

South Willesborough and Newtown Community Council

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Minutes of the Additional Council Meeting held on Tuesday 22nd October 2024

22nd October 2024 Minutes

The Chair opened the meeting at 7:03pm

In attendance Cllr Sue Mullan Chair (SM) Cllr Malcolm Webb (MW) Cllr Steve Campkin (SC).

Also, in attendance Sarah Evans Community Council Manager (SE CCM)

271/24 Record attendance and list apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Cllr Andy Hodges, Cllr David Mullan, Cllr Paul Bohill. Cllr Lauren Corbett and Approved.

272/24 Declarations of pecuniary, other significant or voluntary interest

SC is a tenant of Gas House Fields Allotments

273/24 To Agree Minutes of the Council meeting of 7th October 2024 and sign (attached).

Proposed SC and Seconded MW that the Minutes were a true record of the meeting and the Chair signs them.

274/24 To review the budget performance to date, bank reconciliation, reserves and recommended bank transfers and agree actions

Resolved:-Proposed SC and Seconded MW and Agreed unanimously 1) to accept the budget performance to date, 2) to accept the bank reconciliation 3) to accept the reserves report 4) to transfer £35000 to the Reserves Account from the Current Account. 5) It was noted that the payments listing was not on the Agenda because the costs had not been received from Payroll these would be circulated and agreed by email and endorsed at the next meeting.

Action SE CCM to circulate payments listing by email for all members to endorse

275/24 To receive the VAT return for Qtr. 3 2024 and agree

Resolved:-Proposed MW and Seconded SC to agree the VAT return for Quarter 3 and to submit this to HMRC.

Action SECCM to submit quarterly VAT return to HMRC.

276/24 To review a draft forecast of the budget to the end of March 2025 and agree actions

Members discussed in detail the previous circulated report and reviewed the forecast of costs including the yet to be agreed national pay award for all staff.

Resolved:- Proposed SM Seconded SC and Agreed Unanimously to 1) Accept the Forecast of Budget, that this was to the end of March 2025 not 2024 and to amend this in the Minutes 2) To

monitor closely the budget on a monthly basis to see if there is a need to pace the projects for 2025 to allow for the potential impact of the National Pay Agreement to use the Precept Support Reserve to support the budget as planned. 3) To begin the budget for 2025 2026 without an expectation of precept support from the 2024 2025 budget.

277/24 To receive the costs for Gas House Fields Allotments year to date and agree actions

1. Resolved:- Agreed Unanimously to receive and agree the Costs to date for 2024 2025 and their allocation.
2. To agree forecast of cost for 2024 2025
3. To continue to cover the cost of public liability insurance as a Council service to tenants.
4. To bring all rents in line with SWANCC charge per perch.
5. To investigate 2025 2026 costs for water safety and insurance
6. To use the detailed review of day to day site maintenance, grass cutting and strimming, water usage against a detailed cost centre analysis of the previous years with 205 2026 to review rent rate.

278/24 To receive any Cllr considerations for projects for the budget for 2025 2026

Resolved Proposed MW Seconded SC and Agreed unanimously to consider costs for a flagpole on Newtown Green, maintenance of grass edging on the footpaths of Newtown Green and improvements to the Council Noticeboards.

279/24 To consider content for the Autumn Newsletter and agree

Resolved: Agreed unanimously to the following items for the Newsletter SWAN SALUTE TO THE 1940S, National Allotments Week Open Day, Grants for We are Beams and Salvation Army Summer Programme, Update on Monument and Memorial, No Waiting Restrictions Canterbury Road if permissible with consultation, Community news to include Alfred Arms Charity Day, Salvation Army Summer Programme, Spring Bulb planting, Neighbourhood watch to include e Scooters and fire safety, Communities Prepared flood preparations, Able Business support, New Cllr feature and farewell to Cllr Smith, Ward Cllr Columns and KCC Cllr columns, to request a farewell statement from former Ward Cllr Sojan Joseph, think local buy local Boys Hall Hotel.

