

Mere Town Council

TOWN CLERK - MRS. L. C. WOOD

Minutes of the Annual Budget Meeting held on Wednesday, 28th November 2018 at 7.00 p.m. in The Town Council Office, Duchy Manor, Springfield Road, Mere.

Present: Councillors: Mrs. K. Symonds (Chairman), A. Colman, R. Coward, C. Hazzard, Mrs. J. Hurd, J. Jordan, G. Jeans, A. Mead, Mrs. L. Traves,

The Vice-Chairman of the Town Council, Cllr. Mrs. K. Symonds Chaired the Meeting

Apologies for absence – Cllr. P. Coward sent his apologies for absence.

Declarations of Interest

- Cllr. Hazzard declared an interest in Floral Enhancements
- Cllr. John Jordan declared an interest in matters relating to the Footpath Group & Chairman's Expenses

EXEMPT BUSINESS – RESOLVED that the press and public be excluded from the meeting (or part thereof) during consideration of the business set out below on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined within part 1 of the Local Government Act 1972 Schedule 12A and more particularly specified in paragraphs 14 and 1. Proposal made by Cllr. Mrs. Hurd, seconded by Cllr. Mrs. Traves and carried with a unanimous vote.

The Clerk provided the following notes for councillors to consider prior to the budget meeting:

RESERVES: I can report that the Town Council has a deficit of £1017.83 on my **amended** reserves at 30.11.18. I think that this is a reasonable result given that we had an unexpected expense of nearly £2000 for repairing the sewage pump at the Andy Young Pavilion this summer. We also had a larger than expected service/repair bill for the Mitsubishi vehicle & we have paid £500 as a donation to CPRE that wasn't budgeted for and we have replaced a shed in the Recreation Ground that we did not anticipate replacing.

PUBLICATION – If your Town or Parish has a Precept greater than £140,000, you are required to provide a breakdown of expenditure and income to the public. Each Town or Parish that has set a precept over £140,000 in the past will be sent a separate return to complete. If your Town or Parish is likely to exceed this amount for the first time in 2018/2019, please contact us (details below).

Extract of email sent by WC Financial Planning 5.11.18

LOCAL GOVERNMENT FINANCE SETTLEMENT - NALC has advised that the technical consultation, over the summer, set out no plans to extend council tax referendums to local councils, in line with the three-year deal announced in January. Therefore, you need to bear in mind that we have only 3 years before we are likely to be capped.

NALC has been calling for earlier timings of the local government finance settlement, to help local councils plan their budgets.

SECTION 106 FUNDING - Had a meeting with Colin Brown from Wiltshire Council 25.10.18 to talk about the S.106 agreement for the Woodlands Road Development.

Terms of the Agreement

The Section 106 agreement states that Fry & Son will pay us

- £48,264.00 of the Off Site Facilities contribution (Index Linked from date agreement signed on 19.3.2015) prior to the **Occupation** of the 20th Dwelling on Phase 1 of the Development
- £61,352.00 of the Off Site Facilities Contribution (Index Linked from date agreement signed on 19.3.2015) prior to the **occupation** of the 20th dwelling on the Phase 2 Development
- £68,501.00 of Open Space Contribution (Index Linked from date agreement signed on 19.3.15) prior to the **occupation** of 20th dwelling on the Phase 1 Development
- £87,077.00 of Open Space Contribution (Index Linked from date agreement signed on 19.3.15) prior to the **occupation** of 20th dwelling on the Phase 2 Development

Off Site Facilities Contribution means a financial contribution towards the provision of youth and adult open space & leisure facilities in the area to serve the development

Open Space Contribution means a financial contribution towards the provision, maintenance and improvement of Open Space in the parish of Mere (Open Space means public open space, including play areas and amenity land in the parish of Mere.

The money has to be spent within 10 years of receipt. After the expiry of a period of 10 years any contribution which remains unexpended for the purpose for which it was paid to the Council shall, unless committed by a binding contract between the Council and a third party, be repaid to the paying party upon request.

