

# Codsall Parish Council

## MINUTES

### **Finance Committee Meeting Monday 7<sup>th</sup> January 2019 - 7.00 p.m. Parish Council Chambers**

Before commencement of the meeting, Councillors unanimously voted Cllr B Holland as Chairman of the Finance Committee

**Present:** Cllrs B Holland (Chairman), Mrs M Barrow, Mrs V Chapman, Mrs E Ewart, T Jeavons and S Jenkinson

1. Apologies were received and accepted from Cllrs Michell, Millar and Spencer
2. DECLARATION OF INTEREST AND DISCLOSABLE INTEREST - None
3. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION - None
4. The draft Precept/Budget for 2019/20 and Clerks Summary was received and considered:

The Clerk at the Chairman's request, outlined to Councillors the prepared draft Precept/Budget for 2019/20 and the Clerks Budget Summary Report.

The Finance Committee following discussion proposed the following recommendations for consideration by the Main Council:

#### **PAYMENTS/EXPENDITURE**

##### **Salary**



Consideration has also been given to the council's decision made at the meeting of the full Council held on 24<sup>th</sup> January 2018, item 7.2, where the meeting approved employing a person to open and close the Car Park as a fall-back position.

In order to meet the aforementioned conceivable obligations, the Finance Committee have suggested an increase to the wage budget of £7,027.00.

The wages budget will increase from £82,486,00 in 2018/19 to £89,513 for 2019/20.

### **Office**

An increase of £100.00 from £16,300.00 to £16,400.00. A third of the budget is allocated for the Parish Councils Liability Insurance.

The Parish Office will, as usual, try to obtain better value in all its acquisitions of services/purchases.

### **Land Maintenance**

Recommendation that the 2019/20 budget is increased back to £28,100.00 from the reduced 2018/19 reserve of £23,400.

The list of projects put forward by the Open Spaces Committee with the inclusion of costs in maintenance is estimated to cost approximately £53,590.00. To include all the projects put forward the budget would have to be increased by 44%.

However, the proposed increase together with additional reserves set up for the replacement of the estate fence surrounding Codsall House Field which estimates indicate could be £17,000.00 and replacement of the Parish Council's noticeboards, means that majority of the projects could be undertaken whilst still maintaining a proactive maintenance programme.

### **Election Contingency**

To remain the same.

### **Christmas Lights – Christmas**

Proposed increase from £8,200.00 to £12,000.00 in order that the Parish Council can include recommendations made by the Business Plan Committee for Christmas lights to be introduced at Birches Bridge shops; replacement of broken lights and to add to the councils existing light scheme in the centre of the village. Any additional lighting purchased will result in an increase to the annual cost of installation, removal and storage– this has been reflected within proposed increase.

### **Grants and Sponsorships**

Recommendation to remain the same.

### **Village Improvements Expenditure**

Recommendation of a budget of £5,000.00.

### **Professional Fees**

Recommendation to remain the same.

## **RESERVES**

### **Parish Building Maintenance and Repair**

Recommendation that the parish building maintenance/repair reserve remains at £23,500.00 as the Parish Council should start to think of improving the buildings access via the main entrance.

### **Wheel Field**

Recommendation that the Wheel Field Budget contingency maintenance is reduced by £1,500.00 – from £3,000.00 to £1,500.00.

### **Station Car Parking Reserve**

Recommendation that a £6,000.00 reserve is earmarked for any remedial works/additional works that may be needed.

### **Project Contingency Reserve**

Recommendation that this is now reduced from £15,000.00 to £3,000.00, as all agreed large projects such as the Wheel Field Project and the Station Car Park have been completed.

### **Codsall House Field Replacement Estate Fencing**

Recommendation that a new budget reserve is implemented in order to be able to set aside monies for the replacement of fencing around Codsall House Field, which is deteriorating – the scheme could cost £17,000.00. £5,000.00 has been set aside this year towards the works.

### **Parish Council Noticeboards**

Recommendation that a new budget reserve is implemented for the replacement of the Parish Council noticeboards a suggestion of £5,000.00.

### **Service Shortfall by Principle Council's**

Both South Staffordshire District Council and Staffordshire County Council have indicated that some of their service provision may have to be withdrawn and are looking at Parish Council's to take on or contribute to, some of the services provision. To date we have not received a decisive plan of their cutbacks therefore, if we would like the flexibility/opportunity to take on additional services for the benefit of our community, some money would need to be made available within our budget. £6,000 has been suggested.

### **Election 2019 Reserve**

A further £6,600.00 has been set aside in the 2019/20 budget; the revised budget should meet the potential election costs to be held in 2019, [the election costs for 2019 could be £20,000.00].

### **Play Area Reserve**

An overhaul/additions to the play area equipment will need to be considered over the next five years. The Parish Council will apply for grants for any proposed changes however, a percentage of match funding would be required, therefore a suggestion of an increase from £10,000.00 to £18,000.00 is made to the Play Area Reserve.

The draft 2019/20 budget/precept requirement compared to 2018/19 precept requirement, showed a small increase of 0.2%. The presented draft budget/precept requirement figure for 2019/20 was £165,941.45, compared to £162,913.14 for 2018/19.

In addition, the Finance Committee considered that this year's change to the Council Tax Base calculation, Codsall Parish Council benefits with a movement increase of 1.86%, this increase could allow for C.P.I without the need to further increase the budget/precept.

The Finance Committee also took into consideration guidelines outlined by NALC, that Parish Council's should keep any precept increase to a minimum (below 2%).

Councillor Barrow said that with all the meetings that she had recently attended, it is very likely that some service provision will be withdrawn or cut by South Staffordshire District Council and/or Staffordshire County Council. Cllr Barrow then went on to say that there could be an expectation that Parish Council's pick up the shortfall and the Parish Council should be able to have the flexibility to be able to consider taking on some of the shortfall. Councillor Barrow then went on to suggest that the previously outlined Service Shortfall by Principle Councils Reserve should be increased by £3,000.00 from the original suggested figure of £6,000 to £9,000, therefore altering the Precept requirement for 2019/20 to £168,941.45, an increase of 2.0%.

Councillor Holland said that the presented draft budget puts the council in a very good place to undertake many of the Open Spaces and Village Improvements schemes.

Cllr Jeavons and Ewart thought that as the presented draft budget would enable the council to undertake many of the projects put forward by the committees, the burden to taxpayers should be limited, therefore the draft precept/budget should remain as drafted without alteration, showing a very small increase of 0.02%, £0.09p per year.

Following further discussion, Cllr Barrow proposed acceptance of the draft budget/precept as outlined above with the exception to the earmarked reserve for Service Shortfall by Principle Councils which is to be increased from the draft of £6,000 to £9,000, and a recommendation to full council that the precept requirement for 2019/20 is £168,941.45, an increase of 2.0%, which equates to a £1.09p per year on band D. This was seconded by Cllr Chapman.

A vote was taken: For 3; Against 2; 1 Abstention.