

REPORT OF THE POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE MEETING 23rd NOVEMBER 2010

MEMBERSHIP & ATTENDANCE

Chairman: * **R Kipps**

Councillors: * **N Eve**
* **M Green**
* **Mrs A Hayward**
* **Mrs M Jarrett**
* **G Liley**
* **S Watkins**
* **Mrs J Worrall**

*Denotes members present

There were no members of the public present

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. PRECEPT 2011/12

Cllr Mrs Worrall stated that due to prudent budget provision in the past there was very little fat to cut away from the current budgets, however one area of concern was the amount of overtime the office staff were having to carry out. She appreciated that the current working conditions were not conducive for high efficiency, due to constant disruptions from the phone, members of the public and to some extent Councillors attending the office. There did appear to be a high level of overtime being done, but Members needed to understand what was being done in order to ascertain how a reduction in working hours would affect delivery of service.

The Clerk responded by advising that a review had not taken place for over five years, staff still had the same core hours despite the fact that the activities of the Council had grown. She also advised that hours worked in the office were paid at single time and therefore were additional hours rather than overtime. She also confirmed that no superannuation was paid on overtime or additional hours. The Clerk advised members that she would carry out a study of what staff did during their regulated working day and also what was done during the extra hours so that Councillors could have a better understanding of what was done in the office.

Cllr Watkins stated that he was concerned about the reaction from the Parishioners if services were cut for what would amount to be a small increase in the budget. Cllr Eve responded that both the District and County Councils were making cuts and Parish Council's were being urged to exercise spending restraint as if this did not happen a backlash against local council in subsequent years was probable.

The Clerk advised Members that in her opinion the Council should be more pro-active in obtaining income from grants and also services within the community. She advised that TRDC had informed her that they were unlikely to be able to fund the hanging baskets in the future. She felt that Members could try to obtain sponsorship for this type of service, in order that the baskets could remain, but at the cost of an outside body. Members agreed this was worth pursuing.

Cllr Eve suggested that the budgets should go back to all committees to ask them to make the appropriate cuts. The Clerk reminded members that if this were to happen papers would need to be produced for three additional meetings and the Clerks attendance would also be required which would add to additional hours.

The P&R Committee therefore went through the budgets looking for savings of £12983.00, which would equate to a nil budget.

The following proposed cuts were identified.

P&R Committee

108	Chairman's Allowance	Reduced by £500
109	Chorleywood Matters	Reduce to three editions per year, net saving £1175
114	Hanging Baskets	Try to obtain sponsorship to keep the baskets but stop paying the contribution, resulting in a net saving of £1,000
116	Legal Expenses	Reduce by £500
127	Training and Conferences	Reduce by £400

Open Spaces

217	Tree Surgery	Reduce by £700
220	Maintenance of Horse Track	Reduce by £500

Council

Capital Take the £5,000 set aside for office redecoration and put into the revenue budget.

This made a total saving of £9775.00

The Clerk advised that there was additional income expected from a lease agreement to use the Common for keep fit classes, making a net saving of £10775. She also advised that the Tax Base was still to be calculated by TRDC, therefore it was not yet possible to calculate the precept, but in all probability this would have increased on last years figure, therefore it was likely that the precept payments could be kept the same for the parishioners as the last two years.

The Committee

RESOLVED to recommend to Full Council

That there should be no increase in the amount of precept paid by the Parishioners from the current year.

That sponsorship is investigated to pay for the hanging baskets

That the Clerk provides a report on the volumes of work undertaken by the Administrative Staff.

MINUTES

10/26 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence

10/27 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interests

10/28 APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Subject to the changes made at Full Council, the Minutes of the meeting dated 21st September 2010 were agreed as a true and correct record.

10/29 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINTUES

There were no matters arising.

10/30 FINANCIAL COMPARISON STATEMENT 2010/11

It was agreed that the Parish Maps would be sold at the reduced price of £3.00 at the Late Night Shopping Event.

The Committee

RESOLVED

To note the report

10/31 BUDGET 2011/12

Members discussed specific items within the budget but agreed to look at the budget implications for the forthcoming year when discussing the precept later in the agenda.

The Committee

RESOLVED

To agree the revised budget for 2010/11

To note the proposed budget for 2011/12

This was proposed by Cllr Liley, seconded by Cllr Jarrett and carried seven in favour with one abstention.

10/32 ANNUAL RETURN FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31/03/10

Members discussed the comments made by the External Auditor regarding the fidelity insurance.