How the money is paid - The money is paid to Wiltshire Council. Wiltshire Council raise an invoice to the developers when they have reached the payment deadline. (Wiltshire Council do not have the staff to go out and check when the 19th dwelling is occupied and so would rely upon us to inform them and then they will go out there and check.) Wiltshire Council would prefer to pay the money straight to the Town Council once it is received and enter into a side agreement with the Town Council. This side agreement is a legal agreement in which the Town Council assures Wiltshire Council that it will spend the money within the criteria of the S.106 agreement.

C. G. Fry & Son have indicated that they would expect the 20th dwelling to be occupied in April/May next year.

The Clerk had highlighted possible uses for these funds in her report below.

Cllr. Colman suggested that the Town Council should set up a sub-committee to make recommendations as to how the above funding should be allocated. It was agreed that the suggestion of a sub-committee would be put to the Town Council at a future meeting.

The draft figures prepared by the Clerk and presented to members prior to the meeting resulted in a precept increase of 3.5% per. Cllr. Jordan said that the state pension will increase by 2.6% next year and said that if members were to take the Clerk's draft figures and increase income or decrease expenses by £1250 it would bring it down to an overall increase of 2.6% which he felt would be acceptable as it would be in line with the state pension increase. Members agreed to consider the Clerks notes (in black) and make the following recommendations (in red) on the list of expenses and income as follows:

EXPENSES

ADMIN

Audit Costs – regime changed last year to Limited Assurance Regime & our external auditors are PFK Littlejohn LLP. At present time audit fee depends on level of income/expenditure and whether or not there are any questions raised to the external auditor by members of the public etc. Our Income is £168,836 at present and there is a

possibility that we could exceed £200k for the financial year which would entail us having an intermediate review rather than a basic limited assurance review. Obviously this requires more work to prepare more documents for submission to the auditors but will also incur a higher fee (£600 for income bracket £200k - £300k). **Recommend budget £800**

Election Costs – I had been led to believe that the Town Council would need to share the costs of the May 2017 election but no invoice has been received from Wiltshire Council. However, if we need a by-election during the course of the year it could cost as much as £3500. Last year members agreed to reduce our reserves from £3500 to £500. **Recommend budget £500**

Legal Services – We have reserves of £2250. We need to pay legal expenses for renewal of leases for car parks & public toilets and we have already received a quotation of £750 for this. However, the croquet club and youth club leases are due for renewal in 2019 – if they are straightforward renewals then I would imagine that the cost would be in the region of £500 each (Sonya getting quotes). Also office lease expires in 2020. Therefore there will be a need to budget to add reserves for future legal costs. **Recommend budget £1000**

Staff & Councillor training – Training needs assessment:

JS – currently taking PA1 & PA6 pesticide spraying course -

BR – failed trailer test once and didn't turn up second time. Has been informed that he now needs to do training again and test and pay for it himself. However, members felt that this should be reassessed after a period of mentoring (see CONFIDENTIAL BUSINESS below) and that it may be difficult for BR to find the funds to carry out the training and that the Town Council should pay for the training if given the confidence that BR can achieve targets.

JS - First Aid at Work but this expires in March 2019 so needs to renew – cost £70 + Vat per person

The following is more of a wish list of training and development courses, subject to available funding:

JS & BR - Cherry Picker - £450 (2 people) + £80 (2 certificates) + hire of cherry picker

JS & BR – certificates in ride-on mowers £500 for both

JS & BR – Ride on mowers - £225 + VAT per person

JS & BR - Strimmers @ £180 each

JS & BR – working at height (subject to insurance restrictions) – £350

BR – NRSWA (Signing, Lighting & Guarding) @ £175

JS & BR – NRSWA (Operatives Course) @ £695

Recommend budget £1500

PR & Data Protection – I assume we have to register annually. We need to update & continue our GDPR work and need to do more work on this to reflect CCTV. **Recommend budget £60**

ANDY YOUNG PAVILION

Equipment & Furniture – Last year it was recommended that the reserves should be reduced by £2000 to £450 and only £200 was budgeted. It was agreed that reserves would be replenished at the next budget meeting.

Recommended budget £200.

