

WROCKWARDINE PARISH COUNCIL

Response to the comment of the Internal Auditor (page 5 of 6 Annual Internal Audit report 2015/16) d. *“The budgetary process was not considered adequate and reserves appear to be increasing year on year without being fully supported by Council decisions/explaining the reasons for this”*

The Council (at its June 2016 meeting) reviewed the Internal Auditor’s comments and concluded that they were unfounded. The Council considers that it had adequately discussed and prepared its budgets on a fully informed basis and that there was ample evidence in the Council’s minutes to demonstrate this. The Council had received a full budget monitoring report during the Budget setting process which had been minuted in December 2014 when Council had been considering the budgets and precept for the forthcoming year (2015/16). The Council concluded that although the minutes had been available to the Internal Auditor (and the Clerk would have pointed out the appropriate minutes if asked) it did not appear that the Internal Auditor had made herself aware of the facts and had therefore erred in her findings.

Extract of Minutes from F&GP Committee Meeting 3rd December 2014 14/12 Budget and Precept

The Chair took Members through the tabled discussion document item by item.

The Meeting agreed to recommend to Council that the Allscott Fund be retained as a fund for the enhancement or mitigation of the consequences of the development which had been permitted on the former Sugar Beet site (on the basis that it seemed unlikely that there would still be a requirement to find funds to embark on a legal challenge).

Members were mindful that of the fact that there would be a number of issues to be addressed as a consequence of the development, not least traffic concerns which had been put to the Borough Council, and that the Parish Council may have some influence if it were able to offer part funding to any enhancements.

Members were mindful of the fact that on a number of sites the Council’s play equipment was either becoming increasingly worn out due to age or had been subjected to vandalism and would therefore need to be replaced at some point in the future: all were well aware that new play equipment was very expensive and it was agreed that the F&GP Committee would need to explore the possibility of obtaining grant funding. In the meantime, it was agreed to recommend to Council that an increased provision be made in the precept to allow a fund to be set aside if possible (it was also noted that as the equipment became older, there was an increasing maintenance cost).

Following discussion, it was **RESOLVED** to amend the tabled recommendation as follows:

- 1) To increase the budget for lighting refurbishment by a further £1500 and to recommend to Council that it resumes its former practice of earmarking reserves for future replacement and refurbishment.
- 2) To increase the budget for playing fields by a further £4'700 to £8'700 and to recommend to Council that it begins to set aside funds for the future replacement and refurbishment of playground equipment.
- 3) To recommend to Council that the Allscott Fund be retained and continued but that it should be repurposed as outlined in the discussion.

It was RESOLVED to recommend to Council that a budget of £65'000 be adopted as detailed in Annex A and that a precept of £65'000 be raised.

Extract of minutes from Main Council Meeting 10th December 2014:

14/116 F&GP Committee Budget & Precept

The Chairman presented the minutes of the F&GP Committee meeting held on the 3rd December 2014 and tabled the Committee's recommendations and relevant documents.

Following discussion, it was RESOLVED:

- 1) To increase the budget for lighting refurbishment by a further £1500 and to resume the practice of earmarking reserves for future replacement and refurbishment.
- 2) To increase the budget for playing fields by a further £4'700 to £8'700 and to begin setting aside funds for the future replacement and refurbishment of playground equipment.
- 3) That the Allscott Fund be retained and continued but that it should be repurposed as a fund for the enhancement or mitigation of the consequences of the development which had been permitted on the former Sugar Beet site (on the basis that it seemed unlikely that there would still be a requirement to find funds to embark on a legal challenge).

It was RESOLVED that a budget of £65'000 be adopted [as detailed in Annex A] and that a precept of £65'000 be raised.

ANNEX A BUDGET 2015/16

Clerks Salary 12000

Tax & N. I 2000

Pension Fund 2200

Clerks Travel 550

Office/Telephone 650

Stationery/Postage 500

Subs & Fees 2000

Insurance 3000

Cllrs. Travel 0
Training 0
Street Lighting 5500
Hall Hire 300
Fields Maint 10000
Chairman's allowance 600
Grants (sect 137) 1500
Lighting Refurbishment 6000
Playing Fields 8700
Bus shelter Maint 500
Parish Magazine 1000
Community Fund* 2000
Parish Imp 6000

Total 65000

Martin Goldstraw

Clerk to Wrockwardine Parish Council

17th June 2016