

**Draft Minutes of a Meeting of Doddinghurst Parish Council Finance and Resource Committee held on Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> November 2020 at 7pm via zoom video conferencing**

**Present:** Cllrs. Mrs D. Dicker, Mr G. Smith Mrs. Julia Le Page, Mr M. Capon, Mr A. Smith

**1. Apologies for absence.** None

**2. Declaration of Interests relating to items on the agenda.** No interests declared.

**3. 🖐️ Resolved:** Approved, minutes of the meeting held on 18<sup>th</sup> June 2020

**4. Information: Update on actions since last meeting and External Audit Closure**

Noted: End of year audit process completed and external audit report received with no significant issues noted. This has been was posted on notice board and website.

*Governance:* Doddinghurst Parish Council Standing Orders and Financial Regulations were revised last year in accordance with NALC statutory changes but there have been no further changes this year except that the audit dates were amended due to the impact of Covid 19. Also due to Covid 19, DPC introduced electronic email signatures for all payment authorisations by primary signatories as it was not possible to get 'wet' signatures. This process is working well and is still being followed. The problem with obtaining 'wet' signatures has also impacted on signing Minutes of all Council and Committee Meetings that have been held electronically via zoom video conferencing since May 2020. All Minutes since May 2020 have been signed with an electronic signature and if required could be retrospectively signed with a 'wet' signature once Covid restrictions are removed. Minutes are only signed once a resolution has been approved. Risk Assessments are in hand.

**5. Information: 2020/21 budget review and forecast to the end of March 2021 including assumptions about 2021/22 and planned projects. Precept forecast and analysis for 2021/2022.** The Council reviewed the forecast outturn and budget assumptions for the remainder of 20/21 and 2021/22. It was recognised that a new Council will be elected in May 2021 and that Covid 19 is still with us and makes for uncertainty in planning. This year a number of Projects had to be put on hold because of Covid 19 and the burial income has risen which has resulted in an unexpected outturn of approximately £16k surplus for 2020/21. There is currently £114k in reserve which is earmarked for the future maintenance of the burial ground and play area with some contingency and the surplus will be added to this figure. The Precept for 2021/22 was discussed and it was recognised that the impact of Covid 19 on the Parish should be considered when deciding on the Precept value to be recommended to Full Council in January 2021.

**6. 🖐️ Resolved:** The Budget for 21/22 including an additional Capital Works budget line was approved which will include the following proposed projects: Improvement to the Nature Trail, Parish Room redecoration and flooring, Corridor redecoration, replacement of external doors and frames and Village Assistance funding for Covid 19. Other potential projects including repurposing the shower area, refurbishing the Parish Office and provision of a disabled were discussed and it was recognised that these would be carried over to 2022/23 for the new council to prioritise. The possible extension of the cemetery path is

not required until much later (2025/30) It was also recognised that there is limited staff resource to manage all the projects and so they need to be prioritised accordingly.

**7. 🖐️ Resolution: Approved:**

The budget for 2021/22 was agreed as detailed in Item 6 above.

The 2021/22 precept recommendation to go to Full Council in January 2021 is based on freezing the precept at Band D £62.45 at current tax base of 1203 (nb the tax base may change at the end of the year so the actual figure may go up or down accordingly)

**8. Information:** Noted. Chairman Councillor D Dicker carried out the Annual Performance Review of the Clerk in October 2020. She also thanked the Clerk, RFO and all staff for their continued hard work particularly during the covid 19 pandemic.

**9. Any Other Urgent Business strictly for information only.**

The committee discussed the possibility of applying for Grants for future projects which will be considered but will not be included in the budget. There was also further discussion on the current year's £5k DPC Covid 19 Village assistance to support vulnerable residents which has been agreed by DP Council as a sum that could be allocated by Cllr Dicker and Cllr G.Smith under delegated responsibility. They would use the General Power of Competence, which was approved in May 2020 but further discussions will take place with the Doddinghurst Wellbeing Hub to agree how DPC can best support current provision in the Village. Information provided by Cllr Lesley Wagland on Essex County Council funding to support Covid 19 will be included in any discussions to ensure that all funding coming to the village from ECC is tracked. The committee discussed current proposals and favoured the idea to provide the elderly with a hot Christmas dinner but more information is needed before any decision can be made.

**The meeting was closed at 20.15**

Signed:

Dated: 20<sup>th</sup> May 2021