

DALSTON PARISH COUNCIL

Forge Green
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Minutes of the Policy and Resources Committee Meeting held at Forge Green, on Tuesday 7 November 2017 at 7.15pm.
M Watling (Assistant Clerk)

Present

Cllr Byers Cllr Craig Cllr Drouet Cllr Kaye-Kreczkowski Cllr Kyle

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Cllr Baxter & Cllr Dalton.

2. Minutes

The minutes of the Policy and Resources Committee meeting held on 29th August 2017 were approved and signed by Cllr Byers as a true record.

3. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

4. Public Participation

There were no members of the public present.

5. Annual review of the Financial Regulations document

These have been amended to reflect the changes approved at Parish council meetings of 30th May 2017 to remove the requirement to seek credit references for cheque signatories and 29th August 2017 to add the RFO to the bank mandate however before approval Cllr Craig requested that confirmation be received from CALC that no changes have been made to the Model Financial Regulations document upon which ours are based. RFO to Action.

6. Cemetery Working Group report

Cllr Craig gave a verbal report of the Cemetery Working Group visit to the cemetery which had taken place on 6th November.

- A lot of work is required particularly on the pathways. Roots from some of the larger trees are starting to lift the tarmac. The budget needs to include provision for some of the large expenses.
- The list of cemetery works has been updated although some information is required from the financial records to fully complete the updated document. RFO will advise Cllr Craig when the financial files are returned from the internal auditor so that he can access the required information.
- It was noted that some of the work completed by Wigton Town Council was not to the highest standard. Verges had not been edged nor paths sprayed. Clerk to advise Wigton Town Council.
- Cllr Byers is to arrange for an article to go into the next three issues of the Parish Paper reminding parishioners of the Parish Council policy for Cemetery Memorials.
- Cllr Byers reported that the policy for memorial stones which is published on the Parish Council website was not being observed. This requires the ward, section and space number to be shown in the bottom left hand corner of the memorial. After discussion it was decided that this information should be shown on memorial stones from now on.
- Cllr Craig will arrange some training with Atlantic Geomatics in order that the cemetery map can be brought up to date.

7. Forge Green Property

- The last rental increase for 1 Forge Green was 1st January 2016. It was agreed that the tenant will be given notice that the rent will be increased with effect from 1st January 2018 and the increase will be the increase in the Retail Price Index since the date of the last review. Cllr Kyle recommended using the increase in RPI from November 2015 to November 2017 which will be available mid-December to calculate the increment.
- Cllr Craig advised that it had not been possible for himself and Cllr Cowen to meet and prepare a report for the property.
He did advise that the roof was in need of repair. The nails have rusted and the slates have deteriorated to the extent that 40-50% will need replaced. Although the slates are currently intact the budget should include a provision to carry out repairs to the roof. While the roof was being repaired it would also be an opportunity to treat for woodworm.
- The windows were discussed and Cllr Craig advised that the windows in the rented properties were in a worse condition than the office windows. This was on account of condensation which was loosening the putty on the interior of the windows. The new dehumidifier installed in 1 Forge Green should help with this problem. It was confirmed that the budget should include a provision to replace the windows within the next 3 to 4 years.
- Cllr Kyle enquired if the matter of bi-annual inspections could be clarified. It was concluded that a structural report should be carried out every 5 years. The review for Health and Safety purposes should be every 2 years. Cllr Craig is to action a structural report.
- The question of checking the smoke detectors in the rented properties had been raised by the Clerk. The detectors in the office are checked regularly however the detectors in the rented properties are not tested. While it was agreed that the testing should be the tenants responsibility it was felt further clarification was required because it is a dual-purpose building and the smoke detectors are connected to the mains circuit for the office. Cllr Kyle is to investigate the legal and practical position with the installer of the detectors.

8. Accounts for the half year to 30th September 2017

The figures had already been circulated and showed a surplus of £3,920 for 6 months. Income and expenditure were both approximately half of the budget for the whole year. No payments have yet been made for parish grants or payments to The Charitable Trust. Cllr Kyle is to check that he has received all grant applications for the year for consideration and report back to The Parish Council.

9. Budget and Precept

The draft budget was presented for discussion showing a 6% increase in precept. The RFO had sought clarification from the City Council whether the increase in precept was likely to be capped. The response from the City Council advised that it will be mid-December before any announcement is likely. The Government however are expecting parishes to consider all available options to mitigate council tax increases including the use of reserves. The Council Tax Support Grant paid as part of the precept has been reduced by Central Government by 49% and will no longer be paid after 2018/19.

- Cllr Kyle enquired if the Cemetery grant was still payable. The RFO confirmed that this was still paid at the rate of 40% of the deficit shown on the cemetery accounts but no grant was due if the cemetery accounts showed a surplus. Approximately £1,000 should be received in the next few weeks for 2016/17.
- Cllr Craig queried the reduction in insurance shown in the budget. The RFO advised the insurance cover had been reviewed in 2016 and had secured a reduction and a 5 year agreement to 2021.
- Wigton Town Council have advised that they propose to increase the grass cutting contract by the increase in RPI as at the end of December. It was resolved that this was acceptable and the contract which is due for renewal from 1 April 2018 need not go out to tender.
- Cllr Craig sought clarification why the Kingsway Loan repayment was not reducing. The RFO will look at the paperwork and confirm that the payments are fixed and it is the split of capital and interest only which changes for the period of the loan.
- Discussion took place regarding the income from the Solar Panels and the Parish Charitable Trust. It was proposed by Cllr Kyle that the income should be paid to the Charitable Trust for the next 5 years then to be reviewed again. It was agreed that this proposal should be put before the Parish Council at the November meeting.

- Adjustments to spread the budgeted cost of the repair work needed to the roof at Forge Green over the two periods 2018/19 and 2019/20 would bring the draft budget for 2018/19 into a small surplus.

Subject to the adjustments the budget was approved. Ratification to the 6% increase in precept to be sought at the Parish Council meeting on 14 November 2017.

10. Internal audit visit on 3 November 2017

- The internal auditor has been advised by the RFO the action taken since his report. The financial papers for the 6 months to 30th September 2017 are currently with the internal auditor for review. A report will be forthcoming from the internal auditor.
- The internal auditor felt that the requirement to have an internal audit quarterly was excessive and that half yearly was sufficient. The Standing Orders require an Internal Audit twice a year. RFO will amend the Clerk/RFO monthly Responsibilities worksheet.

11. Dates of Forthcoming Meetings

Next meeting of The Parish Council to take place on 14th November 2017 at 7.15pm at Forge Green.
Policy & Resource Meeting Dates for 2018:- 30th January, 1st May, 31 July, 30th October
Property & Maintenance Meeting dates for 2018:- 27th March, 26th June and 25th September.

The meeting closed at 9.15pm