

# Meriden Parish Council

*The Centre of England*

**FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING**  
**10th December 2018 @ 17.30pm Venue: The Pavilion**

Present: Cllr R Weaver (RW), Cllr J Barber (JB), Cllr M Lee (ML), Cllr F Lynch-Smith (FLS) and Responsible Finance Officer Mrs Barbara Bland (BB).

**1. Welcome & Apologies**

Chair opened the meeting and welcomed Members. Apologies received from Cllr M Haque due to work commitments. Cllr Nunn continues his extended leave of absence.

**2. Minutes of Previous Meeting held on 12<sup>th</sup> November 2018**

The minutes of the meeting held on 15<sup>th</sup> November were approved for accuracy and signed off by Chair.

**IT WAS RESOLVED JB proposed 12<sup>th</sup> November 2018 minutes be approved, seconded by ML.**

**2.1 Matters Arising**

All matters are covered in agenda.

**3. Interim Internal Audit**

BB advised that she had contacted MS Audit Services to book a date in January 2019 and await a response.

**Action: BB to chase MS Audit Services.**

**4. Month End Reconciliation**

BB advised that no bank statements had been received to date for November. Reconciliation for October has been completed and suggested January's meeting to sign off quarter 3 October to December reconciliation. Members agreed BB suggestion.

**Action: BB to prepare quarter 3 bank reconciliation for January's meeting.**

**5. Financial Regulations Review**

BB advised this remains a work in progress.

**Action: BB to complete review of financial regulations for January if possible.**

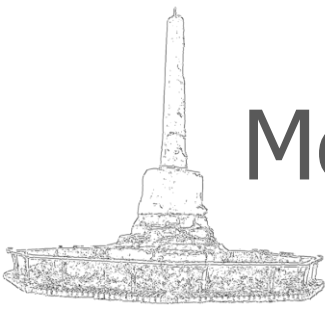
**6. Budget 2019-2020**

RW referred to first draft of budget proposing 3% or 3.5% increase. BB explained reference to documents circulated being:-

1. Budget Headings Income & Expenditure 2019-20 with 3% or 3.5% revisions for consideration;
2. Financial Budget Comparison from 1 April to 30 November 2018.
3. Budget Headings Income & Expenditure 2018-19 for compare and contrast.
4. Reserve Policy allocations of designated reserves per identified project.

**Signed .....**Chair      **Dated .....**

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RW asked BB to explain any significant increases factored in. BB replied that salary costs had been uplifted to take account of salary evaluation undertaken by NALC which has streamlined the salary banding and grades. With increases to salary, NI and pension this has increased by 3.6K.

Members considered and discussed preliminary budget with proposed uplift or 3% v. 3.5%. FLS asked about the support grant taper and RW replied that this will be the last year. BB confirmed there will be no support grant provided post 31 March 2020. Current support grant reduction for 2019-20 is approximately 67% standing at £204.

RW added we need to add provision for enforcement officer and suggested 4K be allocated into reserves. Final costings are awaited from Stephen Hawley, SMBC Highways as shared cost with Balsall Common for a set number of hours to be purchased per week.

BB referred to reserve allocation for identified projects; RW requested the addition of 4K for shared Enforcement Officer hours purchased from SMBC. Deborah Merry had also confirmed election costs for 2019 and the designated reserve of £7,500 can be reduced to £1,000.

After further discussion Members requested a revised budget be prepared to include for a 4% increase given enforcement officer hours and uncertainty of Brexit 29<sup>th</sup> March 2019 and the unknown future services devolved to parish and town councils by Principal Authorities.

**Action: BB to implement above additions and inclusions. Members to consider revised budget for 2019-2020 at 14<sup>th</sup> January's meeting with a view to recommendation for Member's approval at 21<sup>st</sup> January 2019 full Council meeting.**

**Action: BB to adjust designated reserves in accordance with Enforcement Officer 4K and reduction to Election Costs from 7.5K to 1K.**

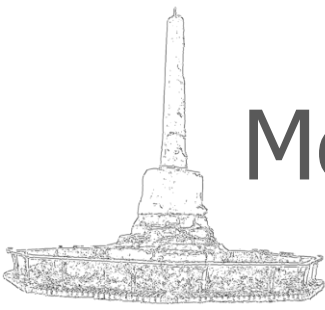
**Action: RW to recommend to full Council a 4% budget increase for 2019-20 with final budget sign off being achieved for 21<sup>st</sup> January 2019 at full Council meeting.**

## 7. Precept 2019-2020

RW acknowledged circulation to Members of proposed 3% and 3.5% precept increase. BB explained SMBC had provided a Band D provisional tax base figure of 1,258 for budget planning purposes. The support grant is confirmed as £204 which is a 67% reduction from last year. Consideration was given to the precept v. budget and currently SMBC have no cap applied to precept increases. Therefore Members felt the precept should be increased to 4% in line with proposed budget. BB was requested to rework the numbers to include a 4% uplift for Members approval at full Council meeting scheduled for 17<sup>th</sup> December 2018.

Signed .....Chair                      Dated .....

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Justification to residents was discussed and the recommendation to increase precept for 2019-20 will be made on the basis of (i) new enforcement officer initiative; (ii) Brexit uncertainty with potential devolution of services to parish and town councils; and (iii) other unknown costs such as legal/professional/staff.

**Action: BB to rework precept to include 4% increase; circulate to Members for approval on 17<sup>th</sup> December 2018; Members to discuss and consider uplift in precept for 2019-2020 and agree at December's full Council meeting.**

**IT WAS RESOLVED RW proposed 4% precept be implemented seconded by ML. RW will recommend full Council approval of a 4% precept increase based on above justifications. BB to re-work numbers and circulate precept proposal to Members for their Approval.**

## **8. Parish Action Project**

BB explained that this remains a work in progress for JB/BB. It will bring together reserves, budget and identified projects justifying any proposed increase to precept and presents as good practice. Cross reference and correlation required by BB from Ward Action Plan to populate content and additions identified in budget.

**Action: JB/BB to work on template. BB to lift information from Ward Action Plan and add projects identified within reserves policy with committed budget and link to budget headings and remains a work in progress.**

## **9. Business Plan 2019-2022**

This item is deferred to January 2019 meeting.

## **10. Risk Management PC & Park**

The additions identified by Members at October's meeting require putting onto system. BB to complete task and present at January's meeting.

**Action: BB to update Risk Register with review date and approval date.**

## **11. Any Other Business**

- ML requested payment of renewal notice for Get Dotted webhost for WW1 Committee website.
- RW asked if receipt of sponsorship from H2L had been paid; BB confirmed no payment received thus far.
- BB advised a security audit was being undertaken by Barclays for all parish council bank accounts.
- ML recorded thanks to BB for her hard work in budget and precept preparations.

## **12. Date of Next Meeting**

The next meeting of finance committee will be held on Monday 14<sup>th</sup> January 2019 at 17.30 pm at the Pavilion.

The meeting closed at 18.35.

Signed .....Chair                      Dated .....

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