

NORTH WALSHAM TOWN COUNCIL
15 November 2016

Minutes of the Precept Meeting of the Town Council held on 15 November 2016

Present:

Chair:

Members:

Cllr F Choudhury
Cllr J Melville
Cllr R Sims
Cllr D Turner
Cllr E Wheeler

Present:

Cllr B Hester

Cllr P Edge
Cllr M Seward
Cllr S Stuckey
Cllr B West
Cllr J Witte

The meeting opened at 18:32.

Open to the Press and Members of the Public

1 ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

(a) Declarations of Interest

None were declared.

(b) Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Cllrs Bull, Canham, Fryer and Murphy.

2 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Mr Matthew Smith (North Walsham Play) spoke on behalf of the charity's current and future plans. The Woodville project was now under £2,000 short of the target figure. He asked the Council to consider including in its precept an amount towards the next project, an upgrade of the younger children's playground at War Memorial Park, adjacent to the Community Centre.

3 FINANCE

As proposed by Cllr Hester and seconded by Cllr Seward, it was **RESOLVED**

That Cllrs Stuckey and Witte be appointed as account signatories.

4 PRECEPT

The Assistant Clerk – Finance was attending outside contracted hours. As proposed by Cllr Hester and seconded by Cllr Seward, it was **RESOLVED**

NORTH WALSHAM TOWN COUNCIL
15 November 2016

That she receives an overtime payment or Time Off In Lieu.

The figures presented did not represent a refinement over those presented on 8 November, but took into account comments from the meeting and subsequent correspondence. A number of points were raised:

- Apprentice groundsman: This had been discussed in outline at the most recent Personnel & Grants Committee as a means of handling the increased workload that would fall to grounds staff when the grass verge maintenance agreement with Norfolk County Council kicked in. It had then been agreed during the discussions since the meeting on 8 November to include cover in the figures for discussion at this meeting. Members were reminded that Norfolk County Council would be funding the basic service at approximately £9,800 per year (index linked), and the Town Clerk advised that the Council may qualify for a small grant contribution towards the cost of an apprentice.
- One camera was unlikely to provide full coverage of the War Memorial Park, but depending on siting might give very good coverage of the main problem areas. Members were advised that the St Nicholas Court camera did not record the churchyard area very well in complete darkness. Contract costs were included in the baseline figure for 2017/18. It was not clear if these would reduce should the police agree to take ownership of the base unit; this would be a process of negotiation. The new Police & Crime Commissioner had asked his team to provide information on costs and usefulness so that he could make an informed decision.
- There is no statutory reserve requirement. It is, however, recommended that councils hold reserves equating to six months' running costs.
- The basis for the figures was and remained a best estimate, based on historical spend with an allowance for increases and actual prices where these could easily be determined. Members were reminded that council finances could not be equated to business finance in a meaningful way. Councils had the precept, receipts and reserves. If a budget was insufficient to cover necessary expenditure, that funding was drawn down from reserves once the Council had approved it. If there was insufficient cover in reserves, that cost could not be incurred. The budget therefore remained fluid to take account of draw-downs and incoming grants during the year, and was only fixed precisely at the year end. Councils were not able to overspend, or to overdraw. Loans were complex and only available through the Public Sector Loans Board for limited purposes.
- The Information Office costs had been rolled forward from 2016/17.
- County Cllr Seward had advised further on the prospects for a bus interchange, noting that it was highly unlikely that anything would happen in 2017/18. He had indicated that it would be helpful for the Council to resolve to write to the County and District Councils expressing the need for a new interchange, and stating that if a suitable site were to be found then it would be willing to make a financial contribution commensurate with their financial resources – for example to fund bus shelters at the interchange.
- The Council had, if you looked at its expenditure, achieved quite a lot this year and remained within budget with a healthy reserve, although this did need to be rebuilt.

NORTH WALSHAM TOWN COUNCIL
15 November 2016

Following the discussions, the following resolutions were made with regard to additional expenditure for 2017/18 (all votes 10 in favour with 1 abstention):

- As proposed by Cllr Seward and seconded by Cllr Stuckey, it was **RESOLVED by majority vote that £10,000 be included in the precept towards the North Walsham Play project for War Memorial Park.**
- As proposed by Cllr West and seconded by Cllr Melville, it was **RESOLVED by majority vote that £5,000 be included in the precept towards shelters for the proposed bus interchange, and that this be a rolling contribution to raise the necessary funding (Cromer Town Council advised a minimum of £10,000 per shelter) for the proposal.**
- As proposed by Cllr Seward and seconded by Cllr Sims, it was **RESOLVED by majority vote that £15,000 be included in the precept towards the cost of St Nicholas Precinct renovation.** No additional funding would be specified for possible work on Market Cross; the reserves already held £5,000 for renewing the inscription, and any additional requirement would be drawn down from reserves.
- As proposed by Cllr West and seconded by Cllr Edge, it was **RESOLVED by majority vote that £14,500 be included in the precept to cover the costs of taking on an apprentice groundsman to support the expanding workload and provide an opportunity for a younger person.**
- As proposed by Cllr Choudhury and seconded by Cllr Stuckey, it was **RESOLVED by majority vote that £8,000 be included in the precept towards the installation of CCTV (and possibly solar lighting) on War Memorial Park.**
- As proposed by Cllr Sims and seconded by Cllr Seward, it was **RESOLVED by majority vote that £2,000 be included in the precept to cover the cost of additional litter bins, installation and emptying.**
- As proposed by Cllr Stuckey and seconded by Cllr Melville, it was **RESOLVED by majority vote that £5,000 be included in the precept for staff training costs including the proposed apprenticeship.**
- As proposed by Cllr Choudhury and seconded by Cllr Stuckey, it was **RESOLVED by majority vote that £2,000 be included in the precept to cover essential additional costs brought about by the NNDC decision to move to a completely electronic planning system. NNDC had written to all councils advising that necessary funding needed to be included in the precept.**
- As proposed by Cllr Seward and seconded by Cllr Stuckey, it was **RESOLVED by majority vote that £10,000 be included in the precept towards the cost of secure, permanent parking provision for Council vehicles.**

The meeting closed at 19:40