

COLWALL PARISH COUNCIL**Minutes of the meeting of the FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE held in the Jean Simon Room at Colwall Village Hall on Wednesday 19th November 2013 at 7.50pm**

Present: Chairman – J Morris, Councillors Bowring, Carless, Haynes, Beard, Mills, Rees, Stock and the Clerk.

1. Apologies for Absence.

No apologies were received.

2. Declarations of Interest

The Chairman reminded those present of the need to declare any items of personal or prejudicial interest. None were declared.

3. Minutes of the last meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 16th April 2014 were approved and signed by the Chairman.

4. 2015/16 Budget

Copies of the draft budget had been circulated to all Councillors prior to the meeting. The Chairman highlighted that this is essentially a balanced budget. Items of expenditure are in line with expenditure in the current year allowing for inflationary rises. The Clerks annual review has been undertaken and the budget includes for the contractual increase in the salary by one spinal point.

The Village Amenities Budget is as proposal by that Committee for acceptance.

There is a planned election in 2015/16. The budget for an uncontested election is forecast to be £100 and included as such in the budget. Should an election be required the cost can easily be covered by the fund dedicated for just such eventuality. Councillor Mills pointed out that the estimated cost of £2,000 for such an eventuality was unreasonable, when only ballot papers need to be sent out and approx 2 hours of counting time allocated as there is already a County Election. IT WAS AGREED should an election be necessary the Parish Council would object to this level of costs and seek a reduction.

It is also assumed that we will continue to receive the same level of grants from Herefordshire Council for the Footpaths Scheme (P3). Should Herefordshire Council subsequently decide to cut this grant due to budgetary pressures, the Parish Council can comfortably fund this item from the reserves.

Turning to the Lenghtsman Scheme currently funded by Herefordshire Council, it was advised that there are plans to extend the scheme. Early budget discussions suggest that the existing grant payment of £2,520 will be maintained, plus match funding for

additional Lengthsman duties. In this regard the Clerk has consulted with the Lengthsman who could accommodate some extra hours for extra duties. On this basis the budget allows for a further £1,000 of funding by Herefordshire Council plus a top up of £1,000 by the Parish Council, Councillors agreed to this increased budget subject to Clerk reporting on Lengthsman activities under Finance at Full Council.

At the suggestion of the Vice-Chairman of F&GP, it was proposed for that the library surcharge continues at the level raised last year £16,000. The library costs are estimated to total £11,168 for the current year, these costs relate to staffing costs only as there have been no costs associated with the building, as Herefordshire Council have continued to maintain the repairing lease as per the terms of the lease thereby reducing the total costs that were forecast.

It was proposed that a library reserve will be created, whereby any funds surplus to that raised, will be held; as the building will revert to Colwall Parish Council at the end of the lease in 9 years, if not negotiated before, and with that will bring potential considerable costs/liabilities. Councillors agreed with this approach.

After the various likely additions and subtractions to and from the accumulated funds the unallocated reserve will be decreased by £99 from the likely starting figure of £42,800 to £42,701 by the end of the Budget Year.

In addition to the general reserves there are considerable reserves in specific Allocated Funds, which have been utilised, as they should be, during the current financial year to fund repairs to Orlin Road Play Area and to cover the costs of the Neighbourhood Development Plan. These Allocated Reserves are forecast to total approximately £34,654 by the end of the Budget year, 31 March 2016.

Main Budget: IT WAS AGREED to accept the proposed budget, in so doing, there would be a 2.0% increase in the precept.

The total precept in the 15/16 year will be £60,058 plus the Library Surcharge of £16,000 totalling £76,058 (the precept in the year 14/15 was £58,880 plus Library Surcharge of £16,000 totalling £74,880).

The budget will be recommended to Full Council for approval at next week's meeting.

5. Annual Internal Review

No changes to The Council's Internal Control Procedures and Risk Assessments financial processes had been recommended by the internal auditor. Proposals for the adoption of the NALC 2014 Financial Regulations will be considered at Full Council on 26th November 2014.

6. Correspondence

i) Precept: The Council's Precept had to be decided by 31st December 2014 and the appropriate form completed. The Chairman of this committee would bring this to Council's attention at next week's full Council meeting.

ii) Review donation requests:
None received.

iii) Colwall Parish Council donations - All donations will be paid in November 2014 as per the previously approved 2014/15 budget.

7. Date of Next Meeting

The next scheduled meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee would be held on Wednesday 22nd April 2015 with a short meeting called on the 19th December 2014 for the approval and signing of these minutes.

The meeting closed at 8.30 pm.

Chairman.....

Date.....