

 Minutes of the Estimates Meeting of Great Cornard Parish Council held in

**The Stevenson Centre on Monday 13th January 2020 at 7pm**

**PRESENT**  Councillors Mr S M Sheridan **Chairman**

Mr A C Bavington Mrs M Bark

Mr T J Keane Mr M D Newman

Mrs T E A Welsh Mr T M Welsh

Mrs P White Mr C G Wright

Mr D Young

Council Manager Mrs N Tamlyn

**1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from Councillors Mr T Harman, Mr A J Liffen and Mr D Walton.

 **2. CHAIRMAN’S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

 The Chairman wished everybody a happy and prosperous New Year.

**3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS**

Members were reminded of the need to declare any interests or requests for dispensations in

 matters on the Agenda.

Councillor Bavington declared a non-pecuniary interest in Item 5 and matters relating to Thomas Gainsborough School as he volunteers at the School and a member of family is employed by The Trust.

Councillor Young declared a non-pecuniary interest in Item 5 and matters relating to Thomas Gainsborough School as a family member is employed by The Trust.

Councillor Welsh declared a non-pecuniary interest in Item 5 and matters relating to Thomas Gainsborough School as he is employed by The Trust.

 Councillor Mrs T Welsh declared a non-pecuniary interest in Item 5 and matters relating to

 Thomas Gainsborough School as she is employed by the Trust.

 Councillor Wright declared a non-pecuniary interest in Item 5 and matters relating to the

 Allotments as he is an allotment holder.

**4. TO REVIEW THE FIGURES TO DATE REPORT**

Members review and **NOTED** the Expenditure against Budget report up to 19th December

 2019. (**Appendix A**)

 The Council Manager advised that the Blackhouse Lane income was based on the rent from

 both football clubs and that Cornard Dynamos next six monthly payment was due in

 February 2020.

 **5. PRECEPT FY2020/2021**

The Chairman invited Councillor Bavington, as Chairman of the Council’s Policies and
Resources Committee to propose the Budget. Councillor Bavington advised that he and Councillors Welsh and Sheridan had held a meeting with the Council Manager in December to review and discuss the proposed Budget.

 Councillor Bavington presented the Budget (**Appendix B**) and advised that he would be

 proposing a 2% increase to the Council Tax level to cover rising costs and allow the Council to

 pursue a number of planned projects and to continue to compensate for the loss of the

 Government grant.

Councillor Bavington highlighted a number of lines in the Budget which had changed over the

last few years due to the extension of The Stevenson Centre. The four year forecast indicates

the Public Works Loan Board payments diminishing due to the Council’s decision to take

out a loan based on equal instalments of principal.

 The expenditure for The Stevenson Centre Grant is in line with the Stevenson Centre Budget

 and is based on the Centre’s first full year’s running costs with the extension in place.

 Councillor Bavington stated the need for the Parish Council to support the Centre via a grant as this allowed the Parish Council to pay the grant only when required.

 Cllr Bavington commented on the proposed Election Fund and the proposal to vire the

 FY19/20 underspend of £2978.00 to an Earmarked Fund for Elections and to budget a further

 £800.00 to be allocated to the Election Fund. This had been suggested by the Council Manager

 as a means of building funds for forthcoming elections as opposed to budgeting the full amount

 required in the year of the elections.

 The Council Manager advised that the Tax Base figure had increased by 4.0%, which would

 assist the Council in meeting its ongoing commitments and enable the funding of the projects

 put forward by the Committees for consideration in the FY2020/21 Budget.

 Members reviewed and **NOTED** the Budget Notes (**Appendix C**) prepared by the Council

 Manager, which referred to each individual budget line and any proposed increase/decrease to

 income and expenditure.

 Members **AGREED** to increase the working hours of the Council Administrator who deals with

 Stevenson Centre and the Allotments and to increase the salary figure to take into account

 the outcome of the NJC pay settlement and pension contributions.

Members **AGREED** Earmarked Capital Expenditure for FY20/21 of £23,500.00 for the following projects:

**Proposed**  **Actual**

 Contribution towards the Cornard Utd Floodlights £5000.00 £5000.00

 Funds towards cost of Neighbourhood Plan £5000.00 £5000.00

 Funds towards cost of Village Hall extension £5000.00 £5000.00

 Funds towards the cost of SC Improvements £4000.00 £4000.00

 Cemetery Improvements £3500.00 £3500.00

 Recreation Budget – Bures Rd Replacement Sign £1000.00 £1000.00 **TOTAL £23,500.00**

 Members **AGREED** to budget £12,066.00 in grant support for The Stevenson Centre Charity.

