

MEETING OF CHANDLER'S FORD PARISH COUNCIL

7.00 PM 28 JANUARY 2019 FRYERN PAVILION, GREENWAYS, CHANDLER'S FORD

COUNCILLORS PRESENT: Councillor Duguid (Chairman), Councillors: Allen, Atkinson, Aubry, Bourne, Broadhurst, Cox, Dolbear Evans, Holden-Brown, Hughes, Irish, Kyrle, Newcombe and Pragnell.

In Attendance: Duncan Murray (Parish Clerk) and Sukey Spurlock (Assistant Clerk).

Public Participation:

There was one member of the public present who commented on the proposed 2.5% Precept increase, that whilst it was not the 5% suggested the previous year it was still unwelcome. He suggested that it was partly due to the fall in the Council Tax Grant, but also unknown additional costs due to the fact he hadn't had access to the Audit and Risk Committee's minutes (which were confidential).

833 APOLOGIES

These were received from Cllrs Bicknell, Johnson and Ricketts.

834 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None were declared

835 COMMUNITY SAFETY – UPDATE

The quarterly report had not been received for the previous quarter.

836 CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

The Chairman commented on the recent robbery at knife point on a Sunday morning and that the Facilities Manager had tried to help the police by reviewing CCTV, noting that whilst the parish was a safe place to live, it was not immune to this sort of crime.

He also commented on the delays to the new sports hall and that he was in agreement with the findings of the Audit and Risk Committee. A meeting was being set up with the professional team and the contractors in the first week of February and that no further action was necessary. He thanked Cllr Atkinson for calling that committee meeting and for the constructive way its Members looked at the issues.

The Chairman also commented on the Working Groups that had been set up by the two standing committees, looking at the North Millers Dale Community building, cycle-paths and other opportunities. Finally, comment was made about the group photos of Council would be taken to the next Policy and Finance meeting.

837 TO APPROVE/ACCEPT MINUTES OF MEETINGS

- a) to approve the minutes of meeting of the Parish Council held on 17 December 2018,
- b) to approve the minutes of the AMC Committee of 7 January 2019,
- c) to approve the confidential minutes of the HR Committee meeting of 13 December 2018,
- d) to accept the minutes of the Audit and Risk Management Committee meeting of 21 November 2018 and to approve the confidential minutes of the meeting of 23 January 2019, and
- e) to approve the minutes of the Policy and Finance Committee's meeting of 14 January 2019, to accept the financial reports made to that committee.

Each minute was gone through for accuracy, with a clarification given in response to a question on the AMC minutes about the health and safety requirements for scans of electrical and other services on a development site. Following proposal, seconding and on a

show of hands each meeting's minutes, along with the financial reports, were all AGREED or ACCEPTED as appropriate.

- 838. TO RECEIVE THE FINAL DRAFT BUDGET FROM THE RESPONSIBLE FINANCE OFFICER FOR THE MUNICIPAL YEAR 2019-2020 THAT HAS RECEIVED APPROVAL AT COMMITTEE STAGES. TO DISCUSS AND AGREE TO SET THE BUDGET FIGURES AS RECOMMENDED IN THE FINAL DRAFT, AND TO SET THE PRECEPT AT £51.53 (UP FROM £50.27) FOR A BAND D PROPERTY, REPRESENTING A 2.5% INCREASE AND AGREE THE FINAL FIGURES OF:**

PRECEPT:	£471,832.38	
CTSG:	£ 13,887.34	(COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT GRANT)
TOTAL:	£485,719.72	

The Clerk gave Members the following briefing in addition to the meeting's previously circulated briefing note: -

"As the Responsible Finance Officer for this Parish Council I have a legal duty to bring forwards a proposed budget to the Council that is both reasonable and justifiable and that is necessarily based on historical fact and known future impacts. This coming financial year will be a tough one. 33.3% of the Council Tax Support Grant (amounting to some £7k) will not be forthcoming, another 33.3% of last year's formula will disappear for 2020-2021 and the following year the last slice will also go.

In terms of future impacts with regards to the Sports Hall build, at the current time the anticipated final account will be around £20k below contract price. It is likely that when we start operating some of the Fryern's clients might move to the new sports hall/pavilion. This has been taken into account.

We could have another scorching summer this year, in which case a bit of cool indoor space might do very well, or people might want to be outside. I/we don't know. Therefore, I have HAD to take a very precautionary approach to income levels and put the new facility at around two-thirds of what I would anticipate it to achieve, especially with the SSE delays to the build programme. However, Members should, in their debate and resolution on the budget and Precept, remember it is far easier, with minimal cash reserves left, to cope with an unexpected surplus rather than a potential significant deficit.

