



NAILSWORTH TOWN COUNCIL
Minutes of Nailsworth Town Council

held at the Town Hall, Old Bristol Road, Nailsworth GL6 0JF
on Tuesday 22nd November 2022

Present:

Cllr Mike Kelly (Chair)
Cllr Shelley Rider
Cllr Steve Robinson
Cllr Patsy Freeman

Cllr Ros Mulhall
Cllr Robert Maitland
Cllr Colleen Rothwell
Cllr Angela Norman
Cllr Jonathan Duckworth

Minutes:

Clerk

Apologies:

Cllr Natalie Bennett
Cllr Paul Francis
Cllr Colleen Rothwell

2022/146

Verbal Introductions and safety briefing

Those present identified themselves. The fire evacuation routes were described for all those present.

2022/147

Declarations of Interest & Applications for Dispensations

There were none.

2022/148

Consideration of Annual Budget 2023-2024

The Clerk drew attention to the previously circulated draft Annual Budget for 2023-2024 and the unenviable task of setting the budget in such difficult times.

For the meeting an extra column has been added to the Annual Budget spreadsheet to enable the council to see the percentage increase on each budget line, and for this to be changed as discussions progress.

There was in depth discussion of the draft Annual Budget, the reasons behind the forecast figures and how the budget is decided. The following points were discussed;

- There is a difficult balancing exercise between whether NTC focusses on balancing services or makes grants
- It needs to be clear that where a budget line isn't being increased, in some cases this is a reduction due to inflation
- A comparison of NTC small grant awards from this year and previous years
- NTC has relied on cllr expertise to reduce website costs for a number of years. NTC will soon be looking at refreshing the website and annual maintenance costs will change.
- There was a proposed decrease of funding for Homestart from £5,500 to £2,000 to recognise last year's additional support due to covid recovery. Homestart's support from NTC is not passed on provision and is a discretionary grant.
- It was noted SDC no longer take a voluntary contribution for the Neighbourhood Warden scheme, partly due to changes in how their service is funded.



- There was a discussion about the recalculation of administration support NTC give to the Arkell Community Centre Trust (risen from £7,000 to £14,000). It was noted this subsidy by NTC of the Trust to be made clear in a separate report.
- Income from room bookings is very difficult to forecast due to recent hire charge changes together with shifting booking patterns from new and old hirers.
- It was recognised that expenditure on the football pitch is for a very specific demographic. Possible new charges for the football pitch are currently being researched and will be presented to the Recreation & Amenities Committee for discussion
- The national pay award for 2023-2024 is uncertain and difficult to predict from discussions with other councils. This will be discussed at the Personnel Committee meeting on Wednesday 23rd November.

It was stressed that for transparency, it needs to be clear that the drivers for increasing the precept are the current cost of living crisis including an increase in utility bills, increased costs for labour, services and increased costs passed on by suppliers and services to NTC. Cuts in services by higher level councils over the years has led to an increased burden on the town council precept.

The draft Annual Budget proposes a one off measure to ease the overall increase of costs, and so to ease the burden on the tax payer. To do this, the following suggestions were made;

1. To not ask for extra funds for Earmarked Reserves from the precept
2. To reallocate £18,500 of Earmarked Reserves to support the 2023-24 budget, by
 - moving £8,000 from the Emergency Tree work Reserve to fund £8,000 of Annual Tree Maintenance for 2023-24
 - moving £5,000 from the Covid Recovery Reserve to fund the Community Development worker for year one, and to move £5,000 from the same Reserve to fund the post for year two
 - moving £5,500 from, the Covid Recover Reserve to fund Homestart (depending on final decision on NTC's contribution to Homestart)

NB Homestart pay around £2,000 a year for hall hire at the Arkell Centre.

There was further discussion on this rationale and the benefits of not having a large increase in the precept for residents this year. It was noted that sometimes it is right to put the budget down (if funds aren't needed) and it is also right to increase it to cover services and other costs. It was noted that for three years NTC didn't need to increase the precept.

All agreed with the principle of using Earmarked Reserves for one year only to ease the burden on residents of the increased precept.

The Clerk undertook to;

- Circulate a comparison of NTC small grant awards from this year and previous years, to include how much grant funding was awarded for Jubilee events.
- Separate web hosting costs and include them in the Website budget heading
- To ask Homestart what is the minimum discretionary funding they expect from NTC to keep current service levels
- To include a report for information on NTC administrative support for the Arkell Community Centre Trust to the next meeting, for transparency.
- Report on room booking income in the New Year after the new charges come into effect.
- New income lines will be added for Mortimer Garden and Market Street Garden budgets.
- Compare precept trends with other town and parish councils



- Carry out final checks on the draft Annual Budget before reissuing it for the 20th December meeting

A decision will be made on the Annual Budget and final precept request at the meeting on Tuesday 20th December.

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Town Mayor
Nailsworth Town Council
Civic Centre, Old Market,
Nailsworth, GL6 0DU

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Date