

# Melbourne Parish Council

Mrs J Storer - Parish Clerk, 2 Mansfields Croft, Etwall, Derbyshire DE65 6NJ



## Committee Minutes

### Finance

Minutes of a meeting of the Finance Committee held at 7.30pm Monday 16<sup>th</sup> December 2013 at the Shone Lounge, Melbourne Assembly Rooms, Melbourne

Present – Cllr Carroll (Chairman), Collyer, Earp, Hicklin, Jackson, Willmore, the Clerk

Apologies: None received

1. The Committee had previously received the revised budget which reflected the changes recommended by each individual Committee. The Clerk sought clarification as to how the Finance Committee was approaching the setting of the budget; was it a) to agree a percentage increase and to amend each Committee's provision or b) to set a budget which met the needs and requirements of each Committee.

It was unanimously AGREED that the budget and consequently the precept, would be set according to each Committee's need.

The Finance Committee went through the revised budget, taking each Committee budget in turn. Concern was raised about the overall possible percentage increase in the precept but Cllr Willmore reminded the meeting that traditionally this Parish Council had been reluctant to increase the precept which meant it was operating from a low base, thus any small percentage increase would not generate vast sums of funding.

2. Burials Committee budget – The main area of concern and discussion was the provision for additional bin collections, following the withdrawal of the free composting service. Initial consideration was given to composting possibilities, but Cllr Hicklin explained that the green waste was not easily compostable, and included such material as hedge cuttings. Cllr Carroll added that she had attended the Cemetery and passed on the thoughts of the Sexton; that there is no suitable composting site. It was AGREED to leave the provision for additional bins in the budget and Cllr Hicklin agreed that possible alternatives will be considered by the Burial Committee.

3. Highways Committee budget – The main area of discussion related to the provision of additional litter bins, particularly at the new Davison Estate where there is a recognised need. Cllrs Willmore and Collyer both considered that the provision should be provided and funded by SDDC. Whilst the Clerk agreed from a moral point of view the bins should be provided by other authorities; she informed of the tight line adopted by both the County and District Councils regarding funds, this meant Parish Councils were faced with stark and simple options; of either funding such provisions or doing without. It was AGREED to leave the provision in the budget but to seek assistance/support from Cllrs Harrison and Hewlett for the District Council to fund the new bins.

4. Facilities Committee budget – Clarification was given of the earliest completion date of the new Pavilion is thought to be December 2014, therefore there is a possibility of a period of crossover of costs in the forthcoming financial year, whereby the Parish Council is funding the existing pavilion and providing a provision to the MSP. The discussion moved onto the possibility of losing some or all of the Section 136 funding and the implications for the Parish Council. Further clarification was provided by Cllr Jackson regarding the financial expectations and obligations of the Parish Council to MSP, which

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is £9000, index linked in perpetuity. A long debate took place about whether this commitment should be funded and if so how it would be funded and whether a section of the Section 136 funds should be top sliced now for the MSP. It was agreed that a budgetary provision of £5000 should be included for 2014/15 and for the Parish Council to continue to seek reimbursement of any costs via the Section 136 agreement. Discussions were also held about the income received from the Recreational Ground. Cllr Hicklin informed the meeting of the charges levied by other sport grounds, which are significantly greater than that levied by the Parish Council. It was thought that as work has started on the new sports facilities, that the status quo would remain and for the MSP to develop its own charging policy.

5. General budget – The Clerk’s expenses were increased to reflect the true cost of employing a Clerk, The other areas of expenditure remained unaltered.

6. The resulting proposed precept for 2014/15 is £40,960. This is a percentage increase of 25%.

7. AGREED: unanimously that the precept for the next financial year is set at £40,960 and this recommendation is to be submitted to the Full Parish Council meeting, for ratification. The Committee was aware that this was a large percentage increase, but one which was necessary to build up a provision to support the MSP, to carry out all of the Council’s necessary functions and to start to establish a buffer should the Section 136 funding cease.

8. The Committee was also acutely aware that whilst the budget was sensible; the percentage increase would generate negative publicity and this needed to be managed. It was agreed that the increase should be shown to be a positive move for the Parish and a press statement will be drafted to reflect the use of the funds and of the real impact on Council Tax bills; which is an annual increase of £4.28 per Band D property.

Date of next meeting: to be advised

There being no further matters, the Chairman closed the meeting at 9.03pm

Finance Committee – Cllr J Carroll