

## GREAT COXWELL PARISH COUNCIL

### Minutes of the Parish Council Budget-Setting Meeting held in the Parish Reading Room Monday 5<sup>th</sup> September 2016.

PRESENT: Councillors: Mrs A Zinovieff, Mr S McNally, Mrs L Gale, Mr R May, Mrs J Russell; RFO: Mr I Mason (Chair and Minutes Sec)

#### 1. Purpose of meeting

To agree a process and format for short (1 year) and medium (2-5 year) term financial planning in order to enable:

- reasoned defensible decisions regarding the setting of the annual Precept rate
- strategic planning of the extent and timing of future capital expenditure
- strategic accrual of ring-fenced funds for anticipated capital expenditure
- more effective targeting of fund-raising activities
- indication and facilitation of grant application opportunities

#### 2. Background

- Identification of need for a more strategic approach to maintenance of park and reading room
- Acknowledgement that some park equipment has or is reaching the point where replacement is needed
- Additional expenditure anticipated for cutting grass on footpaths

#### 3. Approach

Expenditure to be divided into: 'OpEx' – expenditure solely related to fulfilling the statutory duties of the Council; and 'CapEx' – expenditure on new projects, replacement of large one-off items and large maintenance costs. Some expenditure may fall into grey areas between the two. After discussion it was agreed that longer-term expenditure which might attract grant-funding be deemed CapEx whilst all other, shorter-term expenditure can be regarded as OpEx.

It is likely that the OpEx budget will be reasonably future-proof during the medium-term. Cap Ex will be more demand-led and variable. Since May 2016 Councillors have assigned areas of responsibility. It was agreed that each Councillor would identify and where possible quantify likely costs in their area of responsibility.

**ACTION: RFO to draw up draft OpEx budget based on performance from April 2015 to date for discussion by 9<sup>th</sup> September '16**

**ACTION: Councillors to identify categories and where possible extend and timing of CapEx items for RFO by end of September '16 (we didn't agree this deadline, but is that OK for everyone?)**

#### 4. Further issues for consideration:

Should the park be self-funding (as it was initially set up to be), or can it be crossed –funded from the PC/Precept?

Should monies raised by the monthly teas be hypothecated for more high-profile (i.e. CapEx) projects and not for routine maintenance?

These are policy decisions for the Councillors

## **5. Next steps**

Precept is to be set in early January 2017. We receive a letter from the VWHDC in mid-November asking us for the agreed the Precept figure for the year. Therefore a 1 year (2016-7) budget incorporating OpEx and CapEx items must be set and agreed by the PC at one of the PC meetings before the calendar year end. A longer timeline for setting a medium-term budget is acceptable and no deadline was set at the meeting for this. (However, I think we also should get this done by end of 2016).