Footpaths & Car Park – We have £1420 in reserve and our ultimate aim is to tarmac the car park although this will cost a tremendous amount of money. **I have wondered if it may be possible to use S.106 Woodlands Road off-site funding towards this project and have suggested adding £500 (same as last year) to budget. Recommended budget £500.**

Maintenance/Repairs – in 2017/18 year we had a £1600 bill for repairs to the boiler and in 2018/19 we have suffered with a £1700 bill for repairs to the sewage pump. It seems that the pavilion is reaching that age now when it needs more money spent on repairs & maintenance & it is looking a little tired. The Bowls Club have asked if the Town Council could get the building redecorated (inside and out). Would suggest that we budget a further £2000 and if we get no maintenance issues by October 2019 then we ask local decorators for quotes and to carry out work before end of 2019/20 financial year. **Committee agreed.**

BAND HUT – Last year it was recommended to retain reserves of £1000 and to budget a further £250 as it was pointed out that if the roof needed replacing then it would cost a lot of money and reserves needed to be built up..

Suggest budget a further £250 to add to reserves. However, I am aware that Railway Modellers Club have some proposals and may want a grant/donation from the Town Council. **I wonder if S.106 Woodlands Road off-site funding could be allocated towards this project.** **Recommend budget £250.**

BOWLING GREEN – Last year we agreed to retain reserves of £500 and make no further budget allocation.

BUILDINGS

Chapels – Last year it was agreed to retain reserves of £5150 and to budget a further £1000 for the chapels. Chapels in state of dilapidation/structural movement possible issue. Suggest budget a further £1000. **Committee agreed.**

Clock Tower – the Town Council spent nearly £16k refurbishing the Clock Tower during 15/16 financial year which diminished reserves. Reserves should be built back up again and now stand at £2470. Suggest budget a further £1000. **Committee agreed.**

Clock Tower Island – Last year it was agreed to reduce reserves by £1000 to £690 and budget a further £200. **Recommended to budget a further £200 to add to reserves.**

Jubilee Garden Walls – they are in need of some work. Reserves currently stand at £1000 and I think that this should be sufficient given that A. McCann has quoted £500 to do walls at Castle Street Car Park.

Pennybank Lane Walls – Last year it was noted that part of the brick wall on the eastern side of Pennybank Lane had been removed and replaced by a fence. Upon investigation it turned out that Mr. James Chalke had bought the property and had removed the wall believing it to be his. He said he has kept the brick and would be happy for the Town Council to rebuild the wall?!? **Recommended to budget further £200 to add to reserves.**

War Memorial – We have refurbished the War Memorial during the 2018/19 financial year at a cost of £6294.37 towards which we received a grant of £4460 from the War Memorials Trust. Reserves have now depleted and should be built up again. **Recommended to budget £500.**

CAPITAL PROJECTS

Vehicle & trailer – We purchased the Mitsubishi in 2015 for £5850. I have no reason to believe it is on its last legs but money should be budgeted for replacement in due course. The grounds staff have also identified a wish **for an ATV like Gillingham Town Council has but this could possibly be purchased using S.106 funds.** The grounds staff have also suggested that the Town Council might like to consider selling the portable floodlight unit. This requires some repair work (one lens gone, winch cable snapped, fuel line gone and needs new battery) but it has not been used for at least 2 years and is taking up space in their shed. **Members recommended that the Town Council should seek to sell the portable floodlight unit and that any funds received can be added to reserves. Also to budget a further £1000 to add to reserves.**

Grounds machinery & equipment – The grounds staff have had to purchase a new chainsaw and hedgetrimmer this year. Other grounds machinery which they are purchasing this year are a pole saw (£200ish) a power brush for their multi-tool (£200ish) and a leaf blower for the street orderly (Cliff) approx. cost £220 [not buying this now as we have discussed and decided that current leaf blower should be shared]. It should be noted that if the ride-on mower or tractor needed replacing then it would cost more than the reserves we have available (currently £9375). Suggest budget £3000 again this year to add to reserves. **Committee agreed.**

Office equipment – The Town Clerk's computer replaced in 2016/17 financial year and Clerks Assistants computer purchased in 2013/14 financial year. Suggest add £200 to reserves for replacements as and when necessary. **Committee agreed.**

Seats & benches – the Town Council's policy is to have these donated. We have had two seats donated this year – one on Castle Hill and one in new cemetery. We have another stone seat that we will be erecting along Kingsmere once tree work is completed and we have just ordered another donated seat that will be situated in Children's Play Area in Recreation Ground. This will be replacing an existing metal bench which, I am hoping, we can refurbish and relocate nearer to the skate park.

