



**MINUTES**

**Meeting:** FINANCE & GENERAL  
PURPOSES COMMITTEE

**Date:** 16th January 2017

**Time:** 7.10pm

**Venue:** NORTH WEALD LIBRARY, 138 HIGH ROAD, NORTH WEALD, ESSEX

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**PRESENT:**

**Councillors (13)** C Hawkins (Chairman), B Bartram, T Blanks, B Clegg, B Eldridge, A Buckley, Mrs E Godwin-Brown, Mrs A Grigg, G Mulliner, R Spearman, Mrs S Jackman MBE, N Bedford, A Tyler

**Also in Attendance (2)**

Susan De Luca - Parish Clerk  
Adriana Jones – Principal Finance Officer

**Members of the Public (2)**

**Members of the Press (1)**

**F.1601 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (1)**

**NOTED** apologies had been received from Councillor Stellan.

**F.1602 OTHER ABSENCES (0)**

**NOTED** there were no other absences.

**F.1603 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None

**F.1604 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC**

**NOTED** there two Members of the Public present, however there were no questions.

**F.1605 BUDGET / PRECEPT 2017/2018**

Members had been issued with Income and Expenditure papers which, following thorough investigation by the Principal Finance Officer (PFO), included suggested budget figures for 2017/2018. Members had been advised to review these figures prior to the meeting, and if any members had any questions, these could be individually discussed at the meeting. The PFO advised Councillors of one alteration to the figures (failure to calculate code 1178 Grant in final income figures) identified by Cllr Blanks, and showed the updated spreadsheet live at the meeting.

Councillors noted that last year, following the move to the new financial software, the Principal Financial Officer tried as far as possible to stick to the original budgeting format used, however this year the format has changed slightly to reflect the new software to ensure more relevant budgeting (in terms of account codes) for 2017/2018.

Councillors **NOTED** the following points reference the expected income and expenditure for the current financial year - 2016/2017:

The expected total expenditure for 2016/2017 shows a probable overspend of approximately £95,775, the main reasons for this being:

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- £63,416 was paid out of the Section 106 funds held for Hastingwood Village Hall for extension and renovation works to the hall.
  - Approximate £11,000 overspend on Staff Costs, due to both the Clerk and the Administrative Officers hours being increased part way through the year to cover the PFO working on the Neighbourhood Plan / Local Plan, together with under budgeting of PAYE costs.
  - Approximate £16,000 overspend on Open Spaces. This is due to the installation of a replacement Bus Shelter opposite Upland Road, Thornwood (£9,750), the cost of which will be reimbursed by the Parish Councils insurance company.
  - £6,040 to create the garden outside the shops, however funding was also received for this project.
  - Approximate £2,500 overspend in Street Lighting. These works were budgeted for under additional items, however their inclusion within the this code subsequently shows an overspend.
- The expected total income for 2016/2017 shows a possible increase in receipts of approximately £14,000, the main reasons are explained below:
    - £10,500 reimbursement from the Parish Councils insurance company for the Bus Stop in Thornwood referred to earlier.
    - £2,000 income in various cemetery fees
    - £1,000 Parish Hall income - increase in regular bookings
  - The Council no longer holds any Section 106 monies or grant funding for Hastingwood Village Hall. A further £50,000 payment is still expected, however there are no further details as to when this will be received.

Earmarked reserves, which are set aside for specific purposes and for savings for future projects, should be realistic and approved by the council. However, the amount of general reserves should be risk assessed annually and also approved by the council. It is recognised general good practice that the minimum level of General Reserves a Parish Council should hold between 25%-100% of the precept. Larger councils would be nearer the 25% end. The current predicted figures for 31st March 2017 show that the level of General Reserves is expected to be 31%. The Internal Auditor has advised that the level of general reserves will be reviewed again during the final 16/17 Internal Audit.

Councillors **NOTED** that EFDC had advised the Clerk that the Parish Support Grant will be reduced over the next three years, culminating with no support grant being given in 2019/2020:

- 2016/2017 = £10,541
- 2017/2018 = £7,027
- 2018/2019 = £3,514
- 2019/2020 = £0

Councillors were asked to take this into consideration when agreeing the Precept for the coming years.

Councillors **NOTED** that following the recent consultation by the DCLG regarding the possible capping of precepts for Parish Councils, the Chairman of NALC (National Association of Local Councils) released a statement that confirmed the capping of precepts would not be introduced to any size of parish or town council in 2017/18, however had lead to concern about whether this would be introduced in the 2018/2019 financial year.

Councillors **NOTED** the detailed income and expenditure figures as attached to the agenda. Cllr Blanks stated that in his opinion the PFO had underestimated a number of budget items such as Stationery and Superannuation and was happy to go through them. Councillors **AGREED** the suggested budget figures for 2017/2018 as detailed below.

