



Ashington Parish Council

Finance Committee Meeting

Minutes of Ashington Parish Council Finance Committee Meeting held at 7.30pm on Monday 20th May 2019

Present: Councillors: N. Spiers, G. MacPherson, M. Woolley & T. Moss

Parish Clerk: Karen Dare

Apologies: Cllr T. Watson

Members of the public – None

Declarations of Interest - None

The purpose of the meeting was to discuss and approve the accounts as prepared by the RFO for the financial year (2018/2019). The accounts had been circulated to all Councillors prior to the meeting and questions/comments were invited.

Cllr Woolley asked why hanging basket costs were higher than normal in 2018/19 – this is because new brackets, clamps and neoprene strips had been purchased as the existing ones needed replacing. There has been some talk of winter hanging baskets but this would need looking into further.

The RFO pointed out that the Wardens costs were invoiced 12 months in arrears but in 2018/19 the invoicing had been rescheduled by HDC to be issued prior to the end of the year so two years' worth of invoices had been received and paid, hence a higher than budget Warden cost this year.

In addition, for a number of years, the Parish Council had not paid the full Wardens budgeted cost because of Warden sickness absence, resignations etc. This had, over the years, led to a building up of cash reserves which had allowed the Council to set aside funds to repay the Public Works Loan and achieve a good level of cash reserves that could be used to fund the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan or other significant projects, without reserves dropping below the recommended level.

It has always been the objective of the Parish Council to minimise Precept fluctuations by setting aside small annual budgets that were transferred to 'earmarked reserves' and used for one-off large purchases/costs and through prudent usage of cash reserves.

It had been agreed at the Finance Committee meeting of 18th December 2018 that any unspent budgets be re-allocated to earmarked reserves, however, with the

additional Warden expenditure it was agreed that no funds could be moved to earmarked reserves.

The Committee approved the accounts and recommends them to the full Council for acceptance at the June meeting.

The accounts will be presented to the full Council on 6th June for approval after being inspected by the Internal Auditor on 5th June. The accounts will then be sent to the External Auditors.

Meeting finished at 8.00pm

Signed.....

Date.....