the Chairman brought it to the vote. It was AGREED 5:1 with three abstentions FOR the RECOMMENDATION to go to Full Council from the figures in the draft budget of an increase in Precept to: **£451,186** with a Council Tax Support Grant of **£26,038** a total Precept of **£477,224** representing a **68%** increase in the Precept to a Band D tax of **£50.27** per annum.

**b) TO DISCUSS AND AGREE THAT THE CLERK PREPARE A BUDGET/PRECEPT NEWSLETTER TO BE DISTRIBUTED TO ALL DWELLINGS IN THE PARISH**

The motion was proposed by Cllr Atkinson and seconded by Cllr Boyes and their being no request for a debate moved to the vote where it was unanimously AGREED.

**c) TO DISCUSS AND AGREE THE ADOPTION OF A WHISTLEBLOWER POLICY IN LINE WITH THE PROVISIONS OF THE DISCLOSURE IN THE PUBLIC INTEREST ACT 1998.**

Following proposal by Cllr Luffman and being seconded by Cllr Pragnell the Clerk commented that a few minor corrections had occurred following comments after the draft had been sent out. There being no call for a debate the motion went to the vote and it was unanimously AGREED that the policy be adopted.

**6. TO DISCUSS AND AGREE TO UNDERWRITE THE COSTS OF RUNNING OF THE FRYERN FUNTASIA EVENT IN 2015 FROM THE EXISTING AS PER THE PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED REPORT/MOTION**

Members discussed the motion after it had been proposed by Cllr Atkinson and seconded by Cllr Broadhurst. There was agreement the previous three years had broken even, been highly successful and that it had become a valued community event. The uncertainty over sponsorship was noted but it was also noted that there were funds available in the budget. It was unanimously agreed following a vote that the event be underwritten should a sponsor for the £2,500 not be found.

**7. TO NOTE THE FINANCIAL REPORTS:**

- I. SAGE RECONCILIATIONS FROM 19 OCTOBER TO 19 DECEMBER 2014 (MOST RECENT BANK STATEMENTS);**
- II. TO RECEIVE A REPORT FROM THE CLERK ON DISCOVERED VAT REGISTRATION ISSUES;**
- III. TO AGREE THE PAYMENTS MADE AND TO AUTHORISE PAYMENTS DUE, TO SIGN CHEQUES.**

The SAGE bank reconciliations and payments from 19 October to 19 December 2014 (most recent bank statements) third quarter report with Profit and Loss and Balance Sheet were unanimously AGREED and reports signed by the Chairman.

The Clerk reported on the VAT registration issues that had come to light from taking steps to opt the Fryern Pavilion into VAT and that in conjunction with the Chairman of the Council's authority the VAT Consultancy had done further work. This had been at a cost of £800 to resolve the issues and errors from when an incorrect VAT number had been put on the SAGE programme as the Council had become liable to charge VAT on room lettings.

**8. MATTERS TO BE TAKEN TO THE NEXT AGENDA OF THE COMMITTEE**

Members mentioned the need for dog and other signs at Pennine Way and Highfield. The Clerk reported that these had been considered already and included.

**9. DATE AND TIME OF THE NEXT MEETING**

This was agreed as the 2 March 2015 at the Hiltingbury Pavilion

That being all the business the meeting closed at 8.17pm.

Chairman.....