## 2017/2018 budget

## 2017/2018 BUDGET

### GENERAL ADMINISTRATION

#### Income

1080	Miscellaneous Income	0
1081	Repayments and Refunds	0
<b>Total Income</b>		<b>0</b>

#### Expenditure

4001	Staff Salaries	56,000
4002	DONT USE Employers N.I.	0
4003	Superannuation	16,500
4004	Overtime	1,500
4005	Temporary Staff	0
4008	Training	500
4009	Travelling Costs	2,000
4010	Misc. Staff Costs	0
4013	Rent	2,173
4014	Utilities	0
4019	Hospitality / Chairman Allw	200
4020	Misc. Expenses	1,200
4021	Phone Fax Internet	1,850
4022	Postage	400
4023	Stationery	1,600
4024	Subscriptions	1,700
4025	Insurance	3,500
4028	Books & Publications	50
4029	Photocopier Costs	3,000
4031	DONT USE Advertising & Publici	0
4036	Property Maintenance	0
4040	Equipment Maintenance	500
4041	Equipment & Small Tools	500
4051	Bank Charges	130
4053	Loan Capital Repaid (PWLb)	1,586
4054	Loan Interest Paid (PWLb)	808
4056	Professional Fees	0
4057	Audit Fees - External	600
4058	Audit Fees - Internal	900
4062	DONT USE Employee Superannuati	0
4063	DONT USE Pension Actuarial & c	0
4070	Tax and NI	21,600
4075	Website	100
4152	Agreed Additional items	0
<b>Total Expenditure</b>		<b>118,897</b>

### PRECEPT AND INTEREST

1176	Precept	TBC
1177	Precept Support Grant	7,027
1190	Interest Received	300
Total Income		7,327
<b>CIVIC AND DEMOCRATIC</b>		
<b>Income</b>		
1022	Allotment Key Deposits**	0
Total Income		0
<b>Expenditure</b>		
4020	Misc. Expenses	400
4035	Newsletter	1,000
4040	Equipment Maintenance	300
4060	DONT USE Grants/Donations GPC	0
4102	Notice Boards	0
4105	Vandalism	0
4143	Election Expenses	250
4152	Agreed Additional items	900
4160	Neighbourhood Plan	0
4163	Community Day	500
Total Expenditure		3,350
<b>REMEMBRANCE DAY</b>		
<b>Income</b>		
1041	Remembrance Day Income	1,200
Total Income		1,200
<b>Expenditure</b>		
4041	Equipment & Small Tools	0
4101	DONT USE Chairman's Allowance	0
4102	Notice Boards	0
4142	Remembrance Sunday	1,600
Total Expenditure		1,600
<b>GRANTS</b>		
1178	Grants Received - Other	11,245
Total Income		0
4152	Agreed Additional items	0
Total Expenditure		0
<b>PARISH HALL AT THORNWOOD</b>		
<b>Income</b>		
1001	Hall Hire - Regular Users	9,000
1002	Hall Hire - Occasional Users	5,000
1003	Hall Hire - Storage charges	516
1007	Hall Hire - Music Licences	80
1008	DONT USE Hall Hire Returnable	0
1009	Hall Hire - Misc Income	0
1080	Miscellaneous Income	0
1081	Repayments and Refunds	0
1082	Donations Received	0
1178	Grants Received - Other	0
Total Income		14,596

<b>Expenditure</b>		
4001	Staff Salaries	5,400
4002	DONT USE Employers N.I.	0
4003	Superannuation	2,400
4004	Overtime	1,500
4006	DNU Caretaking / Cleaning Material	0
4010	Misc. Staff Costs	0
4014	Utilities	3,900
4016	Cleaning Materials	350
4020	Misc. Expenses	1,000
4023	Stationery	0
4026	Music Licence	100
4036	Property Maintenance	1,000
4037	Grounds Maintenance	800
4039	DONT USE Litter Bins	0
4040	Equipment Maintenance	100
4041	Equipment & Small Tools	500
4049	Litter Collection Contract	850
4051	Bank Charges	0
4062	DONT USE Employee Superannuati	0
4063	DONT USE Pension Actuarial & c	0
4070	Tax and NI	60
4152	Agreed Additional items	0
4157	Thornwood Common	0
4162	Hall hire deposit refund	0
<b>Total Expenditure</b>		<b>17,960</b>
<b>CEMETERY</b>		
<b>Income</b>		
1011	Cemetery Interment Fees	4,000
1012	Cemetery Memorial Fees	1,500
1013	Cemetery GOR Purchase	0
1015	Cemetery Transfers	0
1019	Cemetery Misc Funeral Income	0
1080	Miscellaneous Income	0
1083	Cemetery Plot Purchase	4,000
<b>Total Income</b>		<b>9,500</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>		
4014	Utilities	50
4020	Misc. Expenses	0
4024	Subscriptions	0
4037	Grounds Maintenance	5,500
4039	DONT USE Litter Bins	0
4042	Memorial Maintenance	500
4043	Grave Digging	1,000
4049	Litter Collection Contract	500
4073	Cemetery Memorial costs	500
4150	Norwegian Mem Grnds Maint	0
<b>Total Expenditure</b>		<b>8,050</b>
<b>WEALD COMMON</b>		
<b>Income - Nil</b>		
<b>Expenditure</b>		

