

**Minutes of the Parish Council Precept meeting held on Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2013 in the Sherwood Room of Newstead Centre, Tilford Road, Newstead Village, commencing at 7.00pm.**

1. **Councillors present:** Cllrs P A Wise (Chairman), P Burnham, S Gascoigne and P Young.
2. **Apologies for absence:** Cllrs D Adams, J Booth, B Blood, W Evans, and A Halliwell. Also Borough Cllr P Andrews
3. **Declarations of interest:**  
No other interests were declared

**4. To Review Cemetery Charges for 2013/2014**

Following the increase in burial charges by Clarke’s Cemetery Services from the 1st January 2013, it was noted some of the cemetery fees charged by Mr Clarke were now higher than fees collected by the Council in respect of grave preparation for local residents. Cllr P Young asked for advice on the percentage of burials from local residents compared to non residents. It was resolved to note this information over the next year. It was also agreed the Council should write to Mr Clarke to request his increase in charges are deferred until the 1<sup>st</sup> April to tie in with the Councils own financial year. The Chairman advised in respect of the current financial squeeze faced by the Council and the cost of maintaining the cemetery, she felt it was prudent to raise charges to ensure the Council clawed back some of these costs rather than precept for these. It was also considered necessary to look at raising charges to address any increase in costs that may be applied from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2014.

Accordingly it was agreed the following charges would apply with immediate effect.

	Resident	Non-Resident
Purchase of a Deed of Right of Burial	£175	£625
Grave preparation fee for 6ft grave	£220	£700
Grave preparation fee for 8ft grave (for 2)	£240	£725
Re-open grave	£210	£500
Purchase of a Deed of Right of Burial £450 in the cremations section	 £125	
Burial of a casket in the cremations or burial sections £300	 £110	
Erection of a headstone in the burial section	£75	£225
Additional inscription	£20	£100
Memorial on a cremation plot which must be no more than 2ft in height	£75	£225

**5 To set the Precept for 2013/2014**

Mr Burnham thanked the Clerk for her report on the Parish Accounts accompanying the agenda. The reduction in Newstead’s tax base from **409.89** to **347.45** following the Local Government Finance Act 2012 was noted. For the next financial year, Gedling Borough Council had agreed to provide a cash payment to the Council of **£2,154** to compensate for the loss to the parish as a result of these technical changes, but there was no guarantee this help would continue beyond the next financial year.

The RFO explained in more detail the budget expenditure under expenses and cemeteries and village maintenance, where the cost of routine grounds maintenance throughout the parish and including the cemetery and village green was presently £4,725 per annum. This cost had been fixed as part of a two year contract and was up for renewal on 1<sup>st</sup> April. Assuming a small inflation rise this would leave the Council approximately £4,590 to deal with all other maintenance costs including tree pruning, burial charges, any work on the mortuary chapel and other ad hoc work on the cemetery. The figure was less than spent in previous years, which included a number of one off costs. It was resolved to accept the forecast as a best guess of likely cyclical expenditure.

Mr Burnham queried the budget under donations and said in view of present cash restraints, he proposed the figure of £1,225 should not be exceeded.

For the benefit of the new Clerk, Councillors explained that the Parish Council had a long term project to extend the new cemetery and that the sum of £40,000 had been earmarked from the general reserves to be allocated to this project. On the figures presented a 10 % increase in the precept would only allow a working reserve of £2,458. There was a general consensus amongst Councillors that assuming some flexibility in expenditure under S137 and capital expenditure, the Council should strive to achieve a working reserve of £3,000 in excess of the £40,000 earmarked above. Two proposals were put forward- that of a 17.5% increase, or 16% increase. The Clerk confirmed that if the precept were increased by 16%, this would result in an increase to a Band D taxpayer of **£5.18** per annum i.e. **£32.39** to **£37.57**, although it was noted for many households in the village, the increase would be less, where many households were placed in lower tax bands.

After further discussion, it was proposed by P Burnham and seconded by P Young to accept the budget as presented and to increase the precept by **16%**, which would give a total precept requirement of **£13,055**. This was agreed

**6. Items that the Chairman considers urgent.**

The Chairman asked two cheques to be signed to replace cheques which had previously been mislaid.

These were: -

Cheque Number	Payee	Amount £	Reason
001035	Newstead Centre	161.64	Buffet and Room Hire
001036	Mrs J Johnson	136.80	Purchase of Filing

Cabinet

This was agreed.

**7. Closure and Date of next meeting**

The meeting closed at 8.25pm. The date of the next full Council meeting would be Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> February 2012 commencing at 7.30pm.