

# CHAR VALLEY PARISH COUNCIL

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## **THE NINETEENTH CHAR VALLEY PARISH COUNCIL FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 8 DECEMBER 2015 AT 7.00PM IN THE WOOTTON FITZPAINE VILLAGE HALL**

**Present:** Cllr D Snook (Chair), Cllr S Creed Castle, Cllr S Johnson, Cllr C Bailey, J West (Clerk)

**Apologies for Absence:** Cllr C Everidge

**Declarations of Interest:** None.

**Agree draft Parish Budget and Precept 2016/2017 to be recommended to the Parish Council on 11 January 2016 :** The Clerk provided the meeting with a paper setting out the details of budget, including budget and forecast year-end income and expenditure for 2014/15, a suggested budget for 2015/16 and detail on the precept and level of reserves. He advised the Committee that the level of reserves maintained over the last few years had exceeded what was necessary and that as illustrated in the budget paper the level of reserves should gradually be reduced over the next three years towards a target of £14,000. At the same time the precept should be maintained at its current level and not increased, which would result in a precept of £34 for band D council taxpayers. The Committee generally supported this approach.

The Clerk advised that budgets such as village hall grants that had not been raised for several years were proposed to be increased. Burial grounds grants had been subject to a review and would generally be increased taking account of the reported costs of maintenance. The lengthsman's budget would be increased by £200 to reflect level of actual expenditure in the current financial year. The fingerpost budget would be reduced from £2,000 to £1,500, at the moment with expenditure and grants pending it was hard to predict the current year's outcome for this budget line.

A substantial saving of £800 would be made now that the website was maintained "in house" by the Clerk. A grant was also expected in the current year of around £150 from the Government's Transparency Fund towards this. The Clerk recommended that a new budget of £1,000 be established to cover play area maintenance at Whitchurch.

The Committee then considered each budget line and the following issues were discussed :

- i) James Hargreaves URC – need to confirm what the burial ground grant was used for.
- ii) Whitchurch Canonorum Pre-School- Cllr Bailey was concerned that the finances of the Pre-School might be in need of additional support. This was discussed and it was agreed to make provision for a possible increase in the grant of £250, but the need for this would have to be substantiated, preferably by reference to the Pre-School accounts.
- iii) War Memorial Exhibition – Cllr Creed-Castle was curating an exhibition of local history linked to the names of those listed on the Whitchurch Canonorum war memorial. This would also include some items on the wider history of the area. A charge for admission would be made, but it was agreed that the Parish Council should underwrite the costs of hall hire etc. With a budget of £150.
- iv) Capital expenditure was discussed and it was agreed that the Clerk should establish the whereabouts and condition of the piece of equipment used to remove stones from grass around the play area at Whitchurch.
- v) the Grant of £700 from Cllr Turner's Divisional Budget was discussed, this would be included in the current year's accounts, it was agreed that as per the submitted bid, the money should be split 50/50 between Whitchurch and Wootton for the play area upkeep and enhancement. As far as Whitchurch was concerned £300 should be a contribution to the cost of replacing the swing beam (£500) and the remaining £50, as requested by the Pre-School for the purchase of a bird table.

The Committee agreed that subject to further exploration of the issues raised, a total budget expenditure of £21,071 supported by a precept of £18,525 would be recommended to the Parish Council.

**Close of Meeting: 8.15pm**