

CHOLSEY PARISH COUNCIL- FINANCE COMMITTEE

MINUTES

Meeting	Tuesday 24th November at 7:30pm in the Pavilion, Station Road, Cholsey.
Chair	Mr M Gray
Attendees	Mr P Ramsay, Mrs L Hamlyn, Mrs L Ivereigh
Apologies	Helen Jiggins, Adam Curtis

1	To hear questions or comments from members of the public (max 15 mins).
	There were no questions or comments from members of the public.

2	To receive Declarations of Interest for any agenda items
	Mr Gray declares as chair he receives £200 per year for expenses.

3	To consider the budget for 2016-17
	<p>Mr Gray advised that the meeting was quorate according to Parish Council Standing Orders which state 50% of a working party or committee constitute a quorum.</p> <p>Mr Gray advised that a draft budget had been prepared. It was agreed to review the proposed budget for each cost centre in turn.</p> <p><u>General Administration</u> The proposed overall total expenditure for the cost centre was largely the same with a small increase of £10 from £7620 to £7630 for the year. Increases were proposed to the amount budgeted for annual subscriptions and for maintenance of the website. The amount set aside for professional fees was reduced by £500 although it was proposed that £2,000 should still be budgeted in case additional funds were required for CAGE.</p> <p><u>Accommodation</u> The proposed accommodation budget was the same at £2000</p> <p><u>Burial Ground</u> The proposed total expenditure for the Burial Ground was up by £225 from £7102 to £7327. This was to allow for expected small annual increases in the cost of waste removal, pest control and grass cutting services. The proposed budgeted income for the Burial ground was up overall by £500 from £8250 to £8750 to reflect the previous years increase in actual income from fees.</p> <p><u>Staff</u> The proposed total expenditure on staff was down by £5309 from £48102 to £43063. This reflected the removal of the Children's Worker, Street Cleaner and street cleaning equipment from the budget along with a decrease in the protective clothing budget to remove that which would have been required for the street cleaner. Mr Gray advised that it had not proved possible to recruit a Street Cleaner. The Children's Worker role would be superseded by the proposed Children Centre. The budget for staff included the increase in salaries of £1,000 for the Clerk and for all other staff of 1.5% as recommended by the Personnel Working Group and agreed by Council at their meeting on 4th November.</p> <p><u>Office</u> The proposed total expenditure was up overall by £40 from £2180 to £2220 to reflect an actual increase in phone and broadband charges. The small budget for maintenance of equipment had been removed as it was felt that this was adequately covered by the IT support budget and contingency budget.</p> <p><u>Allotments</u> The proposed total expenditure remained the same at £850. Budgeted income was increased to £1600 in expectation of the provision of new allotments at Cholsey Meadows and also to reflect the actual income in 2014 and anticipated income this year.</p> <p><u>Open Spaces</u> The proposed total expenditure was down overall by £1435 from £8945 to £7510.</p>

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Small increases were proposed to the budgets for grass cutting and dog bin emptying to allow for expected small annual increases in the cost of those services.

The budget for Tree/Hedge maintenance had been reduced to reflect the requirements of the planned maintenance schedule for trees although £1,000 was retained for some planned maintenance and possible emergency works. The budget for Sundry Works was also cut by £100.

The income for open spaces from site rental fees to fairs and street vendors remained the same.

Sundries

The proposed total expenditure for Sundries was down overall by £260 from £5,200 to £4,940. Election costs had been removed from the budget as it was felt that in the very unlikely event of an election in the coming financial year the cost could be met from reserves. The budget for the library worker support grant was increased by 1.5% in line with the rises given to Parish Council staff.

Summer Play Scheme

It was proposed that there should be no increase in the budget for expenditure (£800) or income (£700) for the Summer Play Scheme.

Defibrillator

Although this was not budgeted for it appeared in the draft budget due actual income and expenditure in the previous years. It was proposed that this should be removed from the budget.

Children's Centre

Following Council's agreement in principle to open a Childrens Centre in Cholsey at their meeting on 4th November this had been included in the budget. A budget of £15,006 had been proposed to cover the cost of room rental in year 1 (£500) along with a contribution of £250 towards running costs, annual staff costs of £6,336 for a part-time manager and £7,920 for a part-time support worker.

New Pavilion

The proposed budget for the new pavilion cost centre remained the same at £27,753 to cover the cost of mortgage payments.

Total Income and Expenditure

Taking the above changes into account the total expenditure would be £119,099 and the total income £111,581 resulting in a deficit of £7,518 should the precept remain at the existing level of 66.56p for a band "D" household.

The committee discussed options of increasing the precept by 3% which would result in a £2.00 per annum increase for householders and reduce the deficit to £4984 or by 5% which would result in a £3.33 per annum increase for householders and reduce the deficit to £3029

Mr Gray suggested that the balance of the deficit should be met from reserves. Mr Gray also asked that Council provide a further £1,000 contribution towards provision of a replacement for the dial-a-ride service which is to be scrapped by OCC.

New paths for the burial ground will need to be provided in the coming year, a ring-fenced figure already exists to meet this need.

Mr Gray further suggested a contribution to the proposed skate ramp could also be made from reserves.

After further discussion Mr Gray proposed the Finance Committee recommend that Council accept the budget as drawn up, with an increase of £3.33/5% per annum in the precept and that the balance of the deficit, £1,000 per annum for Dial-a-Ride, a contribution for a skate ramp, and the path improvements/additions are met by reserves. seconded Mrs Ivereigh, carried unanimously.

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To consider council charges for 2016-17

Recreation Ground Charges

The Finance Committee agreed to recommend to Council that charges in relation to the Recreation Ground should remain the same.

Street Vendor Charges

The Finance Committee agreed to recommend to Council that the street vendor pitch charges should be increased by approximately 5% from £10.25 per visit to £10.75.

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Burial Ground charges

Details of burial ground charges from a number of local villages and towns had been obtained. Cholsey's charges were benchmarked against these and after discussion it was decided to recommend to Council that fees for burials and interments should be increased by 10%, fees for headstones should be increased from £63 to £80, cremation tablets from £30 to £50, fees for additional inscriptions and wooden crosses from £24 to £30. It was agreed that the fee multiplier for non-residents, currently set at 2.5 times that of the fees charged to residents, should remain the same.

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AOB

Mr Gray proposed that Mrs Ivereigh be elected chair of the Finance Committee, seconded Mr Ramsay, carried with 1 abstention.