

**Minutes of the Parish Council Precept meeting held on Wednesday 24 January 2018 in  
the Sherwood Room of Newstead Centre starting at 7.00pm.**

1. **Councillors present:** Cllrs Mrs P Young (Chairman), Mr P Burnham, Mr R Butler, Mr E Hardy and Miss H Scott.
2. **Apologies for absence:** Apologies received from Cllr B Andrews, Cllr C Powell and County Cllr C Barnfather, who were all attending a planning meeting at Gedling Borough Council.
3. **Declarations of interest:**  
Cllr Scott declared an interest as a member of Newstead Events Group, the group responsible for organising the Newstead Bonfire Event, which has previously received grants from the Council and also as a Trustee of the Newstead Centre.
4. **To Review Cemetery Charges for 2018/19**  
Details of the revised charges from Clarke's Cemetery & Churchyard Services applicable from the 1 January 2018 had been circulated with the agenda, where it was noted that the various grave digging fees charged by Anthony Clarke had been increased by £20 for a new single grave and reopening of an existing grave, £30 in respect of a double grave, and £10 for the interment of ashes.

The proposed cemetery charges by the Council for 2018/19 were then discussed. The Clerk advised that it was necessary not only to ensure that the Council's fees in respect of new burials remained above that charged by the gravedigger, but also included a small fee in respect of the Clerk's time where additional hours were paid to the Clerk in respect of all new burials.

In questioning how Newstead's fees compared to charges made by other cemeteries, the Clerk confirmed that Newstead remained fairly competitive as a number of local authorities had increased charges substantially to make up for the loss of local government funding. Also the Clerk advised that it would be better not to increase the fees charged for non residents as these were already quite expensive compared to the rates paid by local residents (understandably so, as this would be the only charge towards future upkeep of the cemetery) and they provided an important contribution towards the upkeep of the burial ground in any one year.

Cllrs then questioned the proportion of non residents buried in the cemetery in any one year compared to residents. The Clerk responded there was no set pattern in respect of any one year as the number of burials varied substantially between years.

Cllrs therefore agreed to restrict any increases in the fees charged to both residents and non residents alike to the corresponding increase in charges made by Anthony Clarke.

The new cemetery charges for 2018/19 were therefore agreed as follows:

	<u>Resident</u>	<u>Non-Resident</u>
Purchase of a Deed of Right of Burial	£220 (£220)	£670 (£670)
Grave preparation fee for 6ft grave	£305 (£285)	£765 (£745)
Grave preparation fee for 8ft grave (for 2)	£335 (£305)	£800 (£770)
Re-open grave	£285 (£265)	£555 (£535)
Purchase of a Deed of Right of Burial in the cremations section	£170 (£170)	£495 (£495)
Burial of a casket in the cremations or burial sections	£160 (£150)	£340 (£330)
Erection of a headstone in the burial section	£100 (£100)	£250 (£250)
Additional inscription	£Nil	£Nil
Memorial on a cremation plot which must be no	£90 (£90)	£240 (£240)

more than 2ft in height

*NB Figures shown in brackets are fees charges in 2017/2018*

CLRs agreed that the new charges would be applicable from the start of the new financial year i.e. 1st April 2018. It was also agreed that charges for oversize coffins would only be made for those coffins and caskets of 30 inches or more (up from 28 inches), which is also when additional costs from the gravedigger are incurred.

5. **To Set the Precept for 2018/2019**

A report by the Responsible Financial Officer on the Council's accounts had been attached with the agenda and is attached as an appendix to these minutes. This demonstrated the effect on the budget as a result of 0%, 2% and 4% increase in the precept. It was assumed that all councillors had read the report prior to this meeting.

The Clerk drew attention to the reduction in the amount of Council tax support provided by Gedling Borough Council which would continue to fall and then reduce to nothing by 2020. This represented a considerable loss of income to the Council, where this loss has not been covered by the increase in the tax base for 2018/2019.

Under the heading of **Expenses**, the Clerk asked the Council whether it wished to review the amount paid to the Chairman each month where it was noted that this amount had remained the same for several years.

