

Minutes of the Extra-Ordinary Meeting of Aston Clinton Parish Council - held
on 14th December 2016 at 8pm,
at Aston Clinton Parish Meeting Room

Present:

Councillors: -

L Tubb – Chair

R Stewart

J Egglesfield

L Ronson

M Mason

T Comerford

M Osborn

P Wyatt

C Read

Clerk: G Merry

0 Members of the public

16.121 Apologies:

Apologies were received and accepted from Cllr Hughes

16.122 Declarations of Interest:

There were no declarations

16.123 Public Participation

There were no items

16.124 Budget 2017-18 and Precept Planning

Cllr Osborn reported that the F&S committee had met and discussed the proposed budget circulated by the clerk (**APPENDIX**). An increase of 5% on the current precept had been recommended. Since then however, Cllr Osborn had attended a finance training course and had presented a case that, due to the predicted shortfall in funding for the new community centre, it may be necessary to increase the precept more than 5%, to build a long-term capital reserve. Cllr Osborn suggested that it would be remiss of the council not to address how to build-up the necessary funding. The £45k necessary to fund phase 1 was already budgeted for and covered by the planned 5% increase. However, to meet the possible funding shortfall, projected to be in the region of £800,000, it may be a choice between a gradual increase to build reserves, or a sudden one in the event that costs were not covered. It should also be taken into account that referendum principles may be imposed on parish councils making it difficult to increase precepts significantly in the future.

Cllr Osborn stated that he held no firm view on the matter of the increase but was presenting advice from sector experts.

Cllr Tubb pointed out that there were other grants available and not yet applied-for, so the funding shortfall may not be as large. Cllr Comerford felt that 2017-18 was not the right time to demand a significant increase. The budget presented allows for stage one to be reached and that planning for a greater reserve could start from the following year when the situation re. receipt of S106 money was more certain. He added that there was a good chance of a grant from the F.A. and this may bring the shortfall down to the region of £500,000.

Cllr Read felt that the amount of increase needed to meet the shortfall was not achievable and borrowing would be the better option. Projected income from the new centre should also be taken into account.

Cllr Comerford noted that a reserve in the region of £35,000 is projected at year-end and noted this was not shown in the documents presented. Cllr Tubb responded this was the regular earmarked reserve that the PC aims to carry forward each year, to cover unforeseen large expenses, and was not intended as a capital reserve. Cllr Comerford felt it could be an option to draw on this reserve, should the income from the cafe drop as a result of operating from temporary accommodation during the build. Cllr Osborn pointed out the necessity to ascertain the split of income from the coffee-shop, separate from the income from hirings, as the latter may not be possible during the build.

It was noted that the proposed total costs in next year's budget (£205,278), were not covered by the proposed 5% increase in precept (to £185,537). The clerk explained that it had been decided by the F&S committee to take a proportion of the projected income for next year into account, otherwise the increase in precept would have had to have been approx 17%.

Cllrs Ronson and Eggesfield stated they felt the village would not be receptive to a large increase at this time. Cllr Osborn pointed out that the county, district council and other (e.g. Fire and Police service) portions of the council tax, already accounted for 95% of the bill and were set to increase, as stated widely in the media. Any parish council increase would be minimal by comparison. The clerk also pointed out that last year's 17% increase had received 3 complaints, some of whom were more understanding when presented with the reasoning behind the increase. Cllr Comerford suggested that as it is an actual increase in the region of 7 pence per week, there was a need to use positive PR with the public.

MOTION: To agree a financial strategy in respect of the potential shortfall in funding for the proposed new community centre. It was decided to vote to **amend the wording of the motion as follows:**

MOTION: To agree a financial strategy in respect of building capital reserves. The change of wording was PROPOSED by Cllr Read, SECONDED By Cllr Ronson and AGREED and the motion duly amended.

The following strategy was proposed: -

1. To not build capital reserves this year (2017-18), thereby not making provision for capital projects, other than funding phase 1 of the community centre, as detailed in the budget
2. To re-visit the matter next year and consider it at that time.