Play Equipment for Castle Hill Play Area – The multi-play unit was purchased in 2014, using Policy R2 funds and the swings had been refurbished a few years prior. However, the low level wooden trailway is now quite old. Last year

members agreed that funds should be budgeted in order to consider replacement in the future. **It could be possible to use off-site S.106 funds for this. Recommended to budget further £500 to add to reserves.**

Outdoor Gym Equipment – The Town Council will be using the £4000 reserves (£1000 of which came from Tesco Bags for Help initiative) in order to level the site. The proposed project is to provide more aesthetic boundary treatment, some outdoor gym equipment (4 or 5 pieces) some calisthenics equipment, an outdoor table-tennis table, solar lighting, CCTV and possible canopy to provide shelter from rain. We are confident that we can source some funding for the project and it will be easier to get like-for-like quotations when the site is flattened. **It may, however, be necessary to use some off-site S.106 funds in order to act as seed money for other grants.** Suggest no budget.

Public Access Defibrillator – We had intended to install a new defibrillator in the telephone kiosk in The Square. However, last year members felt that this was an unnecessary expense considering that there was already a PAD nearby in Castle Street and reserves were removed. Do we want to resurrect this (it seems a shame that we have a telephone kiosk without a purpose). **Cllr. Jeans said that he would see if this could be raised on the Mere Forest Charity agenda to see if funding could be allocated although he pointed out that the Town Council would need to write in to submit a request for funding. He also said that the Area Board would give £50 towards this. The Clerk pointed out that the cost of a defibrillator recently purchased at West Knoyle was £2020. It was therefore agreed to budget £500 to act as seed funding.**

Speed Indicator Device – new solar powered SID purchased this year at a cost of £1867 although we received a grant from WC for £1500 towards this at the end of the last financial year. I have received requests for more SIDS around Mere. **Committee agreed that there was no need to purchase another SID during the coming financial year.**

CAR PARKS

Salisbury Street Car Park – Rates – the rates for the Salisbury Street Car Park include rates for the Public Toilets (I presume) – the rate bill says car park & premises. The Chancellor, Philip Hammond, announced, in his autumn Budget speech this year, that business rates on public toilets would end (something that NALC has been campaigning for). This measure needs new legislation so is unlikely to be put in place voluntarily by taxing authorities. However, we have asked Wiltshire Council what their intentions are for 2019 business tax on public toilets but they have said that they cannot answer this question yet.

Maintenance – known maintenance is on the walls in Castle Street Car Park and estimated cost is £500. This would leave us with reserves of £3650. Suggest budget a further £500. **Committee agreed.**

CASTLE HILL

Flag Pole - Cllr. Jeans explained that the wire to haul the flag up the pole had broken and that the Town Council would need to find someone to put the new wire on. We have reserves of £830. **Recommended to budget a further £200**

Sign/Information Board – the Information board has disintegrated and needs replacing. However, we are having difficulties in finding the original source of the artwork to get prices. The Clerk said that the sign was commissioned by Wiltshire Wildlife. **Cllr. Rodney Coward said that the sign was produced by a company in Churchfields Industrial Estate in Salisbury. Recommend budget of £200 to get information board replaced.**

Tree Management – the tree management reserves will be used up on the work we are having done this winter. Therefore budget £500 to rebuild reserves. **Committee agreed.**

Castle Hill Environment Plan/HLS Scheme – There are no reserves remaining. I am hoping that our grounds staff will have the opportunity to get onto Long Hill this winter to carry out some of the remaining work within the HLS Scheme.

