

**BLEWBURY PARISH COUNCIL  
FINANCE COMMITTEE**

Minutes of a meeting held on Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> January 2016 at 7.30 pm at the Manor.

Councillors present: Chris Lakeland (chair), Charlotte Cameron, Michael Penington, Mark Blythe

Also present: Elaine de Ridder (Clerk and RFO)

**1. Apologies for absence.** Mark Blythe for late arrival.

**2. Election of Chair**

Chris Lakeland was elected to chair the meeting

**3. Declarations of Interest**

MP declared an interest in matters relating to the BVCIC (including item 6.3).

**4. Estimates of Income and Expenditure for 2015-2016**

Members of the committee examined the records of income and expenditure to the 31<sup>st</sup> December 2015 and the Clerk's estimates for the full year 2015/2016.

Income

Cemetery income is slightly more than anticipated. BVS fundraising for the play areas is £300 less than anticipated. Income from allotments is also less.

Further income came from an insurance claim and grants for the Neighbourhood Development Plan both of which are ringfenced.

Expenditure

Overall expenditure will be more than anticipated, mainly due to the works necessary to improve security at the equipment stores, the replacement of the backboards of the skateramp and the purchase of a tractor and a mower.

Expenditure was also more in the following areas:

- Telephone
- Clubhouse checks
- Cemetery (purchase of cemetery management software)
- Play space maintenance cost

Expenditure was less than budgeted for in the following areas:

- £500 was budgeted for the clerk's pension but due to the staging date only £90 will be spent by the end of the financial year.
- Lengthman's salary and associated holiday pay
- Election expenses was £1100 less than advised by the Vale
- Training
- Insurance
- Electricity for the Scout Hut
- Provision was made to spend £5000 on the Clubhouse's plant room but not all of it was spent
- CIC grant

- Legal costs
- Contingencies for running facilities were not used.

## 5. To establish estimates of income and expenditure for 2016/2017.

### Anticipated income

The element of Government support given to the Vale which they in turn pass on to parishes, will be reduced by £532. Fundraising from the BVS has been lowered in keeping with the actual amount received. Expected income from cemetery fees was kept at the same level.

### Expenditure

Administration:

Audit fees are anticipated to be the same or slightly higher.

Provision for the clerk's salary was made based on the anticipated NALC recommendation (increase of 1%). A sum was included for pension contributions. A contingency was again included to cover any additional staffing costs, e.g. should the Neighbourhood Plan or Village Hall project increase the Clerk's work load or facilities increase the lengthman's work load.

The lengthman's budgeted hours were based on calculations previously made but small changes have been made, increasing the amount available for footpath maintenance and facility inspections.

Telephone costs: It was agreed that the CIC should be approached to pay for the telephone and internet costs at the clubhouse.

Training: The training budget was slightly reduced from the previous year's provision.

Allotments: No change.

Plant room: No specific provision was made for the plant room as the CIC did not agree with the proposed changes. Instead a general contingency for the running of various facilities have been agreed.

Small grants: The grant to the Citizens Advice Bureau remains at £150 and South and Vale Carers Centre's grant will remain at £50.

Grass cutting contract: As it is a three year contract the figure remains unchanged.

The amount for gravel for footpaths has been increased to £400. An additional £1000 was agreed for maintenance to the TFF car park.

Cemetery: No specific projects have been agreed for the cemetery.

Legal and professional advice: the amount for legal advice remains at £1000.

Neighbourhood planning expenses were not included in the day-to-day expenditure. These costs should be met by various grants.

## **6. Reviewing of grants:**

- 6.1 WWRA grass cutting. As Councils have to look to reduce expenditure and all other residents associations in Blewbury ask members to contribute toward the cost of grass cutting or do it free of charge, it was agreed that this grant would not be paid in the next financial year.
- 6.2 Toddler group. The toddler group no longer exists.
- 6.3 BVCIC. The BVCIC anticipate a shortfall which might require a grant of up to £1,000
- 6.4 St Michael's Blewbury PCC. No request was received for contribution to tree work but a contingency of £250 was included for emergency tree work.
- 6.5 BVGA – allotment development. No further development is anticipated.

## **7. Review of salaries of Clerk and Lengthman**

It is anticipated that NALC will negotiate a 1% increase in salaries for clerks. Other than that salaries will remain unchanged.

## **8. Reserves. *To agree the level of reserves needed for the next financial year.***

The current reserves were circulated. The “black swan” reserve remains at £14,000. Earmarked reserves are kept for the play facilities, Neighbourhood Plan grants, cemetery fundraising and emergency village maintenance, however no funds remain in the play facilities budget. The last of the Play Space reserve will also be spent by the end of the financial year.

## **9. Capital projects. *To establish reserves available for capital projects and to agree the budget for capital projects.*** Capital projects are ongoing, including the Village Hall refurbishment. A sum of £46,573.73 remains for capital projects. It is anticipated that a further PWLB loan of £100,000 will be applied for to finance the village hall refurbishment in addition to grants which have already been applied for.

## **10. Precept for 2016/17 *To agree the precept for the next financial year and make recommendation to the full Parish Council***

It was agreed to recommend to the Council that the precept be increased by £12,000 to £55,000 (increase of £15 per household per year). The increase is mainly due to anticipated loan repayments, to make up for the reduction in the Council Tax Reduction Scheme, to recoup some of the expenditure already incurred and as well as the anticipated cost of maintenance of the play areas and the cost of a mower.

## **11. Review of physical assets and liability.** The review was done prior to the insurance renewal and will be carried out prior to the next renewal.

## **12. Any other business**

None.

The meeting closed at 9.34pm.