

# Luddington Parish Council

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## **Minutes of the Extraordinary Meeting held at All Saints Church, Luddington on 28<sup>th</sup> January 2017 at 10:30**

Present: W Hughes (WH) (Chairman), D Nutt (DN) (Vice-Chairman),  
T Beeley (TB), B Payne (BP), J Warrender (JW)

In attendance: R D Armstrong (Clerk)

Members of the public: M Hughes (MH), A Haynes (AH), B Wallis (BW)

### **1. Record of members present**

As shown above.

### **2. To receive apologies and approve reasons for absence**

Apologies were received and approved from A Hegarty (AH).

### **3. Declaration of interests in any item on the agenda**

Councillors were reminded that they are required to disclose an interest in any item on the agenda.  
No interests were expressed.

### **4. To receive any questions or representations from the public**

**WH** opened the meeting by explaining the reasons for the Public Interest Report issued by the external auditors and the desire to gather views from taxpayers in respect of the 2017/18 budget and resulting precept.

Members of the public were invited to contribute to the debate whenever they felt it to be appropriate.

### **5. Budget 2017/18**

**WH** began by outlining the current state of the Council's finances and suggested that a revised budgetary increase of 30% could be adopted and would cover many of the schemes being considered.

**JW** asked if the Clerk could produce a report of expenditure against budget. The Clerk agreed that this will be provided for each meeting.

**MH** suggested that a 3 – 5 year plan would help to smooth out the variances in budget and the members supported this suggestion.

**BW** asked **WH** to explain how reserves worked and an explanation was provided.

**AH** asked about the possibility of purchasing village green. **WH** explained that the lease had expired and the freeholder had offered the land for sale at a cost of £5000. Negotiations are continuing.

**BW** expressed concern in respect of communication within the Parish. The Clerk suggested the publication of a regular newsletter and the establishment of a communication group to co-ordinate communication which would report regularly to Council. **DN** supported this concept.

**WH** suggested that a precept of increase of 25% would be more palatable.

**WH** read an email from M Willen highlighting his objections to the increase in precept.

**WH** proposed and **DN** seconded that a revised budget of £8974 and resultant precept of £8964 be approved and the motion was passed unanimously.

## **6. Public Interest Report**

The Council has been issued with a Public Interest Report by the external auditor, Grant Thornton, as a result of the failure of the Council to complete an annual return about its finances and governance for the financial year ended 31 March 2016.

It is now necessary for the Council to consider this report in public and to decide what action to take in response to the recommendations of the external auditor.

Grant Thornton have recommended that the Council :

1. Take immediate steps to complete the Annual Return for 2016 and submit it for limited assurance review.
2. Adopt a formal plan for the preparation and approval of the annual return by the statutory deadline of 30 June each year.
3. Monitor performance against that plan

We acknowledged the failing of the previous Clerk to communicate adequately with the Council, although it is fair to say that the unaudited accounts were presented to the public at the Annual Parish Meeting in April 2016.

**WH** proposed and **DN** seconded that the recommendations of the external auditor be adopted in full and the motion was passed unanimously.

## **7. Annual Return for Smaller Authorities for the year 2015/16**

The Clerk was instructed to take immediate steps to complete and submit the Annual Return for 2016 to the external auditor. He was further instructed to prepare a formal plan for the preparation of future returns and the monitoring of performance as recommended by the external auditor.

The Clerk will provide a plan and progress report at the February Council meeting.

## **8. Date of Next Meeting**

The next meeting of the Parish Council will take place on Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> February 2017 at 19:30 at Luddington Village Hall.

The meeting closed at 12:10.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ W Hughes (Chairman) Date: \_\_\_\_\_