MOTION: To agree the above as the financial strategy in respect of building capital reserves, PROPOSED By Cllr Ronson, SECONDED by Cllr Comerford and AGREED. A recorded vote was requested:

L Tubb - FOR
R Stewart - FOR
T Comerford - FOR
J Eggesfield - FOR
M Osborn - AGAINST
L Ronson - FOR
P Wyatt - FOR
M Mason - FOR
C Read – FOR

The clerk advised that for the second motion, the budget must be agreed. However, the wording allowed for the amount of the precept to also be agreed at this time, although this is more usually done at the January PC meeting. It was agreed to vote on both the budget and the precept, as one dictates the other.

MOTION: To agree on the proposed budget for 2017-18 (@ projected expenditure of £205,278 and projected income at £26,165), to form the basis of a precept demand at a 5% increase to £185,537, PROPOSED by Cllr Tubb, SECONDED By Cllr Comerford and AGREED **on the chairman's casting vote.**
A recorded vote was requested as follows: -

L Tubb - FOR
R Stewart - FOR
T Comerford - FOR
J Eggesfield - AGAINST
M Osborn - AGAINST
L Ronson - ABSTAINED
P Wyatt - AGAINST
M Mason - FOR
C Read – AGAINST
Chairman's casting Vote – FOR

5 votes FOR and 4 votes AGAINST. Abstentions are not counted as votes either way.

It was asked that the clerk note, that for those voting against the motion, it should not be inferred that all were in favour of a lower increase.

Signed Date

APPENDIX

BUDGET 2017-18

PAYMENTS:

<u>Salaries - includes incremental pay increases</u>	<u>Workings</u>	<u>Totals</u>
GM Salary	£ 16,650.00	
EB Salary	£ 9,314.00	
Employer's N.I.	£ 1,408.00	
Employer's LGPS	£ 5,214.00	
Total Salary Costs		£ 32,586.00
 <u>Member's Expenses - held as this year</u>		 £ 200.00
 <u>Insurance - 2016 actual + 2%</u>		 £ 1,568.00
 <u>Audit/Election - this year + 2%</u>		 £ 1,356.00
 <u>Subscriptions - projected increase</u>		 £ 860.00
 <u>Training - no change</u>		 £ 1,180.00
 <u>S137 - estimate 60 donations @ £7.50)</u>		 £ 450.00
 <u>Office Costs - estimates based in this year's actual</u>		
Stationery	£ 1,000.00	
Postage	£ 80.00	
Printing/Computer	£ 850.00	
Phone Bills	£ 800.00	
Payroll Company	£ 450.00	
Misc Admin.	£ 5,000.00	
Total	£ 8,180.00	£ 8,180.00
 <u>Mortgage - as this year</u>		 £ 3,981.00
 <u>Electricity</u>		
B.G. - this year's budget + 5%	£ 806.00	
EON - this year's top end x 12	£ 11,100.00	
Total		£ 11,906.00
 <u>Bins - this year's budget + 2%</u>		
Dog Bins	£ 1,050.00	
Euro Bins	£ 1,988.00	
New Purchases (est.)	£ 975.00	
		£ 4,013.00

Premises

Electrical contractor @ average month + 2%	£ 2,203.00	
Repairs (estimate)	£ 2,000.00	
Cleaners (£500 office + £1300 Cafe)	£ 1,800.00	
Lampposts/LED Programme - held as this year	£ 13,475.00	
Drain Repairs (estimate)	£ 8,000.00	
Fire and electrical assessments	£ 1,200.00	
Total		£ 28,678.00

Grounds Maintenance

Annual Contract (Inc. footpaths, churchyard & ad hoc)	£ 33,850.00	
Eamonn (average - no increase)	£ 2,970.00	
Total		£ 36,820.00

Planning Committee: Traffic Calming £ 12,000.00**Programmes**

Community Centre - implementation phase 1 -	£ 45,000.00	
Village Signs	£ 500.00	
Astonbury - to underwrite event	£ 5,000.00	
Play Events	£ 1,000.00	
Total		£ 51,500.00

Contingency £ 10,000.00 £ 10,000.00**Total Payments** £ 205,278.00**RECEIPTS**

Cafe Base Rent @ £1000/month	£ 12,000.00
Cafe Turnover Rent (estimate)	£ 9,000.00
Football Permits	£ 3,000.00
Park Permits	£ 780.00
Burials	£ 1,000.00
Allotments	£ 385.00

Total Receipts without precept £ 26,165.00