

Freckleton Parish Council

Minutes of Finance committee meeting held on Monday 10th February 2014

Present: Councillor, Mrs M Whitehead (Chair)

Councillors, T Fiddler, T Threlfall, Mrs. S Delany, Mrs. L Willis, St J Greenhough, P Walton, C Robb, Mrs. G Cowell, Mrs. J Cartmell and K McKay

1) Apologies:

Councillor L Rigby (another meeting)

It was resolved that the reason for absence should be accepted.

2) To record Declaration of interest from members in any item to be discussed.

Councillor Mrs. J Cartmell declared a pecuniary interest in item 4 – review the Open Spaces contracts for 2014-2017.

3) To review the Salaries for the Clerk and Deputy Clerk for 2014-15 Accounting year

It was resolved that the hours of work and salary for Mrs. J Winstanley should remain the same as last year.

It was further resolved that she should be asked to show more enthusiasm and involvement in her workload.

It was resolved that the Clerks hours of work should be increased to 19.75 per week and his salary will be pro-rata in line with the SCP38 of national salary awards.

4) To review the Open Spaces Contracts, for the period 2014 to 2017.

Councillor Mrs. J Cartmell left the room.

The clerk reported that the existing contracts had been reviewed with the Open Spaces chairman and Golden leaf and apart from some minor change and they had been agreed. Golden leaf had asked for a 10% increase in the grass cutting contract as they are using their own machinery for some of the work.

The Open Spaces chairman confirmed that he was pleased with the standard of work carried out by the new contractors.

The Clerk reported that the contracts had been put out for quotation last year and it was recommended that Golden leaf should be given a three year contract for all of the Open Spaces work.

It was resolved that the following contracts should be offered to Golden leaf, for the next three years, with a consideration for cost of living increases during this period:-

Grass cutting £12,375 per annum

Watering £10 per hour for the work undertaken.

Keeping Village tidy £15 per hour for the work undertaken.

Planting out and Borders £12,600 per annum or £11,310 per annum if there is no winter planting.

Councillor Mrs. J Cartmell returned to the room.

5) To agree the Precept Budget, including Open Spaces expenditure, for 2014-15

It was resolved that the Precept budget should be set at £99,600 for 2014/15.

6) To consider how to allocate the payment of £9,194 from FBC, in respect of the Council Tax Reduction Scheme (CTRS).

The Clerk reported that CTRS was in respect of the adjustment made to the tax base as a result of the Government changing the payment method for people entitled to rate rebates. Previously the Government paid for the rebates but now they are treated as a discount and therefore this means that less money will be collected in rates. The CTRS is designed to offset this shortfall, but there is no guarantee that it will be paid in future years.

In addition, NALC have stated that the Government has announced that “it is prepared to apply the referendum thresholds to larger Towns and Parish Councils from 2015 to 2016 onwards”.

It was resolved that the £9,194 should be applied to the following projects:-

The re-vamp of the memorial park - £5,000

The maintenance of the Tom Croft car park - £4,191.

7) To consider any Capital expenditure proposals for 2014-2015

The Clerk reported that the software used for updating the web-site and downloading the Planning applications was owned by one of the Councillors.

In addition, his computer was running very slowly despite being upgraded several times.

This may be partly due to the slow response from the internet at peak times.

It was resolved that the Chairman and Vice chairman of Finance should review the requirements of the Council’s software and hardware and report back to Council with a quotation.

No further capital expenditure was recommended.

Signed...Councillor St J Greenhough....

Date.....3rd March 2014.....