



LPC FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING

19 November 2019 – 19:30

DRAFT MINUTES

*Attended: Thomas Briggs (Chair), John Thompson, Mark Wilson, Laila Turner
Sophie Martin (Clerk)*

1. **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING** to be agreed and placed on the Parish Council Website by the clerk.

Approved

2. **APOLOGIES** for absence.

Bernie De Haldevang

3. **DECLARATIONS OF DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTEREST:** *To receive any disclosure by members of personal interest in matters on the agenda, the nature of any interests, and whether the member regards the interest to be prejudicial under the terms of the Code of Conduct. Members are reminded of the need to repeat their declaration immediately prior to the commencement of the item in question. Anyone with a prejudicial interest must unless an exception applies, or a dispensation has been issued, withdraw from the meeting.*

4. **BUDGET 2020/21 – including LNP Implementation project budget projections**

Note: We can recommend a budget and approve as such, but not specific line items, which still need approval by full council of specific budget items.

JT asked for explanation of CIL restrictions. TB/MW explained the two CIL pots and need for CIL funded projects to be infrastructure related (due to increase in housing etc – roads, paths).

Bluehouse Lane could be such a project. For TDC CIL pot, TDC has to identified it as a priority.

£3500 for footpath should come out of the LPC CIL account so that it doesn't put us in the red from the main account (to be formally approved)

Explanation of VAT (**Action: SM to confirm how often we have to file VAT**)

Reserve is currently £16,235 - 50% of precept.

Assumption that Precept will increase by at least RPI. Whatever we increase the precept by, we need to increase the reserve accordingly.

Running costs are currently just over £15K per year. We need to review all subscriptions to check they are all necessary. **(Action SM/TB)**

Budget 2020-2021 presented (attached as appendix)

£2000 for Bluehouse Lane safety contribution (2021).

Section 137 – local charities or activities. How much can/should we spend on Section 137 activities? **Action SM to confirm amount.** TB will add separate line item.

Assuming election fees to be charged by TDC have now been excused.

Precept increase of 2.6% only (inflation).

CIL will increase over the next year. Currently CIL account/budget has £7400 remaining for Pay as you go (PAYG) activities after £3,500 footpaths.

JT requested explanation of PAYG activities: TB – explains these are ad hoc projects and activities to be approved as presented as we do not have specific budget items identified in 19/20.

Could be Limpsfield C of E intending to create a trim trail outside of school grounds by cricket pitch. Potential for collaboration.

Who is responsible for public liability and ground cover/cushioning? (TDC/School/LPC)

Action: to research further (MW with school contact)

LNP budget for 2021 - £90,000.

Can't all come from precept.

LNP to identify projects, specific funding source and any co-collaborators, e.g. Diocese for playground / community fundraising project etc. LT has had some initial conversations on this project. The Church/Diocese should lead due to it being leased Diocese land. LPC should contribute to the budget. What are the other potential funding sources? To be discussed in more detail at LNP committee meeting in December.

Need to have a conversation with LNP in terms of priorities and funding. JT said he would talk to Ann Osborn (NB AO is now formal chair of committee; BdH has stepped down due to lack of time).

Chart account. £7,000 for projects with Chart benefit, including pro-rata share of projects, such as footpaths (see parish council meeting).

Precept

JT would like to discuss increase in precept and presented documents:

- Highest to lowest precepts in TD - 2017-2019/20
- Band D TDC figures

How much do we want /need from the Precept? If for example we increased the precept to £50,000, Parishioners would be paying £25 per household (Av. Band D).

Precept increase has to be justified. Previous increase was due to Neighbourhood Plan. *We now have to show this is maintained and justified according to LNP projects and activities.*

TB – agrees we need to increase the precept but need to look carefully at how much. The current reserves/ budget cover most of the projects we can deliver in next year. We cannot increase the precept based on projects we can't deliver in the next year or two either. Big-ticket items have to come from different source (grant, TDC CIL etc). They cannot come from precept.

LT – It's about justification of the increase to parishioners.

MW – efficiency is very important. We are still a low precept. It's good to be in position where we are slightly short of money and running slightly short. We could look at increasing the budget in two steps. What is our precept versus similar parishes in terms of precept level/position? MW also highlighted that money cannot be returned to taxpayers – extra money may encourage wasteful spending.

NB. If we put up the council tax it has to stay there it cannot be increased then decreased so ongoing justification of projects and ongoing activity is key.

Oxted for example has masses of CIL money; Limpsfield doesn't have this luxury. Limpsfield is trying to slow development and will continue to have modest CIL.

LT – increase in precept is therefore in exchange for fighting development in Limpsfield.

Action: We need to properly identify and agree what we want to spend money on and what's the priority and strategy.

Recommendations / Actions

- TB to put together some scenarios for increase over the next few years based on proposed LNP projects.
- NP committee to look at specific funding sources for each project.
- MW / JT suggest we look at other grants we may be eligible for.
- Clerk/Councillors (who??) to take responsibility to look into funding sources and to look at other LNP projects, such as off-street parking for the TDC CIL pot.

5. ANY OTHER ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

- David Chitty update – internal auditor. TB not yet managed to contact. Chitty should contact TB.
- Clerk's contract – details needed for approval in December (hours increase) – TB to draft for December meeting.
- Online banking update - awaiting signatories' confirmation from NatWest before we can apply for online access with new signatories. Any day now. MW to advise as soon as process is complete.

6. NEXT MEETING to be agreed.

Meeting ended - 21.15