

Pool-in-Wharfedale Parish Council

Minutes of the meeting of Pool-in-Wharfedale Parish Council Finance Committee held via ZOOM.US for the purpose of transacting during the COVID 19 PANDEMIC on Thursday 3rd December 2020 at 7.00pm.

Present: Councillor Rowling in the Chair also present Cllrs Mifsud, Cooke, and Lee.

In attendance: Parish Clerk J. Ryan

FC2020/300 Public Participation

No members of the public were present.

FC2020/301 To accept apologies for absence.

No apologies received.

FC2020/302 To receive any declarations of personal and prejudicial interests in items on the agenda.

The clerk asked councillors to note that DCLG guidance in relation to dispensations allowed them to participate in council business connected with council tax. "Any payment of, or liability to pay, council tax does not create a disclosable pecuniary interest as defined in the national rules; hence being a council tax payer does not mean that you need a dispensation to take part in the business of setting the council tax or precept or local arrangements for council tax support".

FC2020/303 To approve the minutes of the Meeting held on Tuesday 6th October 2020.

The minutes of the meeting held on the Tuesday 6th October 2020 were approved by the Finance Committee proposed by Councillor Mifsud and seconded by Councillor Cooke.

FC2020/304 To receive information arising from the minutes that is not listed elsewhere on the agenda.

Councillor Rowling reported that Directions Consultancy has been contacted and informed that for the foreseeable future their services would not be required. The Planning Group will use the services of Ian McKay at Leeds City Council to take them towards the referendum. Councillor Rowling asked the Committee to recommend setting aside more funding in 2021-22.

FC2020/305 To consider the Precept and Budget for the Financial Year 2021-22.

Committee Members debated the pro and cons of increasing the precept in the coming financial year. The Parish Council has increased the precept in the last three years by 5/6%. The reasoning for increases in previous years was to build up the Special Projects Account to help pay for the refurbishment of the Playgrounds, funding for the Neighbourhood Plan, the woodlands and the Wharfedale Greenway. These and other priorities in the everyday budget have not changed so it would be reasonable to propose another similar increase in the precept.

However, this has been an extraordinary year with huge numbers of people losing their jobs and income with possibly still more redundancies to come. So, it may not be a good time to expect residents to pay more for their council tax albeit a small increase imposed by the parish council.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Finance Committee asks that the Parish Council at its next meeting consider two options

1. To increase the Parish Council Precept by 6%
2. Not to increase the Precept in the next financial year

FC2020/306 To discuss other pressures and priorities for the budget this financial year.

In discussing priorities for the coming financial year, the Committee highlighted the Neighbourhood Plan, the Wharfedale Greenway, the Woodland, Trees and Hedges and Amenity Budgets. It recommended that the budget for next year for the Neighbourhood Plan be set at £2,000 and the budget for the Wharfedale Greenway be set at £2,000. Also, that some research be undertaken to look for grants for planting trees within the woodland.

FC2020/307 To discuss the Internal Review of the Council's Financial Systems.

The clerk circulated a number of documents to aid the review of the Council's financial systems by members for the committee. Because of the COVID-19 Pandemic the usual review by cheque and invoice could not be carried out. However, Councillors were satisfied with the information presented which did allow for a number of cross checks to be undertaken. A more thorough review will be undertaken when restrictions are lifted.

FC2020/308 To agree items for inclusion on the agenda for the next meeting.

Budget 2021-22.
Playground funding
Review of Policies.

FC2020/309 Date and time of next meeting.

Monday 25th January 2021 at 7.00pm

Meeting closed at 8.10.