CEMETERY

Rates – last year we were worried about a potential rate increase on the cemetery when indications from the valuation suggested that they would increase significantly. We therefore budgeted extra in anticipation but our rate

bill did not reflect this increase. Suggest we keep remaining funds in reserve and reduce budget to £550. That way, if rates do increase, we should have enough to cover the costs. **Committee agreed.**

Walls, railings & footpaths – The work carried out by the Youth Offenders Team on the railings a couple of years ago never got completed. The grounds staff carried out some refurbishment work on the main footpath last year at a cost of £850 and I am aware that they would like to extend this work further out to other footpaths within the old cemetery – time permitting. Suggest we add £500 to reserves of £1160. **Committee agreed.**

Tree management – the tree management reserves will be used up on the work we are having done this winter. **Recommended to budget a further £250 to rebuild reserves.**

Ground & weed management – we have had to spend some money this year in buying in top soil to fill the cracks in the cemetery that were created during the dry summer. **Recommended to budget £200 to rebuild reserves.**

Water Rates – Cllr. Jeans said that he had received one or two complaints about the water being left on when filling the bowser resulting in the bowser overflowing and water being wasted. It was suggested that the Town Council should purchase an automatic shut off system so that the bowser does not get overfilled.

NEW CEMETERY

New gates & drive – Last year members were reminded that the Town Council had aspirations of installing a driveway and new gates into the new cemetery in line with the driveway and gates to the old cemetery but that this would be an expensive project and probably not within reach given the current financial climate. However, it was agreed to retain reserves of £1000 and make no further budget. **Recommended to make no budget again.**

Drainage & paths – Although it had been agreed to start rebuilding reserves for the next phase of necessary drainage & path works, members felt that no budget should be made last year. Therefore we only have £2000 in reserve. When do we anticipate having to carry out next lot of drainage/footpath work? **Could S.106 off site funding be used for this?** **Recommended to budget a further £1500 to build reserves.**

CHANGING ROOMS

Electricity – Please remember that the office electricity supply (which provides heating as well as lighting/computer comes from the changing rooms supply so this is not all football club usage.

Gas – Last year the gas used in the changing rooms cost us £705. The football club are now training at Gillingham and I have noticed a reduction in the gas use. Would suggest that we reduce reserves and we reduce budget slightly to £1000. **Committee agreed.**

Maintenance/Repair – Last year we removed £1000 from reserves leaving only £710. We had a minor water leak this year which needed repairing and we now have a new boiler service contract with Britchards. It would be nice to get the changing rooms decorated in the near future as ceilings are all flaking & peeling. Suggest we budget £460 to add to reserves to allow for maintenance/repairs and if enough left over towards end of financial year, we get some decoration done. **Committee agreed.**

Water & sewerage – as Gas above. I have noticed a reduction in water costs. Suggest reduce reserves but make a slight increase on budget. **Committee agreed.**

Water testing – we are in communication with the schools water testing contractors about providing a service for us for an annual check and risk assessment on the boiler. (Our grounds staff carry out regular weekly temperature tests). Suggest retain reserves. **Committee agreed.**

Croquet & Boules Club – I have put £1500 budget allocation here as I am slightly worried about the future of the club and am concerned that the Town Council is going to be left with an area of land that needs maintenance. **Recommended budget of £1500**

DUCHY MANOR GROUNDS

Maintenance – We are responsible for the land down to the river at the bottom of the grounds, beyond the fence. A few years ago we got contractors in to come and do some maintenance work and tree thinning, scrub clearance. Suggest it probably ought to be done again. Therefore budget £400 to add to reserves. **Committee agreed.**

Tree Management - the tree management reserves will be used up on the work we are having done this winter.
Recommended budget of £500.

EVENTS – not aware of any events in 2019.

FOOTPATHS

Seed money to tarmac Burton Footpath – We have £1000 in reserve to act as seed money to tarmac Burton Path. Suggest we budget a further £500 towards this. **Committee agreed. Cllr. Jordan explained that the footpath group were trying to submit a bid for lottery funding to resurface Burton Path. Cllr. Jeans said that he would like to allocate a small percentage of this funding to paint white lines along the footpath bit of White Road behind the Social Club so that the footpath is clearly defined thereby making it safer for children/parents when getting to and from school.**

Fingerpost Signs – I believe that the Area Board still has grant funding for fingerpost signs and the grounds staff would like to do some more. The grant will not cover the costs so I suggest we budget £250 to cover extra costs.
Committee agreed.

GROUNDS EXPENSES

Fuel & Oil – Fuel expenses have been higher than anticipated. Presumably because of increase in fuel prices. (NB fuel consumption is much lower in the winter – in 4 month period between 1.12.17 and 31.3.18 we used £970)
Recommended budget of £3000.