 The grant pay over to the charity will be assessed by the Council towards the end of the

 Financial Year. It was **AGREED** that the Council Manager would continue to closely monitor

 The Stevenson Centre’s account to ensure there are sufficient funds to meet expenditure and to

 keep the Council informed accordingly.

 It was **AGREED** that the Council will request a Precept of £235,262.00 from the District Council

 which provides for a 2% increase in the Council Tax on a Band D property (**Appendix D**).

 This is the budget shown for FY2020/2021 in Appendix B.

**6. TO REVIEW THE UPDATED STRUCTURAL SURVEY REPORT ON THE CORNARD**

**DYNAMOS PAVILION AND TO CONSIDER THE COST OF THE REQUIRED WORKS**

Members reviewed the updated Structural Survey Report on the Cornard Dynamos Pavilion carried out by Harcourt-Powell Chartered Surveyors and **AGREED** to instruct Harcourt Powell to prepare the Tender document and obtain prices for the works.

The Council Chairman invited Councillor Beer to speak to the Council regarding his offer to fund the refurbishment of the Pavilions external toilets from the County Council Locality Budget.

Councillor Beer advised that he has approximately £6000.00 of available funds to finance the work on the understanding that the toilets are open to the general public during the day and the Parish Council agrees to cover the costs of their upkeep. Councillor Beer advised that the application for funding would need to be submitted by the end of February in order to meet the funding deadline of the 31st March 2020.

Councillor Newman advised that the Council were investigating the installation of an automatic access management system to manage the opening and closing of the toilets and that this could be included in the Tender document.

Members **AGREED** to separate the works to the main building and the external toilets in the Tender documents and to instruct Harcourt-Powell to prepare the documents ASAP.

The Chairman thanked Councillor Beer for his offer to fund the refurbishment works of the toilets.

Meeting Closed 7.42pm

**Signed**

 **Mr S Sheridan: Chairman**

**APPENDIX A**



**APPENDIX B**



**APPENDIX C**

**Great Cornard Parish Council**

**Budget Notes for Estimates Meeting on 13TH January 2020**

The figures below give a summary of the Council’s Tax Base and Precept figure for FY2019/2020.

**FY2019/2020 Tax Base Figure 2765.43**

Band D £80.21

Precept £221,815.14

Last year’s Tax Base figure increased by 3.3%, which gave an increase of £11,302.94 based on a 2% percentage rise. **The FY2020/21 Council Tax Base increase for Great Cornard is 4.00%.**

**FY2020/2021 Tax Base Figure 2875.71**

Band D 0% increase £80.21 £230,660.69 (+£8,845.55)

Band D 2% increase £81.81 £235,261.83 (+£13,446.69)

**See attached Budget Spreadsheet for consideration based on a 2% increase.**

**INCOME**

Increase to estimated **interest** income based on FY19/20 interest at 0.3%.

Increase to **Allotment** income to reflect the increase in rent effective from 1st January 2021.

**SC lettings** income - Following the separation of the Stevenson Centre’s bank account, all income is paid into the Charity’s own bank account.

**Cemetery** income for FY19/20 is low. Proposed to reduce the income figure by £250.00.

**Recreation Ground** income remains at zero.

**Blackhouse Lane** income increase is in line with Cornard United’s Lease. The first rent review date is

1st April 2022.

**Wayleaves** income increased by 2%.

R**ecycling** incomereduced in line with the reduced rates given by BDC on mixed glass and textiles.

**CIL** it is not possible to budget CIL Funds.

**EXPENDITURE**

**Administration** – Increase to take into consideration previous year’s actuals and rising costs.

**Agency Services –** The contract with TGS/Countrywide is working well. TGS haven’t confirmed a figure for FY20/21 yet. An increase of £1k is proposed to allow for the cost of potential tree works. Agency Services have run under budget the last two FY and it is expected to do so again this year.

It is suggested that the increased TGS costs and tree works can be funded from the current budget and for the figure to remain at £14k.

**Stevenson Centre Grant Support –** Please refer to The Stevenson Centre Budget

**Section 137 Grants** – The Parish Council has agreed to continue to fund the Great Cornard Swimming Pool which is capped at £3k. It is proposed that the budget for grants be increased by £500.00 to £12.5k.

**Capital Spending - EARMARKED CAPITAL RESERVES** for FY20/21 based on proposed 2% increase and considers the committees list of items for consideration in the budget.

