

## LYNDHURST PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held on Tuesday 18 November 2014 at 7.15 pm at Lyndhurst Community Centre.

**Present:** Mr M Rollé (Chairman), Mrs H Klaassen, Mr M Abbott, Mr G Bisson, Mr J Charlesworth (part of the meeting), Mr L Cornell, Mr K Kaljura, Mr A Wiltshire and Mrs P Wyeth.

**In Attendance:** Mrs M Weston (Clerk to the Council)

### 1. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Mrs A Trend and the Revd Dr C Wilkins.

### 2. Declarations of Interest

Mr Wiltshire declared an interest in Agenda Item 5(b) as he was an allotment holder. Mr Bisson declared an interest in Agenda Item 6(e) as he was Secretary of the Village Lighting and Decorations Committee.

### 3. Minutes of last meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 19 November 2013, having been circulated, were approved and signed by the Chairman as a true and accurate record.

### 4. Matters Arising

Mrs Wyeth asked if the Clerk had any details yet or had reflected in the calculations the impact of the provisional tax base change and grant allocation in 2015/16. The Clerk reported that she had spoken to Kevin Green at NFDC today and had been told that figures and precept requests would be issued within the next few days but calculations based on a Band D tax base for Lyndhurst were likely to be as follows but had not yet been reflected in the calculations:

	2014/2015	2015/2016
Grant figure	£1,676.00	£2,514.00
Tax base (Band D)	£1,399.40	£1,366.10

### 5. **Budget Estimates 2014/15**

#### (a) Administration

Discussion took place regarding the Chairman's allowance and it was agreed this was still necessary although it was thought that a saving could be made by not having post meeting refreshments to celebrate the Christmas season at the December meeting. Instead the public could be invited to join the Parish Council for refreshments following the Annual Parish Meeting when the Parish Champion award would be made. However, it was accepted that it would be appropriate to withdraw from the NFDC GIS agreement which was not generally used. £2,400 had been added to the Precept request to cover the cost of a possible election in 2015. The Clerk's salary allowance could also be reduced to £17,938.

**RESOLVED:** To add the sum of £30,712.00p to the Precept request for the Administration budget.

#### (b) Allotment Committee

In response to a question from Mrs Wyeth Mrs Klaassen explained that if land was given back to the open forest it would be necessary to expend a considerable amount of money on fencing. However, if we kept the

land as allotments it would be necessary to clear and possibly repair the land drain. To this end the sum of £2,000 had been allowed to cover one of these items. Regular plot inspections would recommence in the Spring 2015 hence the necessity for an allocation to plot clearance.

**RESOLVED:** That the sum of £4,500 be made as a Precept request for the Allotment Committee budget.

(c) Amenities Committee

Mr Bisson explained that a considerable amount of clearance work had taken place at Great Mead and this would be ongoing, thus requiring additional budget in 2015/16. A request had been made for more frequent emptying of dog waste bins but if this was not adequate more bins would have to be given consideration. Mrs Wyeth asked whether it was necessary to have £500 in the budget for the Silver Street footpath as it should be possible to obtain grants for necessary work. The Clerk explained that although a Countryside Access Forum grant might be forthcoming this would only part fund any work.

**RESOLVED:** That the sum of £7,200.00 be allocated to the Precept request for the Amenities Committee budget.

(d) Cemetery Committee

Mr Wiltshire reported that funds would be needed in the coming financial year to undertake work on the tarmacadam footpaths in the Cemetery. He was still exploring the possibility of providing an electricity supply but it should be recognised that if the electricity is installed it will cost money to run. Mr Cornell queried the need to make an allowance for business rates but the Clerk stated that this should always be added as exemption could not be guaranteed.

**RESOLVED:** That the sum of £6,500.00 be allowed in the Precept request for the Cemetery Committee.

(e) Planning Committee

**RESOLVED:** That the sum of £250.00 be allocated in the Precept request for the Planning Committee to cover the cost of room hire for 12 meetings. This would be sufficient as the Committee would have funds to carry forward from the financial year 2014/15.

(f) Recreation Committee

Skateboard equipment had been installed during the current financial year and would be added to in the near future. More litter bins were required and the sum of £12,850 had been allowed for future projects in the next financial year. With all the additional equipment there was now a good deal of maintenance work needed in the Recreation Ground.

**RESOLVED:** That the sum of £20,400.00 be allowed in the Precept request for the Recreation Committee.

## 6. Any other items requiring budget consideration

(a) *Section 137 Allocation*

**RESOLVED:** That no allowance is made in the Precept for a Section 137 allocation, but that items requiring grant aid could be considered on their merits as required and as the financial reserve allowed.

(b) *Reserve/Contingency Fund*

**RESOLVED:** That no reserve/contingency fund be added for the financial year April 2015 to March 2016.

(c) *Village of the Year*

Mr Charlesworth reported that as the Parish Council had gained 2<sup>nd</sup> place in the Village of the Year competition at the first attempt he would like to enter the competition again in 2015.

**RESOLVED:** That the Parish Council take part in the Village of the Year competition in 2015.

(d) *Election Costs*

As reported in Item 4 – Matters Arising provision for the possibility of the cost of an election had been added to the Administration Budget for the financial year 2015/16.

(e) *Request from Lyndhurst Village Decorations and Lighting Committee for Grant Aid*

Mr Bisson, having previously declared an interest in this item, explained that a letter and statement of accounts had previously been circulated to all Councillors. A request had been made for the sum of £3000 to be added to the Parish Council budget on an annual basis to assist with payment for the Christmas lights and other items such as summer bunting and flower displays. The Committee, as a volunteer organisation, would like the backing of the Parish Council. Mr Charlesworth stated that he would like to see a larger contribution from the businesses in the village as they benefitted considerably from the Christmas lights and asked to know the percentage of businesses that contributed to costs. He felt they should all be requested to contribute. Mr Bisson said that the charity and corporate shops do not contribute. Mrs Wyeth said she didn't think the Parish Council should make a firm annual commitment as this might culminate in them taking over the whole operation although we all appreciate what the volunteers achieve. Mr Wiltshire said he agreed with this. It was suggested that following last year's very successful public appeal for funds this might be repeated this year.

**RESOLVED:** That the Committee contribute an article to the January issue of the Community Centre What's On asking residents whether they would be prepared to contribute via their Council Tax towards the cost of this Committee. The Committee were also informed that they could come back to the Parish Council if assistance was urgently needed or if they had any special projects requiring consideration.

## 7. Clerk's Salary

The Clerk withdrew from the meeting and discussion took place.

**RESOLVED:** That the Clerk's salary be increased by 5% for the financial year commencing 1 April 2015 in recognition of work undertaken over and above hours paid.

## 8. Precept Resolution

Further discussion took place concerning the impact of the provisional tax base change and grant allocation in 2015/16. The Clerk stated that she would contact NFDC to ensure that the figures she had been given would not lead to an increase in the Precept above that resolved at this meeting, ie 2.5%.

**RESOLVED:** That the Parish Council recommend a Precept of £69562.00p for the financial year 2015/16.

Mrs Wyeth requested that it be minuted that she had abstained from voting on this resolution.

## 9. Any Other Business

In the absence of any other business the Chairman thanked those present for attending and closed the meeting.

\_\_\_\_\_ Chairman

\_\_\_\_\_ Clerk