Health & Safety

Tree Inspection – We paid £2000 for a professional tree inspection in 2017/18 financial year and we ought to have this done every 5 years, although, in theory, it shouldn't cost us as much as the first one did because the first one entailed all the plotting & mapping, tagging & numbering etc. JS has been on a visual tree inspection course and so is able to supplement the 5-yearly professional tree inspection and provide interim reports. **Recommended to budget a further £400 this year.**

Huntsgate (Walnut Road) Play Area – Last year, it was agreed to budget £1000 to add to reserves in order to build up funds for repairs and replacements in the Walnut Road Play Area. The reserves did stand at £2098.78 but I have reduced this to £1000 as, given that we are now certain that funding from the Woodlands Road development can be used for the refurbishment of the Walnut Road Play Area, I thought that this balance of reserves would be unnecessary. However, you may like to rethink this as we need to consider timing etc. **However, I now have quotations for complete refurbishment works to this play area which can be funded from S.106 on-site funds.**
Committee agreed with the Clerk's suggestions but asked her to liaise with Mark Cassidy in the New Year on play equipment options and timing etc.

Kingsmere /Longhill Open Space – Some of you may remember that when the Kingsmere estate was built and the open space was transferred to us, we were given a sum of money (as part of a S.106 agreement) to help us look after the land. Each year, I do a breakdown of costings taken from the groundsmans timesheets and deduct the expenses from this sum of money and we will use up the last of this money during the year so we now need to think about allocating funds and setting budgets for this land: Tree work, fencing & hedge cutting etc. **Recommended to budget £500 for tree works and £400 for fencing/hedge cutting etc.**

MUGA – Floodlights – You will recall that we installed 1 LED light to replace one of the floodlights two years ago and this had been pretty successful and the Council had agreed to continue this programme as and when the floodlights stop working. **Members agreed that there was enough funds in reserve to continue this programme as necessary.**

NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

I am not aware that the Neighbourhood Plan needs funding from the Town Council.

Payroll – see under CONFIDENTIAL BUSINESS

PUBLIC TOILETS

Update on lease – after reminding WC again, we have heard on 7.11.18 that Legal team are drafting documents and discussing whether it should be one lease or two separate ones and we should be hearing from them shortly!

Security – I have absolutely no idea what costs will be involved in providing infrared CCTV in the car park on the public toilets. **Recommended to increase reserves to £1000.**

Refurbishment Costs – Last year we agreed to budget £11,771 in order to allow for refurbishment costs as identified by local builders and also to replace the Wallgate wash units. The Wallgate wash units are now obsolete and we cannot renew our maintenance contract on them. We could replace these, however, before the other refurbishment work is carried out. I have added £600 to costs to allow for inflation etc. I have been reluctant to carry out any of this work without the lease in place – **Members agreed that no refurbishment work should be carried out until the lease is in place.**

Drainage Costs – have added £400 to allow for inflation. I have been reluctant to carry out any of this work without the lease in place. **Members agreed that no drainage work should be carried out until the lease is in place.**

RECREATION GROUND

Play Equipment – Last year we added £500 to build up reserves for replacement play equipment and I pointed out that the multi-purpose unit with slide was now extremely old and had required a number of repairs in recent years. We now have reserves of £3130 which would not be sufficient to replace this unit. **However, I think it possible that we could use some of the S.106 off-site funds towards replacing equipment in the Recreation Ground** so you may not want to budget extra or you may even want to remove some reserves. **Recommended to retain existing reserves.**

Tennis Courts – We agreed, a few years ago, that we would continue setting aside some money to build up reserves for refurbishment of tennis courts in future. We now have £1200. **Recommended to budget £400**

Trees - - the tree management reserves will be used up on the work we are having done this winter (which has already been quoted for) However, I would also like to add some more tree work for the Recreation Ground and that is to crown lift the TPO trees on the eastern boundary – both sides. So that the farmer can get underneath with tractor etc. **Recommended budget of £1000.**

Youth Club – Last year the Town Council recommended that the reserves of £3320 be reduced by £1000 and only budgeted £500. We now have reserves of £2805. **Recommend budget a further £500.**

RIVERS

Some of the allocated reserve money is that which has been awarded to the Rivers Group as a grant.

