

## **MEETING OF SPROWSTON TOWN COUNCILLORS – 1 DECEMBER 2021**

At the meeting of the Sprowston Town Council held at the School Room, Sprowston Diamond Centre, School Lane, Sprowston on Wednesday 1 December 2021, the following Councillors were present: -

Mr J M Ward – Town Mayor

Ms D Coleman	-	Mrs B J Lashley
Mr W F Couzens	-	Mrs J Leggett
Mr J F Fisher	-	Ms C T Rumsby
Mr R J Knowles	-	Mr G S Tingle

In attendance

Mr G Ranaweera	-	Town Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer
Mrs E Elliot	-	Administrative and Committee Officer

No members of the public were present

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### **21/310. DECLARATIONS OF DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY AND OTHER INTERESTS**

Councillor	Minute No. and Heading	Nature of Interest
Mr W F Couzens	21/314 - Review of Fees and Charges	Trustee - Sprowston Senior Citizens Club Volunteer - Sprowston Dementia Friendly Community
Mrs B J Lashley	21/314 - Review of Fees and Charges	Chairman - Sprowston Senior Citizens Bowls Club

### **21/311. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Written apologies for absence were received and accepted by the Council from Mr A J Barton, Mrs B Cook and Mrs K Vincent. Verbal apologies for absence were received and accepted by Council from Mr N Shaw.

### **21/312. RESIDENTS QUESTIONS**

As no residents were present the Chairman moved to the next item of business.

### **21/313. PLANNING**

The Town Clerk reported that observations had been requested by the District Council's Head of Planning on applications received since the last meeting.

Having considered each application and the accompanying plans the Council

**RESOLVED**

## **21/313. PLANNING (CONTINUED)**

- (a) to raise no objection to the following applications:

2021/2066 - single storey rear extension at 135, North Walsham Road, Sprowston

2021/2073 - single storey rear extension at 38, Hammond Close, Sprowston

## **21/314. TO REVIEW FEES AND CHARGES FOR 2022/23**

### **(1) Sports Hire Fees**

Mr W F Couzens queried if a 3% increase was sufficient given recent and ongoing rises in energy costs.

The Town Clerk responded that he had accounted for higher increases in energy costs within the budget.

**RESOLVED** that effective 1 April 2022 the proposed schedule of sports hire fees be implemented.

### **(2) Cemetery and Memorial Fees**

**RESOLVED** that effective 1 April 2022 the proposed schedule of cemetery and memorial fees be implemented.

### **(3) Venue Hire Fees**

Mrs B J Lashley noted a 3% increase in the Community Rate increase on 2021/22 figures for the Beryl Read Sports Hall would equate to 65p yet this was not reflected in the proposed rate of £21.75 for 2022/23.

The Town Clerk advised the 3% in the 2021/22 Community Rate column was incorrect as it had not been updated to reflect a smaller increase in some instances. Explaining that he had tried to keep the increase in the community rate to a minimum and increase the standard rate which would impact more on corporate hirers to compensate for the community. As such there was not a 3% increase across the board.

**RESOLVED** to implement the proposed Community and Standard Rate for 2022/23 effective 1 April 2022.

### **(4) Allotment Rents and Water Charges**

**RESOLVED** that effective 1 October 2022 allotment rents increase by £1.00 per annum to £39.00, water charges of £7.80 per annum be applied to reflect the previous year's actual water usage and a one-off set-up/administration fee of £15.00 be applied.

Mrs B J Lashley welcomed the introduction of a one-off set-up/administration fee and pro-rata charging for new tenants taking up tenancy part way through the year.

## **21/315. DRAFT REVENUE AND CAPITAL EXPENDITURE PROGRAMME BUDGET 2022/23**

The Town Clerk recommended option A and explained he had:

- (1) included £15,000 for the Queen's Jubilee and Annual Fete.
- (2) increased energy costs to reflect expected rises.
- (3) introduced a planned maintenance sinking fund for large expenditures such as replacement of play areas. £20,000 to be put aside each year for all parks. He did not want to rely on CIL receipts as they might not be available when required, or required for other projects.
- (4) changed the recording of expenditure for Sprowston Diamond Centre. Previously the building was staffed and cleaned in house. The Council now had contractors who had other responsibilities outside the Centre in the parks etc. and a large amount of cleaning and supplies are no longer relevant to this cost centre. Expenditure is now reflected under the appropriate headings giving a more realistic view of where money is spent.
- (5) created additional cost centres under street scene to identify income from the delegated function of verge cutting and the associated staff cost expenditure.

