

Burwell Parish Council

Meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Meeting

Tuesday 15th December 2020 at 10.30 am

Present: Hazel Williams (Chair), Joan Lonsdale, Liz Swift, Michael Swift, Paul Webb (first 15 minutes only), Brenda Wilson, and Yvonne Rix. Apologies from Gus Jones.

The meeting had been arranged to discuss the precept for 2021/2022. All members of the group had received a draft budget for the year compiled by the Clerk/RFO.

Paul Webb informed the group that he would suggest that if any of the annual maintenance budget for the Skate Park is left unspent then this should be earmarked to a skate park sinking fund. This could also apply to the tennis court maintenance and trim track. We had also agreed in the FA grant application to put £2.5k into the sinking fund for the Pavilion. Hazel Williams suggested that any excess income from the facilities at the Recreation Ground could be earmarked for the sinking funds. Michael Swift commented that it is good management to put money aside and the £2.5k pa was a stipulation for the FA, but there could be one pot for the Recreation Ground. There are also some cracks on the skate park which are now being monitored which may need to be repaired in the next few years. Michael Swift then suggested using the CCLA for earmarked reserves as this earns some interest. Joan Lonsdale expressed that the recreation ground facilities are no different to any of our other properties. Yvonne Rix commented that the Council could earmark a substantial sum for example £10K from the current general reserves. She felt that it would be difficult in the current financial situation to allocate £5k in the budget for the sinking fund.

Paul Webb left the meeting.

Yvonne Rix went through the draft budget. She explained that she had looked carefully at each budget heading bearing in mind the impact of Covid and hall hire on both income and expenditure. Some budgets for expenditure had been reduced to a slightly lower level. Income for the Gardiner Memorial Hall had been set at nil, but some allowance had been made to the Mandeville Hall income as it is hoped that some if not all of the Gardiner Memorial Hall hirers could use Mandeville Hall instead. Making these changes reduced the budget to £161,265.00

Yvonne Rix recommended that the capital allowance for the Safety Campaign of £3000 and the LHI capital allowance for the village entrances buffer zones should also be earmarked as the application has been submitted.

As a result of Covid the Band D rate for Burwell is £100 lower this year than last at £2308.50. This means that for every £1.00 on the Band D household rate we will received £2308.50. The Band D household rate for 2020/2021 is £70.33. Previous discussions by the Finance and General Purposes had indicated that the household rate should not be increased or only increased by a small amount for the forthcoming year.

Keeping the Band D household rate at £70.33 the same as last year will result in a precept of £162,356.81, which using the proposed budget of £161,265.00. will leave around a £1,000 contingency.

If we kept the Precept at the same level as 2020/2021 of £169,395.00 a Band D household rate would increase to £73.38 per year.

The Group agreed that there is a need for the precept to be increased on an annual basis, but in the current climate this was not appropriate. Yvonne Rix stated that there is a need to reconsider the budget mid-year when more information is available, the budget has been set fairly low and income and the estimated general reserves will hopefully be higher than expected.

Gardiner Memorial Hall third party contributions have not been included.

There should be no need to transfer funds from the CCLA account. It should be noted that figures given to Council stating the Councils financial position include funds in the CCLA account

Discussion will need to be taken on how the Council can use the £20,000.00 we have recently received from the Goosehall Solar Farm. Options include the Recreation Ground car park and the Gardiner Memorial Hall. It cannot be used for repairs or remedial work to the Mandeville Hall ceiling. The Council needs to officially earmark CIL funding of £35,000 towards the cost of the car park at the Recreation Ground.

The Group agreed to recommend to Council that for the financial year 2021/2022 no resident should face an increase in the level of payment for the parish councils' part of the community tax charge and that the Council should set the precept request at £162,357.00.

The meeting ended at 11.26 am.