SECTION 137

The limit of expenditure for S.137 during 2018/19 is £7.86 per elector (7.86 X 2392 = £18,801.12)

Last year the S.137 grants and donations were set at the same level as the previous year. **Cllr. Jeans said that he had attended a Youth Club meeting where it was revealed that the younger youth are often intimidated by the older youth when using the skate park and a scheme of supervising the younger youth was mentioned. Cllr. Jeans said that he thought this was a good idea and wondered if the Council could sponsor this project, either through the Leisure Credit Scheme or some other scheme. It was recommended to increase the Leisure Credit Scheme donation to £665 but to write and say that we would hope that the extra funding would allow Seeds4Success to provide some supervision for younger youth to use the skate park at certain times.**

STREET CLEANING

Commercial Waste Collection – Wiltshire Council have contracted out this service and we now have a direct contract with Hills Waste. However, I have noticed that on their last invoice they have charged us for excess bags/weight. The grounds staff tell me that they struggle when there are events in Mere such as Carnival & Remembrance because there is more litter and they can't get it all in our bin. We also have problems with local residents dumping rubbish bags in the car park and also local residents putting their household waste in our litter bins in the car parks. CCTV should help with this problem. If we need to have another bin to accommodate extra rubbish then it is going to cost another £1300. **Recommended to increase budget to £1300 to allow for existing contract to be maintained next year and to monitor situation with regards the necessity for an extra bin. Also to seek new quotations from contractors.**

FENNEL ROAD/LOVAGE WAY OPEN SPACE

Last year I reminded members that the reserves set aside for this 'Play Area' was a commuted sum from the developers to provide play equipment in the play area for the site. However, after consultation with residents once the development was built, it was clear that a play area was not desired in that location and it was felt that the Recreation Ground play area was within close proximity. The Clerk pointed out that the commuted sum had been reduced over the years on maintenance & grass cutting of the play area at White Road. Last year, the Town Council recommended to reduce the reserves by £4000 in lieu of the funding that has been set aside for the outdoor gym equipment in the old swimming pool area at Duchy Manor. I have had one resident of White Road Gardens approach me to say that they would like some play equipment for young children on the site. **Cllr. Colman said that he had been approached by several families who wanted play equipment on the site.**

Road Name Signs – Cllr. Jeans said that there were 3 roads in the town with no road signs. It was agreed to budget £100 to act as seed funding for grants towards new road name signs.

INCOME

Allotments – We sent a year's notice to all allotment holders in March 2017 and a 10% increase was applied to all allotment rents w.e.f. March 2018.

Cemetery (Burial fees & charges) – Last year we increased all burial fees & charges by 3% (rounded up or down) and it was **recommended to do the same again for 2019/20.**

Croquet & Boules Club Rent – Concerned about likelihood of receiving next year's rental income. As stated in expenses (above) – lease is due for renewal in 2019. Last year it was recommended that their rent should be reduced to £250 for 2018/19. **Recommended that no reduction be applied for 2019/20 unless approach made by Club.**

Floral Sponsors – invoices have just been sent out to businesses.

Sports Clubs fees – Last year it was recommended that all sports clubs should be asked to increase their donations by 3% (as is the Town Council's policy) and that an invoice should be sent to the two football clubs again this year, requesting a further contribution of £250 each towards the extra expenditure incurred on gas/water/electricity for changing rooms. **Recommended to repeat**

Bowls Club – Last year it was recommended to ask the Mere Bowls Club for a financial contribution in view of the fact that they have use of the Andy Young Pavilion and the car park and to mention that the Town Council was thinking about £500. I have investigated the renewal of their lease and I have established that they have a long lease up to the year 2061 (not established whether rent is mentioned yet)

Sponsorship pledges by businesses for car parks – We are in the process of sorting out the sponsorship signage. Once we have proofs of the signs from signmakers then we will send these out to the businesses with the invoices. We had pledges to the value of £4700 when we sent out our letters earlier this year.

Recommendation by Budget Committee: To approve a Precept of £146206.38 on Wiltshire Council for the 2019/20 financial year which will result in a 5.91% increase or £6.98 per year on the Band D charge of the Town Council portion of the Council Tax

Meeting closed at 22.33 pm