Mrs B J Lashley said that re-coding was long overdue and asked how the sinking fund differed from the play equipment renewal fund.

In response the Town Clerk clarified that play equipment renewals was a static fund whereas monies would be added to a sinking fund each year to accumulate over time.

Mrs B J Lashley mentioned that funds for streetlighting renewals had been put aside before and a previous Council spent the money elsewhere. She questioned how the play equipment sinking fund could be safe guarded.

The Town Clerk replied that an embargo could not be placed around any particular cost centre and Council were at liberty to change a decision after 6 months or in light of a material change, particularly if there was unforeseen expenditure and these funds subsequently required.

Following a question from Mr W F Couzens the Town Clerk referred to page 14 and £30,000 in cost centre 7611 held in reserves for possible loan repayments in 2022/23. If a loan was taken out, funds to cover regular loan repayments would need to be added to this budget line in future years.

With regard to increasing reserves for streetlighting renewals, and in view of the average life span of a column, Mrs B J Lashley referred to a report previously prepared for Council to implement a phased replacement of streetlighting stock and requested an item be placed on the agenda in January 2022 to progress it.

The Town Clerk advised that since bringing the report to Council he was now unsure if there was sufficient detail in the recommendations to know which of the 400 columns to replace, given the varying levels of safety highlighted by a traffic light system, and would revisit the report before bringing to Council.

**21/315. DRAFT REVENUE AND CAPITAL EXPENDITURE PROGRAMME BUDGET 2022/23  
(CONTINUED)**

Mr W F Couzens suggested all replacement street lights be numbered for easier identification when reporting faults.

In response to a question from Mrs J Leggett the Town Clerk confirmed streetlight replacement was in the Council's forward plan.

Mrs B J Lashley observed that £15,000 for the Queen's Jubilee and Summer Fete was a lot of money and added to the overall increase in precept.

Mrs J Leggett noted the overall increase for a band D property in option A was £3.13 per year.

Replying to a question from Mrs B J Lashley the Town Clerk reported that insurance premiums for the Viking Centre were likely to decrease once occupied.

Mr W F Couzens queried why £396,830.00 expenditure on the Viking Community Hub was not included in the Summary of Income and Expenditure.

The Town Clerk said a reciprocal amount should be included in the Summary of Income and Expenditure.

As there was no out turn Mrs B J Lashley questioned if there would be a shortfall at end of year.

The Town Clerk explained £200,000 CIL receipts was used to purchase the Viking Centre with the balance funded from general reserves and this would be shown in the end of year accounts.

Mrs J Leggett asked the Town Clerk how robust the tax base figures were.

Whilst reliant on Broadland District Council he felt they seemed reasonably accurate.

Answering a question from Mr B J Lashley the Town Clerk advised the steel container, cost centre 5224, was situated in section 11 at the cemetery and was not in sufficient state of repair to be moved. Interments were now taking place in section 11 and was unsightly.

Only bulky inexpensive equipment was currently stored in it with other items housed in the visitor centre, which required relocating.

A brick building was too expensive and a replacement container was a reasonable compromise.

Mrs B J Lashley requested the replacement container be disguised with surrounding planting if possible.

Mr J M Ward proposed, seconded by Mr R J Knowles option A setting the precept for 2022/23 at £743,973.00, a 2.55% increase on Band D tax rate and 5% on the total precept. On being put to the vote the motion was CARRIED.

**21/316. PRECEPT 2022/2023**

**RESOLVED** to authorise the Town Clerk to submit, under Section 50 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, a precept requirement to Broadland District Council of £743,973.00 to meet the Council's funding requirement for 2022/23.

There being no other necessary business the Town Mayor of the Council thanked Councillors for their participation and declared the meeting closed at 8.10pm.

15 December 2021

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Town Mayor