

ST STEPHEN PARISH COUNCIL

In the District of St.Albans, County of Hertfordshire



MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE COUNCIL HELD AT THE PARISH CENTRE, STATION ROAD, BRICKET WOOD, ST ALBANS, HERTS ON 30 JANUARY 2018 AT 7.30 pm

Present: Cllrs. Dorothy Kerry (Chairman), John Bell, Wendy Berriman, David Brannen,
Martin Doyle, John Parker, Bill Pryce, Nicholas Tyndale & Cllr Whittaker.

In attendance: Mrs C Hardy (Clerk)

1. APOLOGIES

Cllr. Karen Hurford.

2. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

None.

3. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 16 NOVEMBER 2017

RESOLVED: *Proposed: Cllr Bell* *Seconded: Cllr Doyle* **Motion Carried**
That the minutes be approved as a true record.
Votes in favour: unanimous

4. NOTIFICATION OF OTHER BUSINESS

None.

5. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

None.

6. TO CONSIDER THE 2018/2019 PRECEPT

Members referred to the Precept Review and budget report prepared by Mrs Pienaar.

The Chair stated that she proposed to discuss this by examining firstly the forecast for the 2017/2018 Income & Expenditure budget, followed by the proposed 2018/2019 budget which included precept considerations. The forecast figures to the end of March 2017 were expected to show slight excess income. The 2018/2019 I&E budget had been set with the Governance and Accountability guidance '*be optimistic about spending plans and pessimistic about income levels*'. The budget had a 2.7% increment, to take into account inflationary pressures and included variations to allow for known changes to existing services/activities and Council decisions. Part of the funding gap could be directly attributed to additional Health and Safety costs due to annual health surveillance and vibration testing.

There was a wide ranging discussion on those areas of the expenditure budget, which could be cut back to reduce the funding gap. This included whether or not the policy of awarding 'grants and donations should continue.

PROPOSED: *Cllr Berriman* *The proposal was not seconded and automatically fails*
That grants and donations are withdrawn with the exception of the senior citizen lunch clubs

PROPOSED: *Cllr Pryce* *Seconded: Cllr Parker* **Motion Unsuccessful**
That grants and donations are not awarded for the 2018/19 financial year

RESOLVED: *Cllr Kerry* *Seconded: Cllr Bell* **Motion Carried**

That grants and donations are maintained but the budget is reduced by 40%. That successful applications are paid 60% of the total request.
Votes in favour: 6 Votes against: 3

Cllr Brannen stated that considerable income could be raised by reviewing the Park Street Pavilion bar agreement. Members agreed with Cllr Brannen and will consider the suggestion once devolvement of the land from SADC has been completed.

The Chair then moved on to consider the Future Spending Plan and Rolling Replacement programmes. The Chair stated that the Council had faced exceptional levels of expenditure during 2017/18 and that the expenditure required to cover the RRP and priority projects amounted to an insurmountable sum. The Precept Review and Budget report suggests that the Council is 'required' to hold a Working Balance of between 3 and 12 months expenditure to enable it to continue to provide services in the face of unforeseen circumstances. Cllr Pryce stated that the working balance was 'recommended' not required to be maintained at no lower than 3 months expenditure. Given this and that the Council's Rolling Replacement Programme for 2018/19 amounted to £48k, Cllr Whitaker commented that the working balance should be maintained at just over three months, but no more than that amount. Release of these funds would go a considerable way to funding the RRP programme.

Owing to in-year expenditure the 2017/18 priorities had been retained alongside the 18/19 items identified by each Committee. The total amount required to progress #1 priorities was £69k. To raise enough to finance these priority #1 projects would require a substantial and uncomfortable increase in the precept. It was therefore proposed that priorities be pared back to £38.7K to be funded by a reallocation of earmarked reserves.

It was noted that a 4.84% increase in the precept would be an increase of £3.32 per year to Band D households and that it would still be lower than that levied by five out of the nine St Albans' Parish and Town Councils, two of which were rural.

RESOLVED: *Proposed Cllr Kerry* *Seconded Cllr Brannen* **Motion Carried**
That the precept is increased by 4.84%
Votes in favour: unanimous

RESOLVED: *Proposed Cllr Berriman* *Seconded Cllr Whitaker* **Motion Carried**
That the funding for the RRP and priority items for 2018/19 is found from a reduction in the working balance and a reallocation of reserves.
Votes in favour: unanimous

7. OTHER URGENT INPORTANT BUSINESS

None.

8. MEETING CLOSED

The meeting closed at 10pm.

NOTE: These minutes are to be considered as 'draft' until the Council has resolved to approve them.