

Notes from Huntington Parish Council Meeting Finance Working Group

Monday 18th December 2017 at Huntington Village Hall, 7:30pm

Present

Cllr Dave Whitehead (Chair), Cllr Nick Dodd, Cllr Jacky Creswick and Louise Gibson (Clerk)

Apologies

Cllr Roy Shelton – Illness

Cllr Mark Williams – Work Commitments

The Group were previously presented with the current Cashbook detailing all expenditure in the current financial year, to date and a spreadsheet for budget setting 2017/2018

1. Expenditure Review for 2017.2018

The balance brought forward is predicted as £15,110 which is significant increase on the previous year. Any contingency consideration does not include New Homes Bonus (NHB) or Section 106 money.

Administration costs could potentially be reduced by a review of the amount of articles published in the Huntington Handbook. However, the older residents may rely on this source of information with no internet or email access. This should be considered next year but with careful consideration of how redistribution of the information can be maintained for older residents.

The Jubilee Field suffered a damaged fence and gateway this year. It was questioned whether S106 money (specifically ring-fenced for Jubilee Field) could be used for these repairs (not yet carried out due to a potential community donation) instead of drawing on annual miscellaneous costs.

2. Budget-Setting for 2018/2019

Please Note: The precept figures for 2018/2019 for Huntington Parish Council was not available from CW&C at the time of this meeting. The Parish Council is due to receive them on 23/12/17. The Spreadsheet presented to Full Council will include the ACTUAL figures and not an estimate.

With the rise of houses (due to the Saughton Camp building programme), based on an average of the last two years, it was predicted that the precept would be approximately £23,900.

If the precept were to be at this level, the budget costings would remain the same as this financial year but with the following changes for 2017/2018 (compared to this financial year). (Also see separate attachment: Financial Summary: 2018/2019 Budget Setting)

- A statutory allocation to the Clerk's pension of 1% (if the Clerk decides to opt in)
- An increase in Clerk's Salary was budgeted for although the Clerk reminded the group that this would need discussion and resolution by Full Council AFTER April 2018 and is not automatically awarded.
- Miscellaneous Costs to be increased to include the fencing repairs to Jubilee Field and the potential to buy a projector in order that documents can be displayed at future Parish Council meetings. This will need resolution by Full Council before any expenditure is made.
- An allocation of £2000 towards Community grants.

3. Precept Calculation

With the budget proposed and, dependent on the precept being £23,900 or above (predicted rise due to the number of new homes built. To be confirmed by end of December and shown in final spreadsheet), there would be no rise of the precept charges to residents and would remain at £17:31 for each Band D property.

RESOLVED: The Financial Working Group would recommend no rise to the Full Council on the basis of the precept being £23,900 or more (To be confirmed and detailed in final spreadsheet analysis)

ACTION: If CW&C set the precept figure (based on the number of Band D properties which is set to rise) at lower than predicted, the financial working group would be required to meet again to reassess Budget-setting and determine any deficit or where cuts could be made.

A query was raised as to the rise in new homes built over the past 5 years and why this wasn't showing the significant increase in precept as expected.

ACTION: The Clerk to devise a table to show historical data of the number of houses over the past 5 years. To be distributed to Councillors. (Post meeting: Please see Appendix 1).

4. New Homes Bonus Savings Review

This financial year saw four payments made by the New Homes Bonus. These were:

- Jubilee Field Path Completion
- Grant to Saighton Parish Council
- Grant to Youth Group (St Luke's' Church)
- New Lighting from Caldly Nature Park to Celandine Close (Not yet paid but anticipated before end of this financial year)

It was noted that an increase in the surplus (Balance brought forward) has also resulted in a decrease in New Homes as capital expenditure such as the new path and the new lighting in Caldly Nature Park has been drawn from the New Homes Bonus. It was questioned whether the money should be subtracted from the surplus and not from the New Homes Bonus. This could be considered by Full Council whilst budget setting at the next Parish Council meeting.

The Capital Expenditure Team has previously highlighted a number of potential projects for the future use of the New Homes Bonus and this may include the current school site. Therefore, any money spent on smaller projects, funded by the New Homes Bonus, should be cautious at this time (until the current school site future plans has been decided)

5. Audit Process 2018

The Clerk informed the Working Group that the audit process had changed for the 2018/2019 financial year. Smaller Parish Council authorities who had an expenditure of less than £25,000 would now have the option of declaring themselves exempt from external audit (whilst still ensuring that all accounting paperwork was completed and available for scrutiny and self-appointed internal audit was carried out by someone not associated with the Parish Council). However, due to Huntington Parish Council's expenditure exceeding £25,000, we would be required to complete an external audit with no choice to opt out.

The meeting closed at 9:15pm

APPENDIX 1

Huntington Parish Council

HISTORICAL Precept Calculations 2017/2018

Financial Year	Based on Amount of Houses (Band D)	Increase in Houses
2011/2012	797 houses	
2012/2013	801 houses	4 houses (!!)
2013/2014	781 houses	DECREASE of 20 houses (!!)
2014/2015	950 houses	169 new houses
2015/2016	1036 houses	86 new houses
2016/2017	1162 houses	126 new homes
2017/2018	1255 houses	93 new homes
2018/2019	???? (Awaiting CW&C email)	?????