

COUNCIL MEETING – 25 NOVEMBER 2008

ITEM 10(a): FINANCE COMMITTEE

Notes of meeting of Finance Committee held on 19 November 2008

Present: Cllr Lady Kara Hawks (Chairman); Cllr G James and Cllr J Samways

1. DRAFT BUDGET, 2009/10

The Committee considered draft estimates for the financial year 2009/10 and proposed variations as shown below:

Clerk's salary: National salary award for 2008/09 still not settled. Parish Councils have been recommended to implement a 2.45% per cent increase pending arbitration (Council's budget allows for 2.5% increase). Clerk's contract is for 10 hours/week but Clerk already works in excess of this. Hours may increase further in the context of the new planning arrangements (i.e. use of internet and display equipment for viewing applications) and web site maintenance. From 1 April 2009, Committee propose making provision for an additional hour a week on the contract (estimated salary £6061 plus Employer NI).

Equipment: Council may need to purchase a screen for use with the new laptop and projector. In the first instance it is recommended that a possible loan of the Camera Club's screen be explored. The new laptop will require new anti-virus protection from 1 January 2009. Recommend that AVG be used (free anti-virus software).

Grants: The Committee reviewed the current policy of allocating grants and recommends grant payments for 2009/10 as shown in the draft estimates. These total £1200 with an additional £300 to be held in reserve for other recipients if required. The Committee also proposes that the unused grant budget of £400 in the current financial year be reduced to £200, i.e. a saving of £200.

With the proposed amendments, the projected year-end balance at 31 March 2010 was estimated at £4756, made up as follows:

General Fund	£972		
Special Funds	£3784	(Maintenance	£2000
		(Clerk's gratuity	£784
		(Elections	£1000)

On balance, it was felt that the precept could be held at £10,200 for next year.

A copy of the draft estimates is attached, **with the proposed amendments shown in the penultimate column.**

RECOMMENDED:

- (1) That provision be made from 1 April 2009 for the Clerk's contracted hours to increase from 10 to 11 per week;
- (2) That, in respect of grants:
 - (a) For 2008/09, the unallocated budget of £400 be reduced to £200
 - (b) For 2009/10, grants totalling £1200 be agreed as shown in the draft budget, with an additional £300 held in reserve;
- (3) That the precept remain at £10,200 for 2009/10;
- (4) That, subject to (1) to (3) above, the amended draft estimates be approved;

NOTE: Unfortunately, since the Finance Committee meeting, an error has been found in the estimates spreadsheet. The result is that the draft expenditure for 2009/10 was understated by £500 and should have been £13707 (not £13207). Taking this into account, and with the amendments proposed by the Committee, the year-end balance at 31 March 2010 is now estimated to be £4256 rather than £4756. This would leave the General Fund balance at £472, rather on the low side, and members of the Committee are recommending that the £500 shortfall be met by removing the £500 contribution to the Maintenance Fund next year. This should avoid the need for an increase in the precept. Members are reminded that the Maintenance Fund budget already stands at £1500.