

**BLEWBURY PARISH COUNCIL
FINANCE COMMITTEE**

Minutes of a meeting held on Wednesday 4th January 2017 at 7.30 pm at Sebastopol Barn.

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

Also present: Elaine de Ridder (Clerk and RFO)

1. Apologies for absence. Michael Penington.

2. Election of Chair

Chris Lakeland was elected to chair the meeting

3. Declarations of Interest

No declarations made.

4. Estimates of Income and Expenditure for 2015-2016

Members of the committee examined the records of income and expenditure to the 31st December 2016 and the Clerk's estimates for the full year 2016/2017.

Income

Income is as expected apart from cemetery fees which were more than anticipated and additional grant funding obtained for car park works.

Expenditure

Expenditure is as expected apart from lengthman's hours (slightly less than the maximum set) and repayments to the new PWLB which will not be made in this financial year. This will result in a surplus for this year which would be used towards cash flow/reserves during the village hall refurbishment project.

Expenditure was more than anticipated for the

- Tickers Folly Field car park
- Electricity for the Scout Hut

Expenditure was less than budgeted for in the following areas:

- Machinery replacement and maintenance
- Not all of the budgeted amount for work on the Clubhouse's plant room has been spent but more is anticipated by the end of the financial year
- Legal costs
- Not all the contingencies for running facilities were used.

5. To establish estimates of income and expenditure for 2017/2018.

Anticipated income

The element of Government support given to the Vale which they in turn pass on to parishes, will be reduced by £384. Expected income from cemetery fees was kept at the same level, as was the fundraising from the BVS for the play areas.

Expenditure

Administration:

Audit fees are anticipated to be higher due to higher income and expenditure in the 2016-2017 year.

Provision for the clerk's salary was made based on a possible 1% increase as well as provision for a handover period for a new clerk when two salaries will be paid. A contingency was again included to cover any additional staffing costs due to the Village Hall project. It was also agreed to spend up to £600 for a new laptop and smart phone for the clerk.

The lengthman's budgeted hours were based on calculations previously made. A small additional budget was set aside should it be necessary for the lengthman to do extra mowing following cutbacks by Highways, OCC and the Vale.

Plant room: As reported earlier, not all the money set aside to pay for plant room changes have been spent. Another £2000 has been set aside for the next financial year should it be necessary.

Small grants: The grant to the Citizens Advice Bureau remains at £150 and South and Vale Carers Centre's grant will remain at £50. It was agreed to continue with a grant to the DVTG for the Wallingford bus which would come to £300 for a whole year. The Parish Council asked the finance committee to consider having funds available should a village organisation ask for a grant. £250 has been set aside for this purpose.

Grass cutting contract: A new three year contract was agreed upon by the Parish Council.

Replacement machinery: Up to £650 towards hedge cutting equipment has been agreed.

Footpaths: The amount for gravel for footpaths has been kept the same at £400.

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

Risk Management: A professional tree survey would be needed in 2017. It was agreed to have £1000 in the budget towards the survey and tree work as necessary.

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

6. Reviewing of grants:

- 6.1 Blewbury Brass Band and/or village organisation grant. See "Small grants" above.
- 6.2 BVCIC. It was agreed that £1000 be set aside should it be necessary.
- 6.3 St Michael's Blewbury PCC. No grant towards tree work in the Playclose has recently been applied for so no provision has been made for the coming year.
- 6.4 Other regular grants: Didcot CAB and South & Vale Carers Centre remain unchanged.

7. Review of salaries of Clerk and Lengthman

It is anticipated that NALC will negotiate a 1% increase in salaries for clerks. A small increase in hours (and associated holiday pay) is anticipated should it become necessary for him to do additional grass cutting due to cutbacks by the County and District Councils.

- 8. Reserves.** *To agree the level of reserves needed for the next financial year.*
The current reserves were circulated. The “black swan” reserve has been reduced to £10,000. Earmarked reserves are kept for the play facilities, future Neighbourhood Plan revisions, cemetery fundraising, emergency village maintenance and the village hall refurbishment project. Some funds remain in the play facilities budget after the last of the Play Space funds have been transferred to the Parish Council.
- 9. Capital projects.** *To establish reserves available for capital projects and to agree the budget for capital projects.* The Village Hall refurbishment project will start very soon. The contract sum has been agreed at the previous Parish Council meeting. The PWLB loan has been obtained and the WREN grant will be paid once the project commences.
- 10. Precept for 2017/18** *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 only 1% (£550) to cover the reduction in the Council Tax Reduction Scheme (CTRS) grant paid by the Vale.
- 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 8.51pm.