

MINUTES OF THE POLICY & RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE  
MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 10<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY 2017

**PRESENT:** Cllr. Goodchild (in the Chair), Cllrs. Bunyan, Clifford, Holmes, and Swann.

**APOLOGIES:** Cllrs. Rook and Veitch.

**Declaration of Interests, Dispensations, Predetermination or Lobbying:**

Members are required to declare any interests, dispensations, predetermination or lobbying on items on this agenda. Members are reminded that changes to the Register of Interests should be notified to the Clerk.

**59/16: Internal Finance Check:**

Cllr. Swann had confirmed that the internal finance check had been completed and everything was in order.

**60/16: Authorisation of payments made after the December meeting:**

A list of payments made after the December meeting, is filed with these minutes.

**61/16: Cheques for Payment:**

Cheques for January were signed for payment as per the list filed with these minutes. It was proposed by Cllr. Goodchild, seconded by Cllr. Holmes and agreed to authorise payment of the cheques as presented.

These included:

Policy and Resources	£12,587.04
Burial and Properties	£ 2,327.94
Environmental Management	£ 3,499.02
General Funding	£ <u>95.70</u>
Total	£18,509.70

**62/16: Budget Discussion:**

Cllr. Swann tabled a document he had prepared showing the agreed budgets for all the Committees, plus the percentage rate increase overall and for Band D properties. The figures show that we will need to increase the precept by £21,000. Due to an increase in the tax base, this equates to an actual increase of 4.31% (£5.25 per annum) for a Band D property. The majority of the increase is to cover the costs associated with the Neighbourhood Plan as discussed at November's Full Council meeting and for last year's by-election. There have been significant increases in the litter clearing contract because the company that undertakes this for us has recently been taken over. There have also been major increases in employer pension and National Insurance contributions and on the business rates for the car parks which Members agreed were unavoidable and out of our control. Savings have been made in many areas to keep the increase to a minimum. Cllr. Clifford stated as a resident that he felt we were delivering remarkably good value for money.

**63/16: Solicitors:**

This item was deferred until the next meeting as some facts needed to be clarified.

**64/16: Staffing:**

There were no staffing issues to be discussed.

**65/16: Contracts:**

Members had agreed the specification for the Grounds Contract at the last Policy & Resources meeting. As the current contract was due for renewal in March this year, a list of contractors who could be invited to tender for the contract had been prepared by the Clerks. Members discussed the list and agreed on four contractors they would like to tender for the contract.

**66/16: Grant Applications:**

a) An application had been received from The Counselling Centre in Tunbridge Wells for a financial contribution towards the cost of refurbishing their premises. Members discussed the application, and decided that as we were unable to determine how many of our parishioners would benefit from the service it was proposed by Cllr. Swann, seconded by Cllr. Clifford and agreed that with regret Members could not support the application.

b) A request had been received from Jonathan Bibby – a Kent Public Rights of Way Officer. He was asking the Parish Council to consider contributing £250 towards the cost of clearing vegetation from the verge of the footpath which runs from Angley Road (opposite the School) to Wheatfield Way. The area is not the responsibility of KCC or the Parish Council as ownership has reverted to the Crown. KCC Cllr. Sean Holden has agreed to contribute £250 from his members grant to help with the clearance. Members discussed the request but felt it would be an inappropriate use of our grant system to award a grant to KCC. Members suggested that the developer that is building houses in close proximity to the area should be approached for a contribution. It was proposed by Cllr. Holmes, seconded by Cllr. Clifford and agreed that the request for a contribution be refused.

**67/16: Sissinghurst Tennis Club Groundwork Alterations:**

An email from the Chairman of the Sissinghurst Tennis Club had been received seeking approval from the Parish Council (as owners of the land), to pave the grassed area to the front of the courts to reduce maintenance and to provide an area for members to sit. It was proposed by Cllr. Bunyan, seconded by Cllr. Holmes and agreed to grant approval subject to agreement on a suitable water permeable material being used.

**68/16: Promotion of Parish Council:**

Cllr. Clifford reiterated that he would like ideas from the Chairman of the Committees for possible news stories, he would be happy to draft any suggestions but felt it important to keep our profile going. He was in the process of drafting a press release on our new Clerk and Deputy Clerk.

Cllr. Clifford gave Members an update on the proposed new format for the parish magazine. He was expecting to be able to produce a proof of the front cover and details of suggested contents at the next Policy & Resources Committee meeting. He was hoping to invite Tally Wade of Coffee Shop Media, to that meeting to assist with the presentation to Members. It was hoped this new magazine would help improve communications between the Parish Council and residents and would also help promote the Parish Council.

**69/16: Items for Information:**

No items were raised.