

**Notes of the Datchworth Parish Council Informal Finance Meeting on
Wednesday 12th January 2022 at 11am
All Saints Church Hall**

Present: Cllrs.T Stowe (Acting Chair), J Garrod, C Groves

In Attendance: Andy Short, Wendy Prowle (Zoom) and 1 Member of the public

1. Apologies for absence

Cllr. Stowe informed the meeting Cllr. Dodson had resigned and that he would be chairing the finance meeting as Acting Chair.

Proposed Cllr Garrod, Seconded Cllr Groves

No apologies received.

2. Declarations of Interest

None

3. Approve minutes of last finance meeting (26th April 2021)

Last finance meeting minutes approved Cllrs. Garrod and Groves

4. Public speaking on any finance agenda items

MOP stated he thought the meeting would be inquorate because of the resignation of Cllr. Dodson. Cllr. Stowe explained he was in attendance as Acting Chair to oversee discussions only. None of the items today would be voted on, it was only a case of agreeing options with the RFO to take to Full Council on 25th January.

5. Review

5.1 Financial Risk Assessment & Effectiveness of Internal Audit

To take to Full Council

- reviewing the number of Councillors on Finance Committee
- review Credit debit card.

5.2 Fixed Asset Register

To take to Full Council including decision to upload to DPC website

6. Change of Bank to Nat West

To take to Full Council. Information to be sent to Cllr. Stowe **Action Clerk**

7. Discuss allocation of funding for Nutcroft play area

Allocate funding from Neighbourhood Plan 22/23 Budget. – Funds in this item were allocated from the receipt of New Homes Bonuses.

8. Budget Estimate to Year End 2021/22

Finance committee agreed with estimated figures to year end

9. Forecast Budget for 2022/23

- Audit fees: added an extra £1k (above necessary funds) for additional work being carried out by external auditor on 2020/21 accounts
- Capital projects/Neighbourhood Plan/Play Equipment:
Remove Neighbourhood Plan item - allocate the £10,748 b/fwd from the previous year to:
Capital Projects £4,748
Play Equipment £6,000
- General Reserves: Excess funds b/fwd from previous year quite high at £9,119.17. It was suggested that £5k in GR for 2022/23 was a reasonable amount, therefore the excess to be deducted in the allocation of funds column (column E) which will bring down the amount that would be required from the precept.
- Grants/Donations/Awards: It was suggested that £2k was not necessary, and to drop to £500
- Legal Expenses: It was suggested that £4k for 2022/23 should be adequate.
- Litter bins & dog bins: It was suggested to cut down from £1,200 to £700 – that some of the dog poo bins could be removed which would save approx. £140 per bin.
- Misc Admin & Subs: Will the council be renewing the HAPTC subscription @ £735? If not this figure can be lowered and re-allocated elsewhere or lower the precept request by about 2%.
- Play area maintenance: In addition to £200 for the inspection, it was suggested to allocate an extra £1k for any general maintenance.
- Salaries: – not discussed, to be reviewed by RFO.
- Trees:
Approx £15k + VAT outstanding from tree survey work
£5,300 still in 2021/22 budget – leaves £9,700 to find in £2022/23 (complete work in March, pay invoice in April):
Re-allocated £2,460 b/fwd from play equipment to trees (funds from NHP allocated to Play Equipment).
£7,240 from precept, plus;
£2,300 from precept for additional/unexpected tree work.

10. Agree Precept for 2022/23

- Implementing the above suggested amounts would necessitate an increase to the precept of 10.92% (Annual cost to Band D property of £49.01 - £5.19 annual increase to previous year).
- FC also suggested the option of the same precept increase as previous year of 14.75% which would give an extra £1,250 to be allocated (suggested maybe extra to trees?). (Annual cost to Band D property of £50.71 - £6.89 annual increase to previous year).

Meeting Closed 12:36

**Signed: Andy Short
Clerk to Datchworth Parish Council**

Date: 14th January 2022