

Minutes of the Parish Council Precept meeting held on Wednesday 28th January 2015 in the Sherwood Room of Newstead Centre starting at 7.30pm.

- Councillors present:** Cllrs P A Wise (Chairman), Mr P Burnham, Mr D Adams and Mrs P Young.
- Apologies for absence:** Apologies received from Cllrs J Booth, H Crouch, and S Gascoigne. Also Cllr P Andrews and County Cllr C Barnfather. *The Council agreed to waive standing orders in terms of the quorum required to enable the meeting to take place, as Gedling Borough Council required the precept information by 31st January.*
- Declarations of interest:**
No interests were declared
- To Review Cemetery Charges for 2015/16**
Revised charges from A Clarke with effect from the 1. 1 .2015 had been circulated with the agenda. It was noted grave digging costs had increased on average by £15, with the charges for interment of ashes increasing by £5.

Proposed cemetery charges by the Council for 2015/16 were then discussed, and it was agreed that fees for grave preparation would rise in line with the additional fees charged by the gravedigger. Also agreed was a previous suggestion by Cllr Halliwell to eliminate charges for additional subscriptions on existing memorials. Cllrs asked the Clerk to confirm what additional costs were incurred by the Council as a result of further subscriptions onto an existing headstone, to which the answer was none other than the Clerk's time in writing to approve the request. In essence she advised this was another form of income charged by the Council to offset the future running costs of the cemetery. In order to claw back some of the income which would be lost by not applying this fee, it was agreed that costs to erect a headstone would increase by £20 in the case of an headstone erected on a burial plot and by £10 for a headstone erected on a cremation plot. The new cemetery charges for 2015/16 were agreed as follows:

	<u>Resident</u>	<u>Non-Resident</u>
Purchase of a Deed of Right of Burial	£200	£650
Grave preparation fee for 6ft grave	£245	£725
Grave preparation fee for 8ft grave (for 2)	£265	£750
Re-open grave	£225	£515
Purchase of a Deed of Right of Burial in the cremations section	£150	£475
Burial of a casket in the cremations or burial sections	£120	£310
Erection of a headstone in the burial section	£100	£250
Additional inscription	£Nil	£Nil
Memorial on a cremation plot which must be no more than 2ft in height	£90	£240

Cllrs agreed that the new charges would be applicable from the start of the new financial year i.e. 1st April 2015.

5. **To set the Precept for 2015/2016**

A report by the Responsible Financial Officer on the Council's accounts had been attached with the agenda.

The Clerk then explained the sums allocated under various headings as outlined in her report to the Council. In respect of **Receipts** received by the Council, Gedling Borough Council had confirmed that a cash payment of **£3,886** would be paid to the Council to offset the reduction in the tax base as a result of the Local Government Finance Act. Income received in respect of cemetery fees was hard to predict and the amount shown in the **Forecast** assumed no further cremations/burials until the end of the financial year. The estimate for 2015/2016 was a best guess based on an average income received from this source over the past three years. The **VAT refund** was cost neutral as whatever was paid out in VAT was claimed back in the same year. **Bank interest** had been included as a small sum each month was now being received on £40,000 invested by the Council with HSBC

In terms of **Payments**, the figures for 2015/2016 were as noted in the written report which accompanied the agenda. The Clerk explained that under **cemeteries** and **parish maintenance**, costs were expected to increase more than inflation to take into consideration the revised specification on the grounds maintenance contract and that any charges from the new contractor appointed would be fixed for the next three years

The Clerk also advised that she had now received one estimate for the cost of extending the cemetery car park and advised that the total cost of carrying out this work should be completed for a maximum figure of **£7k**. It was noted that the provision set aside within this estimate for the cost of removing the ash tree at £1,000 was felt to be expensive. Cllr Burnham agreed he would approach Acorn Services and Jonathon Rhodes (contractor currently carrying out work in the Newstead Wildlife Meadow) with a view to securing an estimate for removing the ash tree. For the purpose of setting the precept, the Clerk assumed that the Council would choose to proceed with this work in this financial year and so under **Capital Expenses** for 2014/15, she had increased the forecast figure to **£7.5k**. This demonstrated that even with this additional cost, the expenditure of the Council would still be less than income received during 2014/15.

Cllrs then discussed the report and were happy to accept the figures put forward by the Clerk for 2015/16 in respect of the various budget headings. Cllr Burnham felt the Parish Council should try to retain a balanced budget for 2015/16 and his preference was to increase the precept by **4%** to allow for a small surplus of £100. The Chairman felt that many parishioners were still being squeezed financially and that a **2%** increase was her preferred option. A vote was then taken with

three out of four Cllrs supporting a **4%** increase in the precept with Cllr Wise against. This resulted in a total precept requirement of **£14,652**.

Form C was then signed by the Chairman and Cllrs Burnham and Young requesting this amount from Gedling Borough Council.

6. Items that the Chairman considers urgent.

None

7. Closure and Date of next meeting

The next meeting would take place on Wednesday 4th February commencing at 7.30pm.