4020	Misc. Expenses	0
4037	Grounds Maintenance	0
4064	Weald Com Play Area	2,000
4074	Weald Common Grounds Maint	1,300
4105	Vandalism	0
4152	Agreed Additional items	0
<b>Total Expenditure</b>		<b>3,300</b>
<b>OPEN SPACES</b>		
<b>Income</b>		
1031	Dog Bin Recharge Income	280
1081	Repayments and Refunds	0
<b>Total Income</b>		<b>280</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>		
4013	Rent	5
4020	Misc. Expenses	200
4036	Property Maintenance	200
4037	Grounds Maintenance	300
4038	Play Area Equipment	0
4066	Thornwood Play Area	1,500
4102	Notice Boards	200
4104	Bus Shelters	50
4105	Vandalism	200
4106	Dog Waste Bins	1,450
4107	Street Signs & Furniture	100
4148	Bluemans End Rental	215
4149	Bluemans End Maintenance	1,300
4150	Norwegian Mem Grnds Maint	950
4152	Agreed Additional items	0
4153	Play in the Park	130
4155	Pike Way	900
4156	Village Sign	630
4157	Thornwood Common	1,200
4159	SGL Play Area	1,200
4161	DONT USE Play Area Grounds Mai	0
<b>Total Expenditure</b>		<b>10,730</b>
<b>STREET LIGHTING</b>		
<b>Income - Nil</b>		
<b>Expenditure</b>		
4014	Utilities	0
4040	Equipment Maintenance	0
4068	Street Lighting Maintenance	3,900
4072	Street Lighting Electricity	4,600
4107	Street Signs & Furniture	0
4152	Agreed Additional items	0
<b>Total Expenditure</b>		<b>8,500</b>
<b>ALLOTMENTS</b>		
<b>Income</b>		
1021	Allotment Rents	2,000
1080	Miscellaneous Income	0
<b>Total Income</b>		<b>2,000</b>

<b>Expenditure</b>		
4014	Utilities	800
4020	Misc. Expenses	500
4036	Property Maintenance	100
4037	Grounds Maintenance	1,000
4041	Equipment & Small Tools	0
4151	Key Deposit	0
	<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>2,400</b>
	<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>34,903</b>
	<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>174,787</b>

Councillors reviewed the proposed Additional Items, the main points of discussion included the following:

#### Dog Bins at Blenheim Square

Councillors noted the request from a local resident asking for two dog bins on the Blenheim Square estate as the provision of dog bins had not been included at the time of the development being built. Cllr Bedford suggested the developer (Crest Nicholson) should be contacted and asked if they were willing to fund one of these bins. Cllr Tyler stated it was his understanding that Crest Nicholson had a community fund, and that perhaps funds could be used from this. Cllr Bartram asked if specific locations had been suggested. Cllr Mrs Godwin-Brown suggested that EFDC should consider installation of dog bins as part of their Local Plan process, or at least as part of any new development. It was **AGREED** that the Clerk would:

- write to EFDC suggesting the consideration of Dog Bins as part of any large development;
- write to Crest Nicholson asking if they are willing to fund one of the dog bins;
- contact the resident who requested the dog bins asking for suggested locations

#### Commercial Oven, Parish Hall at Thornwood

Councillor Clegg expressed his concern that consideration was being given to a commercial oven effectively for one hall user, especially as the oven currently in situ was relatively new, relatively large, and certainly fit for purpose. Cllr Spearman agreed, suggesting that a commercial microwave would be a more suitable option. It was **AGREED** to purchase a commercial microwave up to £500.

#### Parish Hall Floor

Councillors were reminded that in January 2015, the Parish Hall floor was stripped and resurfaced, and was now in need of repolishing. It was **AGREED** that regular annual maintenance was the preferred way forward to ensure the floor remained suitable and in good condition. Cllr Buckley asked if the proposal was to reuse the same contractor who completed the works in January 2015, to which the Clerk confirmed it was.

#### Replacement Chairs, Parish Hall

The PFO explained that the quote was for faux leather seated chairs that could be easily wiped clean, the cost being £44 per chair. Fabric Chairs could be purchased for half the price. Cllr Mulliner expressed concern at fabric chairs stating they are extremely difficult and arduous to clean when they get dirty, which happens after roughly 18 months of use. After discussion, it was **AGREED** to purchase 20 faux

leather chairs, see how they fared, and if necessary start a rolling annual period of replacing the stock of chairs (150).