**Proposed**  **Actual**

Contribution towards the C.Utd Floodlights £5000.00 £5000.00

Funds towards cost of Neighbourhood Plan £5000.00 £5000.00

Funds towards cost of Village Hall extension £5000.00 £5000.00

Funds towards the cost of SC Improvements £4000.00 £4000.00

Cemetery Improvements £3500.00 £3500.00

Recreation Budget – Bures Rd Replacement Sign £1000.00 £1000.00

 **TOTAL £23500.00**

**Loans and Repayments** – Reflects the PWLB repayment schedule.

**CIL Expenditure –** It is not possible to budget for CIL Expenditure.

**Stevenson Centre –** Nil as expenses for the centre are now met by the charity and any deficit met by the Parish Council by means of a grant.

**Allotment Expenses –** Increase to £2.3k to allow for two skips per annum and to take into consideration the Council’s decision to ensure all allotments are passed on in good condition.

**Cemetery Costs** – The running costs for the cemetery have been low so far this FY, which has allowed the council to meet the costs of refurbishing the noticeboard and remove the laurel hedge in this year’s budget. It is proposed to reduce the cemetery budget to £7000.00.

**Blackhouse Lane Expenses** – Increase to £5k to cover a general increase in costs as well as the maintenance of the cricket square.

**Recreation Ground** – Costs are currently in line with the Budget. It is proposed to increase the budget to £14k to cover rising costs.

**Shawlands Wood LNR** – SCLC’s Finance committee meet in January to review their budget. Adrian Walters has advised that increases are normally in line with RPI. Proposed 3% increase.

**Salaries & Wages** – This year’s salaries will be under budget due to staff changes and a reduction in pension contributions.

The TUPE transfer of staff to The Stevenson Centre Charity was completed in July 2019 and £5200.00 of salaries for FY2019-20 have been allocated to the SC Grant to allow for the cost of staff wages from April to July 2019.

The NJC pays scales from 1st April 2020 have not been finalised. The consensus of the Large Council Forum is to budget for a 2-3% rise.

Suffolk Pension Fund’s Draft Triennial Results 2019 proposes a reduction in employer contribution rates by 1% in FY20/21 and a further 1% in FY21-22.

The bookings for The Stevenson Centre are considerably higher than forecast, this has resulted in an increased workload for the Council Administrator who deals with the SC and it is proposed to increase their hours from 16 to 20 hours per week.

Both Administrators will have joined the Pension Scheme by 1st April 2020.

The proposed increase to the salaries budget considers the estimated 3% pay rise as well as an additional 4 hours a week for the Council Administrator, and a one point pay scale increase for all Council Officers in line with their contracts. It is proposed that the salary figure be increased to £80,500.

Please note that the previous year’s actuals cover the time that Mr Fitt still worked for the Council on a higher pay scale, and that the current salary figure allows for three members of staff and provides the Council with 20 additional staff hours per week.

**Streetlights** – Costs can vary as dependent on the cost of electricity. In FY2018/19 the cost increased by £3285. Proposed that the budget figure be increased from £15.5k to £18K.

**Insurance** – The Council achieved a significant reduction in costs when negotiating the new 5 year agreement with Zurich. Cornard United and the Scouts reimburse the Council for their Building’s Insurance and the SC Charity covers the insurance cost of the Centre. A further reduction was achieved with the removal of the Bowls Club Pavilion from the Policy. It is proposed to budget £4000.00 which will allow for increased Ill-health Insurance payments and a 3% index linked increase.

**Professional Fees** – The Council uses the services of Lambert Chapman to assist with the preparation of the Parish Council’s account and AGAR at a cost of £995.00 + VAT.

 It is hoped that the Cornard Dynamos and the Scout’s Lease will be progressed, and the Council may incur further legal fees regarding the Village Hall legal matter. It is proposed that legal fees be increased to £7k.

**Village Hall maintenance** – To continue to budget for general maintenance costs relating to the Village Hall. Budget to remain at £1k.

**Community Warden** – Costs for the Community Wardens are currently under budget. The proposed FY20/21 increase from £17.50 to £20.00 can be absorbed without increasing the budget. The Council Manager is due to meet with the Town Clerk with a view to discussing a 5 year agreement.

**Litter/Dog Bins** – Last FY BDC increased the bin emptying charges by £250.00. No increase has been proposed for next year. Proposed to reduce the budget figure £2250.00.

**Elections** – Only one Ward was contested in the 2019 Elections which has resulted in an underspend of £2978.00. In order to prepare for the next elections, it is proposed that the unused funds be vired to an Elections Fund and a further £800.00 be set aside to build funds for future elections.

**Transfer to Reserves** – In 2006 the Council agreed that General Reserves should remain around £30,000.00, which is in line with the general recommendation of 10% of income. Based on the Parish Council’s current income figure of £247,747.00, £30,000K represents a strong 12.7% of income reserve. It is therefore considered unnecessary to allocate funds to General Reserves in FY20/21.

**APPENDIX D**