The Committee

RESOLVED

To note the Recommendation but to reject the suggestion to increase the amount of fidelity insurance, as Members felt that there were appropriate controls in place to protect the Council's resources and the increase in insurance costs would be disproportionate to the risk involved.

This was proposed by Cllr Mrs Hayward seconded by Cllr Mrs Worrall and unanimously approved.

10/33 PROPOSALS FOR THE FUTURE OF THE LIBRARY AND ARCHIVE SERVICE IN HERTS

Members discussed the proposals and whilst Members understood the need for cuts some felt this would be a retrograde step in times of unemployment that the library's should be used for further self improvement. There was debate about staffing levels, now that the return of books was automated.

The Committee

RESOLVED

That the Clerk respond to the proposals stating the Committee's views.

This was proposed by Cllr Mrs Worrall , seconded by Cllr Liley.

Cllr Eve requested a recorded vote

The vote was carried

Five in favour – Cllrs Kipps, Mrs Jarrett, Liley, Watkins and Mrs Worrall

Two against – Cllrs Eve and Mrs Hayward

One abstention – Cllr Green

10/34 REVIEW OF THE LICENSING ACT 2003

Members considered the details within the report but felt that Parish Councils should have the right to consultations as representatives of the community before licences are granted.

The Committee

RESOLVED

That the Clerk replies to the consultation document accordingly

10/35 HEALTH AND SAFETY UPDATE

Members noted that progress of the H&S risk assessments, and noted that further reports and actions would follow in future agendas.

Members felt the response from TRDC was disappointing regarding the asbestos check for the building, but felt that no further action should be taken until the original plans had been looked into.

It was agreed that Cllr Mrs Hayward attend the H&S training course. The Clerk advised that one more space was available for Councillors. Cllr Green, put his name forward for the H&S training but requested that the Clerk send a memo asking if anyone else wants to attend.

The Committee

RESOLVED

That the Clerk contact TRDC for a copy of the original plans for the office

That the Clerk issues a memo to all Councillors asking for a volunteer to attend H&S training.

10/36 WEBSITE AND EMAILS

Community Notice Board

Cllr Mrs Worrall explained to Councillors what the Community Notice Board would do. She stated that technically the Parish Council website was out of date but the Community Notice Board would enhance and update the system. She advised that she had personal experience with this type of website and felt that Option 2 would be the most advantageous.

The Committee

RESOLVED

That the Community Notice Board go ahead within current budget provision under the suggestion in Option 2.

This was proposed by Cllr Liley, seconded by Cllr Mrs Jarrett and carried with seven in favour and one abstention.

Comment Page on Website

Members had suggested that this may be an asset to the website, however after careful consideration

The Committee

RESOLVED

That the Council would not go ahead with a comments page on the website at this stage.

This was proposed by Cllr Eve, seconded by Cllr Mrs Worrall and unanimously approved.

Photographic Slide Show on the Website

Members considered the details in the report, whilst it was agreed that pictures could be descriptive, there was a risk of deformation of character if photographs were used without express permission of the subject.

The Committee therefore
RESOLVED
To defer the idea for the time being.

This was proposed by Cllr Mrs Jarrett, seconded by Cllr Mrs Worrall and the proposal was carried seven in favour and one against.

Email Addresses

Members understood the reasons behind the suggested email addresses, and agreed in principal to changing the email addresses into a generic format, which would be easier for the public and generally a more professional format.
It was agreed that if Councillors could not get on with the new system they could be taken off. Members also agreed the new format for the staff.

The Committee
RESOLVED
That a new format for Members and Staff be initiated for emails under the Chorleywood-pc.gov.uk domain name.

This was proposed by Cllr Mrs Worrall, seconded by Cllr Watkins and unanimously approved.

10/37 INTEREST RATES ON THE BANK ACCOUNTS

Members considered the details within the report but generally felt that it cost more to administer than would be gained in the increased interest rates.

The Committee
RESOLVED
To note the report and review the situation on a periodical basis.

This was proposed by Cllr Mrs Worrall, seconded by Cllr Liley and unanimously approved.

10/38 PRECEPT 2011/12

See Recommendation 1

The meeting having started at 8.00pm, finished at 10.55pm

These minutes have been checked by the Vice Chairman.

Signature _____ Date.....

These minutes were agreed as a true and correct record at the Policy & Resources meeting and signed by the Chairman.

Signature Date