

UNADOPTED

POLEGATE TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Full Council Budget Meeting held on Monday 15 January 2007 in the Council Chamber, 49 High Street, Polegate at 7.30 p.m.

Present: Cllrs. G. Carter (Mayor), S. Barber, Mrs C Berry, M. Cunningham (from 7.35 p.m.), J. Harmer, Mrs D Joy, R. Martin, Mrs M Piper, Mrs I Scarborough, Mrs J Voyce and T. Voyce.

5 members of the public

7388 Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Cllrs. Mrs Coleman, Fitzgerald, Gibbs and Mrs Morson.

7389 Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest. However, it was acknowledged by all present that the setting of the budget and precept would have financial implications for the councillors as residents of the town.

7390 Budget and Precept 2007/2008

The Mayor highlighted the significance of the loss of Watermill Ward to Willington & Jevington Parish Council and the fact that Wealden District Council had recommended a reduction to the precept of 9.1%. This would equate to a precept of £173,050 which is £17,000 less than 2006/2007.

The base budget, as presented, was then discussed and the following items agreed:

Grounds maintenance - to include two additional items to the grounds maintenance specification, viz. Cophall allotments and Brightling Road meadow and to tender for 1, 2 and 3 year contracts for comparison and best value purposes. The budget figure to remain at £5,800.00.

Sussex County Playing Fields Association - a donation of £25.00.

Grants and Donations - total figure set at £3,500.00, with the exception of CAB

CAB - due to the population decrease (loss of Watermill Ward) and the decrease in Polegate clientele, it was proposed and seconded to revise the grant from £4,600 to £4,000.00 for the next financial year and to give notice that it is likely to reduce again next year. It was noted that pro rata Polegate clients equalled 1.35% of total clients dealt with and therefore the grant should reflect this.

A second proposal was then put forward to reduce the level of grant to £3,000.00 for the next financial year. This was seconded and a vote taken as follows:

In favour of a grant of £3,000.00	5
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Against	6
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Therefore the motion was lost.

The original proposal to reduce the grant to £4,000.00 was then revisited and a vote taken as follows:

In favour of a grant of £4,000.00	6
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Against	5
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Therefore the motion was carried.

It was agreed to defer the allocation of £1,500.00 towards election expenses until the financial year 2008/2009.

It was also agreed not to allocate any money from the budget for the refurbishment of the Wannock Road play area but to proceed to identify grant funding for the project; and to carry out a feasibility study with regard to a petanque piste also subject to external funding including financial assistance from the petanque club.

It was agreed to carry £1,000.00 forward into the financial year 2007/2008 for the provision of a town map.

The provision of a PCSO was agreed at £11,274.00.

It was agreed to accept Wealden's revised figures for members' allowances at an additional cost of £790.00

The implementation of the above items represented a base budget of £233,089 with a precept of £173,050, which would necessitate a net utilisation from reserves of £60,039.00. However, members considered that such a high utilisation of reserves could not be justified and it was therefore proposed, seconded and agreed by all to revisit the budget to ascertain where savings could be made.

It was also noted that administration costs accounted for a considerable percentage of the budget and some discussion took place with regard to staffing levels and possible adjustments. As members of the public were present at the meeting it was proposed, seconded and agreed by all to suspend Standing Orders to allow residents to give their views on the proposals so far and to make relevant comments.

STANDING ORDERS SUSPENDED

No adverse comments were received and the proposals that had been made so far were generally acceptable with the exception of adjustments with regard to staffing levels which it was felt should be maintained.

The Mayor thanked the public for their input and reinstated Standing Orders.

STANDING ORDERS REINSTATED

It was then proposed, seconded and unanimously agreed not to make any adjustments to staffing levels.

The following adjustments to the budget were proposed, seconded and agreed by all.

	Amount Saved
Not to purchase new tables for the Council Chamber	2,000.00
Fencing repairs to be utilised from repairs and maintenance fund	10,000.00
Reduced allowance for financial software package to £500.00 (any training necessary to be provided from training fund)	1,000.00
Grant to CAB, reduced to £3,000.000	2,000.00
Grants allocation reduced to £2,000.00	1,500.00
Additional planters	<u>800.00</u>
Total saving	17,300.00

The base budget would then stand at £216,789.00.

It was further agreed that it was necessary to increase the precept to £180,000.

7391 Resolutions

It was resolved to agree the revised estimates for 2006/2007 and the original estimates for 2007/2008 resulting in a net utilisation of £36,789 from General Reserve, leaving a balance of £72,446.00.

It was resolved to close the Brightling Road Reserve Account (£420.00) and the Youth Service Reserve Fund (£2,000.00) and to transfer the monies to the General Fund.

It was resolved to include the following additional expenditure within the budget as follows:

Replacement heater for pavilion	380.00
Provision of RCD's and timers to High Street lamp columns	2,500.00
Financial software package	500.00
Members' allowances	<u>790.00</u>
Total	<u>4,170.00</u>

It was resolved not to make any further allocations to the reserve accounts for the recreation ground (£17,000.00) and repairs and maintenance (£20,615.00).

7392 Precept

Resolution: In accordance with s.41 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 Polegate Town Council has calculated its budget requirement for the financial year 2007/2008 in accordance with s.50 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 as being £180,000 and Wealden District Council is directed to pay the stated amount to the Town Council and to send payments to Mrs R McGlave, Assistant Town Clerk, at the Council Office, 49 High Street, Polegate.

This provides a general balance carried forward for the future of £72,446.00

Post Meeting Note

The recommendation from the temporary Responsible Financial Officer is that a fund is set up to provide for future election expenses with a sum being set aside each financial year of, say, £1500.00, with effect from the financial year 2007/2008.