280/24 To agree the date of the next meeting as Monday 4th November 2024 and items for the Agenda

SM proposed a review of the need for a Council Community Building and terms of reference for a Working Group to look for a Council Community Building, Feedback from the Parish Forum, a reminder of the request for item for a Christmas Carol Event from Cllr Corbett.

There being no further business to discuss the Chair closed the meeting at 8:20pm.

Signed Chair _____ Date _____

Appendix of Reports

Forecasting Report

Costs for Gas House Fields Allotments

Forecast Budget to End of March 2024Purpose of Report

- To review spend forecast for year ahead and agree
- To review impact of potential National Pay Award and Agree actions

Year to date Council has spend 58961.51 on payments net of VAT

The Scribe report for forecasting carries the spend anticipated on Earmarked Reserves - EMRs this year but it does not carry the receipt value for these EMRS. Therefore the calculation has been completed to demonstrate equal balance of income to expenditure.

	Income	Actual	Forecast
Budget	89803	98186.08	571
EMR applied 24 25	15145	15145	
Total	104948	113331.1	113902.1

	Payments	Actual	Forecast
Budget	96252	58961.51	44960.38
EMR	15145	-3643.2	0
Total	111397		103921.9

Forecast Oct 24 to Mar 25

The National Pay Award has again been balloted to Unions with closure on 16th Oct 24. The anticipated Award is £1290 per employee on NJC Greenbook Contracts. This is a national decision and again very unusual to previous years so it was not possible to budget for this. If it is agreed and applied to all staff it would be a cost of £3870. For the benefit of prudence this has been included in the forecast and is an unanticipated expense.

A hard forecast has been applied to the budget on all lines except Community Gardener and Rising Costs as no projects are agreed on these lines and Clerk training for CILCA has not yet been applied.

The hard forecast determines a likely cost of full budget on Area Enhancements, Comms, Events Workings, Small projects, all running costs anticipated staffing costs except as detailed above. (The SWAN Salute costs to pay this financial year are prepared in Reserve for next year and covered separately).

Worst Case Scenario

Based on the figures, is predicted the Council will spend its Precept Budget this year and use the Precept Support, combined total of £96252 it will then need to fund the impact of the Pay Award and balance at **£4026.00**. A review of the Council reserves includes the unspent precept support of 2022 2023 which was carried over this year of £5227 and importantly always hold a contingency fund of 3-6 months costs in contingency for these eventualities.

Spend	103921.89
(Reserves	3643.2)
Precept	100278.69
Overspend	4026.69

Mitigation

Before a Reserve needs to be used the Area Enhancement spend is forecasted at full which is a spend of £7586.67 with careful monitoring and depending on the plans for the budget this Financial Year within the Area Enhancement budget or very early next financial year will buffer the need to use reserves. Other spend agreed is the bench for Newtown Green and costs are awaited for installation November 2024. The Living Bus Stop full costs are awaited. The final figures of the pay award are needed to know the full impact. Once all these figures are received the Budget can be monitored to determine if project pacing is required or reserve support is needed.

Impact

If the Council spends its full budget this year it is likely there will not be an overflow for Precept Support 2025 2026 which the Council did review last year at Budget Setting and expected with the buffering of low spend in its formation year and during the Pandemic years and the support of the Covid grant. Therefore it would be wise to begin the budget without an expectation of Precept support for 2025 2026.

Sarah Evans
Community Council Manager
18th October 2024.

Costs for Gas House Fields Allotments year to date 2024/2025

Purpose of Report

To receive the Costs to date for 2024 2025

To consider likely upcoming costs

To agree a process for rent review.

Recommendation

1. Bring All rents in line
2. Agree forecast of 24 25
3. Detailed review of day to day site maintenance, grass cutting and strimming, water usage.
4. A detailed cost centre analysis of the previous years
5. Receive 2025 2026 costs
6. Review rent rate.