#### Street Lighting

Councillors **NOTED** that structural tests were required on certain street lights, and that at present the company who had quoted were the only company the Parish Council were aware of who completed such works. Cllr Tyler agreed he would ascertain if another company could be sourced to allow for a competitive quote. The PFO explained that these tests were required for H&S reasons. Cllr Mulliner queried if up-lighter lights were a suitable alternative, expressing concern about the swan necks being the main issue for older lights. The Clerk stated that she had confirmed with the Parish Councils contractor to a trial of a different type of light which had a much longer shelf life, however there was no meaningful data back at present. There was concern expressed that many of the lights in the Parish were now very old, and that a specific fund should be started as a contingency in case of any issues. It was **AGREED** that £3,000 should be earmarked for Structural Tests and remedial works this year, and a further £3,000 should be placed into an Earmarked Reserve fund.

#### Defibrillator

Councillors **NOTED** that fund raising for the North Weald Defibrillator was not being managed by the Parish Council. The Clerk confirmed that over £1,600 had been raised by both the Parish Hall Committee and various other fund raising events for a Defibrillator at the Parish Hall in Thornwood, and that the Parish Council were being asked if they would be willing to fund the remainder which was not expected to exceed £500. Cllr Bedford asked if an electricity supply was available, to which the Chairman stated that this particular defibrillator worked on batteries and no electricity supply was needed. Councillors **AGREED** to provide the additional funds to the defibrillator at Thornwood to a maximum of £500.

#### Essex Air Ambulance

Councillors felt this was an extremely worthwhile cause, a service that has been used by residents in the Parish, and it was **PROPOSED** by Cllr Tyler to donate £200 to the Essex Air Ambulance, which it was noted would be a drop in the ocean considering how much it costs to keep the service running. This was **SECONDED** by Cllr Bedford.

#### Marie Curie

Councillors felt this was an extremely worthwhile cause, however considered if funding should be given to a more local charity, such as St Clare's Hospice. The Chairman agreed this was a worthwhile cause, however reminded members of the fundraising and support the Parish Council already gives each year to St Clare's. It was **PROPOSED** by Cllr Tyler to donate £200 to the Marie Curie program. This was **SECONDED** by Cllr Bedford.

#### CCTV Weald Common and North Weald Shops

Councillors **AGREED** to fund the annual maintenance of both sets of CCTV, and to place the CCTV under the Parish Councils insurance, both of these being on an annual basis going forward.

#### Publicity

Councillors **AGREED** to the continued use of Everything Epping Forest as the Parish Councils press officer for 2017/2018.

The final agreed figures for additional items for 2017/2018 are as follows:

## 2017/2018 Additional Items

<u>Item</u>	<u>AGREED</u>
1 Play Area Emergency Works Fund (Move to EMR)	£500
2 Weald Common (Move to EMR)	£3,500
3 Play in the Park - two events in 2017	£130
4 Joint Standards Committee (Move to EMR)	£500
5 Marie Curie Care services	£200
6 Essex Air Ambulance	£200
7 2 x dog bins Blenheim Square	£846
8 CCTV Weald Common Annual Maintenance and insurance	£200
9 CCTV North Weald Shops Annual Maintenance and insurance	£300
10 Parish Hall - Commercial Microwave	£500
11 Parish Hall - Repolish Wooden Floor	£1,000
12 Parish Hall - New Wipe Clean Padded Chairs	£880
13 Essential Street Lighting Structural Survey and remedial works	£3,000
14 Contribution towards Thornwood Defibrillator	£500
15 Everything Epping Forest - Publicity	£900
16 To accommodate possible capping of referendum that is expected to be introduced 2018/2019	£3,000
17 Street Lighting Contingency Fund - Place into EMR for any emergency Street Lighting Works	£3,000
18 Contingency for possible office relocation	£3,000
19 Formal registering of all Parish Council owned land and property	£10,000
<b>Total Additional Items</b>	<b>£32,156</b>

Cllr Mrs Jackman stated that small regular increases are much easier for the public to accommodate rather than occasional large increases. Cllr Blanks suggested that in light of uncertainties surrounding Brexit, and the possibilities of large price increases for services, he felt that the precept should have as large of an increase as possible, with reserves being built up. After discussion, Councillor Bartram **PROPOSED** a 2% increase in the precept for 2017/2018. This was **SECONDED** by Cllr Eldridge. A vote was taken, the results of which were as follows:

11 - For  
2 - Against (Cllr Mrs Grigg, Cllr Mulliner)

**MINUTES**

*Meeting: F&GP MEETING*

*Date: 16th January 2017*

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The Council therefore **RESOLVED** to put a recommendation to full Council to request a precept of £175,475 for the period 2017/2018.

Meeting closed

**Signed** .....

**Date** .....