CLr Scott queried what costs the Chairman incurred, which was mostly in respect of additional petrol costs as the role incurred a number of trips into the village and also in fetching plants for the planters etc, telephone expenses and the cost of printer consumables. Also, it was traditionally the role of the Chair to provide wine at the Christmas buffet. It was noted that the amount currently paid to the Chairman was half that paid to the previous chair. As a result, it was proposed by Council to increase the amount paid to the Chair by £5 per month i.e. from £15 per month to £20 and this was agreed.

Under the heading of **Cemeteries and Parish Maintenance**, the Clerk advised she had now heard back from Anthony Clarke with a cost for mowing the verge on the Station Hotel side of Station Road. This was given as £25 per cut and based on a total of 7 cuts each year worked out at £175 per annum. As this was slightly less than the figure assumed for the purpose of setting the budget, CLRs were asked if the Clerk could instruct Anthony Clarke to undertake this work once grass cutting begins again in April and this was agreed.

The Chairman drew attention to the slight increase in the provision made in respect of **Section 137/Donations** which had been increased to £1225 from £1,000. The Clerk advised that this figure was based on likely expenditure over the current year and the figure was accepted as stated.

Also shown in the budget was an allocation of £5,000 under **Capital Expenditure**, which could be utilised towards capital projects the Council hoped to achieve in 2018 such as the provision towards a roundabout on the small children's play park and towards improvements on the skate park where this sum could act as match funding. As the majority of other costs outlined in the budget were fixed, this would also allow some contingency in terms of the budget should the unexpected happen.

In summary the Clerk advised she had not set a balanced budget where it was assumed that the reserves would continue to be used to offset any deficit in the budget.

During discussion by the Council, the need to extend the cemetery was discussed where it was felt that the existing grave space would not run out for several years. The Chairman felt that irrespective of this, the £40k set aside would be required to replace the remainder of the existing boundary walls around the Old Cemetery and also as many of the

trees in the cemetery were now in poor condition; it was anticipated these would require work in future. The Council had also discussed utilising the reserves to create a Garden of Rest in the New Cemetery.

In order to compensate for the loss of Local Council Tax Support, it was felt by Cllr Butler that Council tax rates should rise now to avoid a larger increase in future and that a 6% increase would be not be unreasonable . The Clerk advised that whatever increase was set in terms of the cost per household, the difference between 2% and 6% was negligible in cash terms. At present the cost to a Band D household of Newstead Parish Council was £41.03 per annum. A 2% rise would cost work out at an additional 82p per year.

In noting that the other parts of the Council tax bill was likely to increase substantially, it was proposed by the Chairman to limit the increase to 2%, and this proposal was seconded by Cllr Scott.

No further recommendations were made in respect of the budget proposed, which was then agreed as stated in the report from the Responsible Financial Officer. As no other proposals were put on the table, the 2% increase proposed by the Chairman was agreed resulting in a total precept requirement of **£15,333**.

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

Community Payback Scheme - The Clerk advised of a meeting held with the Probation service with regard to the strimming and general tidy up of the Old Cemetery, whereby as part of the risk assessment undertaken it had been necessary to instruct Jonathon Rhodes to remove a broken branch which was suspended on branches directly above the main entrance gate. In addition it had been requested that the Council again purchase some tools for the Probation service up to the value of £150 in lieu of charges for the work carried out and this was agreed by the Council via email. The Clerk then advised that following discussion with the Probation service, the Parish Council had been asked to provide half a dozen loppers which could be obtained from Wickes at a cost of £26.99 each including VAT. The Clerk advised she had now searched online and could get the same loppers for £18.99 from Amazon. The Council agreed that the Clerk could purchase the loppers on behalf of the Council and the costs reimbursed to her.

Anti-Social Behaviour in the Village - Following discussions with the Chairman, it was noted that Niki Pekal, Anti Social Behaviour and Troubled Families Co-ordinator for Gedling Borough Council would attend the next meeting of the Parish Council to discuss action taken regarding antisocial behaviour currently being experienced in the village.

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

The next meeting would take place on Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> February commencing at 7.30pm.

As there was no further business the meeting finished at 8.30pm.