

Minutes of the Admin and Finance Sub-Committee meeting held on Monday 30th September 2013 at Escrick Village Hall

Present: Cllr E Casling
Cllr S Cunningham
Cllr M Luscombe
Cllr J Goode

Clerk Mrs L Reader

2 members of the public

Note:- the items on the Agenda were considered in the following order 1,2,5,6,3,4 and 7 but are recorded numerically.

1. To Receive Apologies for Absence

There were none.

2. To Receive Declarations of Interests

There were none.

3. To discuss the Clerk's Contract

As there had been a slight problem with the distribution of the documents for this item, it was decided to leave until the main Parish Council Meeting on 7th October.

4. To discuss the Parish Council's Grievance and Disciplinary Policy

It was felt that whilst the NALC Grievance and Disciplinary Policy document that had been sent round was too complicated, the Parish Council should adopt the Grievance and Disciplinary Policy, with a few amendments in relation to items that were not appropriate for example reference to Trade Union membership and that the policy should be reviewed every two years unless there are any significant NALC changes notified to the Parish Council.

5. To discuss the Budget and Precept 2013/2014

Cllr Casling introduced this item by saying that the objective was to discuss what items should be considered and that these need to be assessed financially as they may impact on the precept to set for the following year. The impact on the budget would depend on what works were wanted by the residents of the village. The suggestion was made that the residents should be consulted about what they wanted for their village but that they should be aware that any increase in the precept would be reflected in their Council Tax payments. Cllr Casling made the point that last year, the only increase in Council Tax was due to the increase in Escrick Parish Council's precept as the rest of the Council Tax elements were frozen.

Two examples of things that might need funding were the Fish Fountain and the Monument at the junction of Main Street/Carr Lane which might both benefit from maintenance works. It was suggested that the residents would need to be consulted for ideas as to what they'd like to see included in the budget for the precept..

The point was made that due to the recent unbudgeted election costs, should the Parish Council not “get it’s own house in order” first before looking to committ money to any additional works as part of the precept.

Cllr Luscombe commented that there was also a need within the budget for the costs of training, for both the Clerk and Councillors. Cllr Casling agreed that the budget sheet should be reviewed and amended to include “Other Items” such as Maintenance works, Training, Health and Safety Inspections/Advice and Professional Advice. There may be other items yet to be identified

The overall feeling was that the precept would need to increase but that it needs more thought and consultation before the figures can be finalised.

6. To discuss Financial Risk Assessment

There was some discussion about what this item actually included. Cllr Casling explained that it was about demonstrating that we have thought of what might go wrong and what we would do about it. She used the recent election as an example; the risk is that an election may be needed and there would have to be contingency element in the budget for the unexpected expenditure. It is about showing that the Parish Council is aware of what risks it is exposed to and what it might do about them if they were to occur. No decisions could be made on this item due to a lack of understanding of exactly what was required of the Parish Council.

Cllr Casling agreed to send round an example of a Financial Risk Assessment from another Parish Council to explain this better.

7. To discuss the Freedom of Information Model Scheme and Publication Model

The Freedom of Information Model Scheme and Publication Model document that had been circulated was discussed. This sets out what information is available and where it can be accessed, i.e on the website or as hard copy. Cllr Casling agreed to complete the standard form and circulate the committee for approval.

It was agreed that the Clerk would put the Asset Register onto the website.

A discussion took place about the costs of photocopying, printing etc in relation to supplying information requested under the FOI act and it was agreed that this needed further investigation. This item would be continued at the next Admin and Finance sub-committee meeting. The policy was approved to go to the full parish council.

There being no further items, the meeting was declared closed.