



Ashington Parish Council

Finance Committee Meeting

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**Minutes of Ashington Parish Council Finance Committee Meeting held at 10.30am on Wednesday 29<sup>th</sup> November 2017**

Present: Councillors: T. Currell, M. Woolley, N. Spiers

Parish Clerk & RFO: C. Price & K. Dare

Apologies: J. Stillwell, G. McPherson

Members of the public: None

Declarations of Interest: None

Councillors met to discuss the preliminary budget figures provided by the RFO. The RFO had prepared a budget for 2018/19 which took into account the likely cost increases for existing services and additional budget needs.

The highlights are:

1. Income remains the same for next year. The PC needs to bear in mind that Ashington Autos rent for 'green shed' land makes up the majority of its income. It was agreed that this be added to the Risk Assessment as a potential risk.
2. Expenditure will increase because the PC is potentially facing one-off costs of 5k for IT, 1k for hanging basket brackets, repairs to seats/noticeboards, possible higher skatepark insurance cost (recent information from ACCT which needs further clarification)
3. In order to offset the additional expenditure the RFO has removed the budgets for Youth training (1k) and youth fundraising (2k) as neither budget was touched this year. In addition she had reduced the Neighbourhood Plan budget from 4k to 2k as the PC has received a grant for some of the work. She has not re-instated a grants budget but has kept the Contingency budget at 3k and this can be used to support these other budgets if necessary.

4. Taking all this into consideration the Budget Deficit (Income minus expenditure) is 106,130. The current Precept is 97,260 so the PC is potentially facing a loss of 9k next year if it does nothing. See point 7 below.
5. There is no Council Tax support grant from HDC next year. It has been reducing year on year (this year it was only 328) so the PC needs to fund everything itself.
6. Cash Reserves remain reasonable – the PC should have @60k (50% of expenditure) and it has 96k. The PC also has 'Iceland money' plus 'Earmarked reserves' but both of these funds are diminishing year on year and must not be relied upon in the long term.
7. The PC could keep the Precept static and use the cash reserves to meet the 9k deficit. It could use some cash reserves to 'top up' funding for some projects e.g. play area improvements or MSC surfacing (on top of any Earmarked reserves that the PC is already committing to these projects) or it could aim to keep cash reserves and increase the Precept to fund some or all of the 9k deficit. Or a combination of these options.

Questions/comments:

1. There was some discussion about the Warden budget figure that had been provided by HDC. The RFO would follow up on this with HDC to seek clarification as to how they had reached the increased cost of 55k (from 47k)
2. The PC owns two cctv cameras that are an integral part of ACCT's camera system. The cameras are old and of no value. All cctv systems must be registered and compliant with current regulations and it makes no sense for both the PC and ACCT to be registered cctv users. It should be discussed at the PC and ACCT working party.

It was agreed that, pending clarification of Wardens costs for 2018/19 and any subsequent amendments to the budget, that the budget be approved by the Finance Committee and recommended to the full PC for approval at the December meeting.

It was also agreed that any changes to the Precept be discussed at the December PC meeting and approved at the January meeting.

Meeting finished at 11.30am

Signed.....

Date.....