

**WALDRIDGE PARISH COUNCIL**

**Minutes of a Finance and Budget Meeting  
the Waldridge Parish Council  
held on 04 December 2018 at 7.00pm**



**Present:** Councillors - Bell, Corner, Davies, Foster and Sexton.

**Also in attendance** – Sarah Wilson - Parish Clerk

1. **Welcome**

The Vice Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2. **Apologies for Absence:**

Cllrs Harding, Hollingsworth, Howie and Warren submitted their apologies.

3. **Disclosable Pecuniary Interests**

No members declared an interest.

#### 4. Finance, Budget and Precept

##### a) **Review of current year's finances and budget**

Councillors reviewed the current year's finances and anticipated spend, and consideration was given to the level of funds remaining for the current financial year, once essential costs were taken into account. All non-essential projects were discussed, and a decision on whether to proceed with each one in the current financial year was made. Summer bedding plants were discussed, and it was agreed that flowers and planting are an important part of the identity of the Parish, therefore these will be purchased, with a supplier to be decided at the next meeting. Next discussed was the Northumbria in Bloom entry fee. Cllr Foster questioned who would take care of the paperwork and portfolio following Cllr Cork's resignation. Cllr Sexton stated that he was happy to take on this responsibility, and the Clerk added that she would be happy to help prepare the portfolio. It was then questioned whether the Parish would be penalised by Northumbria in Bloom if they chose to use DCC as a supplier. Cllrs Davies and Sexton read out two separate pieces of correspondence from Northumbria in Bloom, and it was felt that these suggested that the Parish would not be penalised, as long as there was still active community involvement. Training was discussed next, and it was decided that this was important, and that up to £100 would be made available to cover training costs. Next discussed was the toilet flooring for the Parish rooms, and it was decided that the installation of this would be delayed, but that the decision on this would be revisited once any costs that may arise from the forthcoming election are made certain. The accessories for the Parish rooms toilets were discussed, and it was agreed that the purchase of these should go ahead. The Christmas events were discussed, and it was agreed that the £15 allocated for refreshments at the carol service, and the £25 allocated for the best decorated house prize would still be made available. As the Christmas movie day is no longer going ahead as a Parish event, it was decided that the £50 allocated for refreshments will no longer be spent. It was also decided that the printing of a Christmas flyer will also be cancelled. The possibility of delaying the installation of the children's play area until March/April 2019 was discussed, and the Clerk informed the Council that the Parish would likely have to pay for the equipment part of the order straight away, but that around £3,000 could be freed up in this year's budget if it were to be delayed. Taking into account the requirement to keep a minimum of 25% of precept in reserve, and given the potential cost of the upcoming election being anticipated at around £5,600, Cllr Bell stated that it would be considered gross negligence if the Council did not take action when they had the opportunity to do so. Cllr Bell also stated that it would be likely that installation would be delayed anyway, given the time of year and weather conditions, and that the play area would likely not see a great deal of use during the winter. Cllr Corner stated that although it would be a shame to have to delay the installation, the delay could allow for the fence to be installed around the same time. Cllr Sexton stated that although he was opposed to the delaying of the play area installation, he could see why it was necessary. The next item discussed was the carrying out of an interim audit. Cllr Davies stated that he felt that this should not take place, as it would cost money, and he stated that the Council would already be having an audit at the end of the financial year. Cllr Corner agreed and asked why the Council should pay for this now, when other projects are being delayed. Cllr Foster stated that it was important, as it would demonstrate that the Council are doing everything possible to follow correct practices, and Cllr Bell agreed that it was important, as it would show that the Council had conducted the necessary due diligence.

**Resolved:** It was agreed that Summer bedding plants will be purchased, with a budget of £1,000 - supplier to be decided at the next meeting. It was agreed to enter Northumbria in Bloom, and to pay the entry fee of £215. It was agreed to allocate £100 to training. It was agreed to delay the installation of toilet flooring, and to revisit the decision at a later date. It was agreed that toilet accessories should be purchased to a maximum value of £50. It was agreed to proceed with the £15 allocated to the carol service refreshments, and the £25 allocated to the best decorated house prize. It was agreed that the Christmas movie day refreshment budget of £50 would no longer be spent, and that the printing of a Christmas flyer would no longer go ahead. It was agreed to delay the installation of the children's play area until March/April 2019, provided there would be no additional storage charges for the equipment. All above votes unanimous. It was agreed that the Clerk should arrange an interim audit at a cost of £100 (Cllrs Bell, Foster and Sexton in favour).

b) **Next year's budget**

The Council reviewed the draft budget for 2019/20 and gave careful consideration to each budget item. Each item was discussed in turn, and the amount allocated to each of these was considered. It was decided that given the need to meet the 25% minimum reserve amount, and given that the precept would already need to be raised significantly, some budgeted spends would be reduced, and some projects would need to be postponed, and added to the three-year budget instead.

**Resolved:** The budget for 2019/20 was approved by the Council. It was agreed to hold the minimum reserve amount of 25%. All decisions unanimous.

c) **Precept**

Based on the budget for 2019/20, consideration was given to precept requirements. The fact that the precept has not been raised in many years was taken into consideration, along with the fact that the Council have taken over the costs for street lighting both on the C11 and Waldrige Road between Poppyfields and the village. Recent and ongoing projects were discussed, such as the refurbishment of the Parish rooms, the children's play area, the new car park, and additional seating, along with the many popular and successful events such as the new cinema event, and it was agreed that in order to sustain and improve upon the provision of services and events for residents, a significant precept increase would be necessary. Based on the budget for 2019/20, it was agreed that the required precept level would be £64,006.67, an increase of approximately 109%. Although this is a significant percentage increase, it was noted that this should equate roughly to a £1.89 per month increase for a band D property.

**Resolved:** The Council agreed to set the precept level for 2019/20 at £64,006.67 - the decision was unanimous. The LCTRS grant amount of £33 was noted.

d) **Action Plan**

This item was not discussed.

**Resolved:** It was agreed to defer discussion of the Action Plan until the next meeting.

e) **Three-year budget**

This item was not discussed.

**Resolved:** *It was agreed to defer discussion of the Three-year budget until the next meeting.*

5. **Date of Next Meeting**

11 December to commence at 7.00pm.

The meeting terminated at 9.30 pm

**Chairman**  
**Date**