

Draft until signed

**Minutes of a Budget Discussion Meeting
Wednesday 4 December 2019 at 7.30pm, Adstone, Bildeston Road, Combs**

Present: S Scarff (Chairman), V Whitehead (Cllr), T Chaplin (Cllr), I Walker (Cllr)

Attending: T Bamber (Clerk)

1. Introduction

The Chairman noted that, while the meeting was quorate no decisions were required: its purpose was to arrive at a proposal to be considered by the full Parish Council. Minutes were to be taken in the interests of transparency.

2. Finance

- a. **Budget Review** – those present reviewed the previous year budget and the budget to actual variance reports. Following a full discussion a new draft budget for 2020/2021 was drawn up for circulation to the council.
- b. **Media:** to cover the annual donation to Barclif (100), the quarterly cost of the newsletter (£100/qtr) and the website subscription (£42), proposed budget of £550
- c. **Broadband:** it was agreed that the broadband provided in Battisford Village Hall, while helpful, was not essential and therefore not cost effective. It was proposed that the hall committee be informed that the Parish Council would not be requiring this after the following year (2021).
- d. **Cemetery:** in light of need for more frequent grass cuts this last year, it was agreed that slight increases were appropriate. An amount also needed to be provided for a survey of trees in the cemetery.
- e. **Bus Shelter:** the budget for repairing the roof has not been used so the £200 budgeted will be earmarked in general funds.
- f. **Community Projects:** As well as the ongoing cost of maintaining the defibrillators in the village (£200 every two years – next in 2020), there is strong interest in the Oaks Meadow Project and it was agreed to propose a further £1000 to cover activities associated with the project.
- g. **Election expenses:** rather than suffer sudden costs in the event of an election, it was proposed that for the next few years a cost of £200 be budgeted and carried
- h. forward into earmarked funds, until there was sufficient to cover a full, contested, election.
- i. **Street Light Maintenance:** it will be necessary to replace the failed light in Queens Close. To the extent that this cost may exceed the budget, this may be funded from the general reserve.
- j. **Precept:** dues to changes in population of the village, the cost to a council tax band D household of maintaining the precept at the same as last year would constitute a reduction from £26.50 to £25.64 (3.25%). In light of the fact that the Combs precept cost to villagers is so low compared to the rest of the country (average cost £64.05, Battisford £43.85) and the possibility that the Oaks Meadow project may result in further costs in future, it was not considered unreasonable to suggest a precept of £9,000, being a cost of £28.85 per band D household (an increase of £2.35 or 8.8%). It was noted that this precept would not enable a completely balanced budget but it was agreed that if necessary such costs as exceed the total budget this year could be drawn from general reserves.

Action. Clerk to circulate proposed budget and precept demand for discussion and approval at the next meeting.

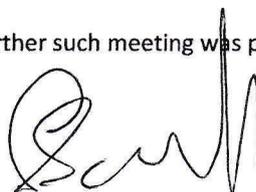
3. Any other business

There was no other business to discuss

4. Date and time of next meeting

This was an informal meeting and no further such meeting was proposed at the time.

Meeting closed at 9.55pm



Proposed 2020 Budget

CATEGORY	Total to Nov 2019	Budget 2018/19	possible budget 2020	Comment
1 Audit Fees	£ 226.00	£ 200.00	£ 250.00	based on last year
2 Barcliff/media	£ 302.00	£ 150.00	£ 550.00	for Newsletter, Barcliff and website
3 Broadband for Village Hall	£ -	£ 150.00	£ 150.00	based on last year (to be cancelled after 2020/21 year)
4 Burial Grounds Maintenance - Combs Cemetery	£ 1,562.00	£ 1,500.00	£ 2,000.00	based on last year plus tree survey (estimated cost at present)
5 Burial Grounds Maintenance - St Mary's Churchyard	£ 978.00	£ 1,200.00	£ 1,500.00	based on last year plus extra cuts
6 Bus Shelter	£ -	£ 200.00	£ -	to earmark from unused funds last year
7 Clerk's Expenses - Petrol/Stationery	£ 124.00	£ 100.00	£ 100.00	based on last year
8 Clerk's Overtime	£ -	£ -	£ -	
9 Clerk's Salary & Expenses	£ -	£ 3,000.00	£ 3,170.00	based on past and current rates
10 Community Projects	£ 3,410.00	£ 3,100.00	£ 1,200.00	to cover exploration of possible projects
11 Councillors' Expenses	£ -	£ 50.00	£ 50.00	based on last year
12 Dog Bins Maintenance	£ 527.00	£ 550.00	£ 550.00	based on last year
13 Donations - Section 137	£ -	£ 1,000.00	£ 500.00	following a review of last year
14 Election Expenses	£ 105.00	£ 1,000.00	£ 200.00	to build to a full cost fund
15 Hire of Hall	£ 120.00	£ 240.00	£ 300.00	allowing for increase
16 Insurance	£ 261.00	£ 350.00	£ 300.00	based on new 5 year cost
17 Miscellaneous	£ 525.00	£ 500.00	£ 500.00	based on last year
18 Street Lights-Energy	£ 524.00	£ 1,200.00	£ 1,200.00	based on last year
19 Street Lights-Maintenance	£ 2,400.00	£ 1,500.00	£ 2,000.00	to cover repair and replacement of Queens Close light
20 Subscriptions & Fees	£ 351.00	£ 360.00	£ 360.00	based on last year -covers known small increase
21 Training	£ 156.00	£ 500.00	£ 400.00	based on last year
	£ -	£ -	£ -	

Cost totals £ 11,571.00 £ 16,850.00 £ 15,280.00

Receipts	Total to Nov 2019	Budget 2018/19	possible budget 2020	
22 Reclaimed VAT	£ -	£ 500.00	£ 500.00	
23 Deposit Account Interest	£ 6.28	£ -	£ -	
24 2.5% Consolidated Stock	£ -	£ -	£ -	this was closed in 2015
25 Burial Ground Income	£ 2,400.00	£ 4,000.00	£ 4,500.00	based on trends
26 Miscellaneous	£ -	£ -	£ -	as before
27 Donations	£ 2,000.00	£ -	£ -	
28 Precept	£ 8,000.00	£ 8,000.00	£ 9,000.00	This is the proposed figure
Income Totals:	£ 12,406.28	£ 12,500.00	£ 14,000.00	

Precept:	2019/20	2020/21
Tax base for Combs	301.88	312.01
Band D charge	£26.50	£25.64 (if precept unchanged)

Effect of change in precept:	precept	£8,000.00	£8,500.00	£9,000.00	£12,000.00	£20,000.00
increase %		0.0000	6.2500	12.5000	50.0000	150.0000
new tax band D		£25.64	£27.24	£28.85	£38.46	£64.10 (precept/tax base)
tax increase		-£0.86	£0.74	£2.34	£11.96	£37.60
Tax increase %		-3.2467	2.8004	8.8475	45.1300	141.8833