The 2nd draft of the budget was taken to P&F in January 2019 with a 1.5% increase to precept mainly due to the £7k fall in the CTSG (grant) that forms part of the precept income. It also took into account the licence costs for the booking system (£1.2k over the year). When Members of P&F discussed the 1.5% increase an increase of 2.5% was also proposed. 1.5% put the precept expected up from £50.27 for a Band D property to £51.02 (up £0.75p for the year). However, this left very little leeway, and reduced the funds available for PCSO support as this is expected to not be required by Hampshire Constabulary.

With the decisions being taken on staffing for the Sports Hall, salary and associated costs have moved up from £196k to £214k, thus the reduction in the unneeded PCSO monies. The contingency would remain rather small at £30k (6.3%), with the PWLB loan repayments guaranteed by £84k of the Asset Improvement Fund (as required by contract with the DCLG borrowing requirements).

As part of that discussion at P&F I presented an updated Cashflow Forecast for the rest of the construction period. This was based on anticipated council operating expenditure (which is pretty accurately kept to), VAT cashflow impacts, and residual anticipated contract costs. This showed that the council has kept pretty much on track with expenditure outside of the contract and has adequate cash to fund the remaining works as well as its own functioning with an anticipated £205,170 cash at bank/to hand as at 31 May 2019 and £66.8k VAT

refund (minimum) due in June 2019. Which equates to the proposed Precept charged, less operating expenses to that point in time.

However, as it has been noted that ACSOs (Accredited CSOs) might want to be considered across the borough in lieu of PCSOs as they have powers of issuing fixed penalty notices and, this would create the need for an additional %age point. Therefore a 2.5% increase would be necessary to support the costs of an ACSO 1 day per week (£5k) taking the Band D cost to £51.53 for the year, an increase on the second draft budget of £0.51p for a Band D property (giving a precept of £471,832.38 with CTSG of £13,887.34). This 2.5% increase was clearly supported in a vote by the Members of the P&F committee, but by law Full Council has to set the budget and Precept.

There is no underestimating the need for this very precautionary approach to the budget and Precept for the coming year, and the period of consolidation I have been promoting for the last few months. It is abundantly clear that a 2.5% increase in Precept is needed for the coming 12 months and that 2019-2020 will potentially be a very tight financial year!"

The Chair of Policy and Finance commented that the draft budget had been discussed at some length at committee stages and that several Precept increase levels had been discussed but the proposed 2.5% was probably the best but that was now at full council for debate and decision.

The Chair of Audit and Risk also made comment, firstly in thanking Officers for their hard work and taking responsibility for bringing responsible proposals forwards. Other comments made by this Member included not being able to take a gamble, protecting remaining reserves. Further that the Precept budget and the parish's business plan were separate entities with the business plan predicting an anticipated future with growth and the budget predicting the year ahead from an historic expenditure viewpoint. In the current circumstances the Member felt she could support the increase as a prudent measure.

Another Member commented they agreed with the previous speaker and that the proposals to Policy and Finance ranged from 1.5% to 2.5%, with inflation running at 2.1% it was a wise precaution to take to set the increase at 2.5%. He also mentioned that discussions were going to take place from February about Community Safety options. He finished by saying that the RFO had got it right every year so far.

Other Members commented on the proposals one suggesting it was too cautious, others suggesting that they supported the prudent approach and another preferring a 0% increase, which he felt was achievable.

The Chairman summed up the debate saying that at Policy and Finance an increase of 2.2% was proposed but not seconded and that a level of 2.5% reflected the uncertainty of the coming year with the operational issues that could arise.

Following proposal, seconding and on a show of hands the Precept and Budget were AGREED by 14 votes to 1 as per the RFO's draft proposals PRECEPT: £471,832.38, CTSG: £ 13,887.34 (Council Tax Support Grant), TOTAL: £485,719.72 representing a 2.5% increase in Precept.

- 839. TO AGREE THE RECOMMENDATION FROM THE POLICY AND FINANCE COMMITTEE TO: -**
- a. WRITE OFF THE DEBT ACCRUED (£289.80) BY CHRIS BYRNE FOR ROOM HIRE FOR HIS TAI CHI CLASSES IN 2017-18.**

In response to a Member's question it was confirmed that there was a six-year period in which a debt was recoverable should the debtor resurface. Following proposal, seconding and on a show of hands the writing-off of the debt was AGREED.

840. MEMBER'S QUESTIONS

None were submitted for the agenda.

The date and place of next meeting was confirmed as 8.00pm 18 March 2019 (after the Annual Parish Meeting) at the Fryern Pavilion. That being all the business the meeting was closed at 7.47pm.

Chairman.....