2024 Costs

Allotments

Code Title	Receipts			Payments			Net Position
	Budgeted	Actual	Variance	Budgeted	Actual	Variance	+/- Under/over spend
24 National Allotment Society				70.00		70.00	70.00 (100%)
31 Water Charges				525.00	371.55	153.45	153.45 (29%)
32 Site Maintenance		71.00	71.00	210.00	371.76	-161.76	-90.76 (-43%)
53 Rent Allotment	2,000.00	1,095.89	-904.11				-904.11 (-45%)
55 Deposit for keeping site tidy		325.00	325.00				325.00 (N/A)
67 Living Workshop				75.00	15.98	59.02	59.02 (78%)
75 Critical Fencing		8,346.50	8,346.50		8,621.50	-8,621.50	-275.00 (N/A)
76 Water Safety					504.99	-504.99	-504.99 (N/A)
77 Waste Removal					1,155.00	-1,155.00	-1,155.00 (N/A)
SUB TOTAL	2,000.00	9,838.39	7,838.39	880.00	11,040.78	-10,160.78	-2,322.39 (-80%)

Summary

NET TOTAL	2,000.00	9,838.39	7,838.39	880.00	11,040.78	-10,160.78	-2,322.39 (-80%)
V.A.T.					2,105.44		
GROSS TOTAL		9,838.39			13,146.22		

Community Gardener

Code Title	Receipts			Payments			Net Position
	Budgeted	Actual	Variance	Budgeted	Actual	Variance	+/- Under/over spend
70 Community Gardener				3,840.00	660.00	3,180.00	3,180.00 (82%)
SUB TOTAL				3,840.00	660.00	3,180.00	3,180.00 (82%)

Summary

NET TOTAL				3,840.00	660.00	3,180.00	3,180.00 (82%)
V.A.T.							
GROSS TOTAL					660.00		

2024 has been an impactful year on the Gas House Fields Allotments Site, the Health and Safety has been significantly improved and is ongoing. The Critical fencing was covered by S106 and the Water Safety and Waste Removal was covered by SWANCC.

The site maintenance costs have been separated to show those linked to one off costs for H&S improvement and those which are general annual costs accruing. The Community Gardener budget has funded the mowing and strimming for 2024 2025.

Upcoming Costs

The external perimeter fence on the side site of the allotments is beginning to degrade and it will need to be reviewed for repair.

Water will be left on over the winter so is likely to be used more and forecast of equal lowest monthly usage would suggest further costs of £372.00.

Day to day site maintenance costs year to date are £372 plus grass cutting and strimming £660. It is expected that day to costs will continue and a further £371 is forecast as year to date.

Public liability Insurance for tenants has been funded by the Council and 24 25 costs are awaited.

Legionnaires Risk Assessment costs were new this year and costs for 2025 2026 are awaited.

Once these full costs are received the full impact of increasing costs can be determined.

Rents

On its inception the Allotments Cttee agreed to hold the price for existing tenants for 1 year, and its second year it determined it was too soon to review the rents fairly with Covid costs and its third year it determined hold the rates at the current rate until this year.

The existing tenant rates have a number of discrepancies with discounts for senior citizens and means tested discounts and some errors in calculation whilst new tenants were charged evenly at £7.50 per perch.

Going forward there needs to be a fair policy for all and its recommended to review the impact of costs against rent with every tenant paying the full £7.50 per perch and then to assess the need to review the rents against the costs forecast for 2025 2026. A rent review must give 12 months notice.

To review the rents it is necessary to benchmark the costs rents are expected to cover.

Section 10 of the Allotments Act 1950 requires that rent on statutory sites (sites owned by the local authority and not viewed as a temporary use for the land) must be set at a reasonable level. When considering what is reasonable, you would need to look at other allotment sites in the area as well as other leisure activities that are managed by the Council. All the funds generated by rents should be used for the management and improvement of the allotments and not used for any other purposes.

Therefore it is the recommendation of this report to agree the costs the rent should cover, assuming the Council wishes to maintain the provision of PLI Insurance as a benefit rents could then cover day to day site maintenance, grass cutting and strimming, water usage. Once this is agreed a detailed cost centre analysis of the previous years and a forecast of 24 25 can be determined and the rent rate agreed

Sarah Evans
Community Council Manager
18 10 2024