

Minutes of the meeting of the Budgets & Staffing Committee of the Parish Council held at 10.00am on 18th November 2008 in the Parish Rooms, Townhouse Road, Costessey at which the following were present:-

Mr Amis – Chairman

Mr Smith – Vice-Chairman Mrs Bates Mr Todd Mr Cockaday Mr Denby Mrs Jackson – Parish Clerk

1/08 **Election of Chairman** Mr Amis was unanimously elected to the Chair.

2/08 **Apologies** Mr Dinneen and Mr Bedford.

3/08 **Election of Vice-Chairman** Mr Smith was unanimously elected Vice- Chairman.

4/08 **Declarations of interest** – None.

5/08 Consideration of matters raised in intermediate audit 2008

There were two matters raised by the audit:-

a. The need to review the Financial Risk Assessments. The clerk said she would look into the assessments of other Councils to see what matters should be addressed.

b. Consideration of an increase in Public Liability from £5m to £10m. The Clerk had sought a quote for the additional premium but this had not yet been received.

6/08 Consideration of projects for 2008/9

a. Tennis Court Fencing – The Clerk said that both Council’s Health and Safety Advisor and the Play Equipment Inspector had drawn attention to the fact the tennis court fencing was in a very bad state of repair. The Clerk had sought a quote for replacing the three sides. **RESOLVED** to decide whether to repair or just take down the fence when the quote is received.

b. Rebuilding St Edmunds Churchyard Wall The Clerk had met with the Diocesan Architect who thought repairs could be done for a reasonable price. The architect has recommended a mason and a quote for the works was being sought.

c. Felling in Greenhills Wood. It was hoped some grant funding for these works could be gained but there would be a cost to the Parish Council. A provisional sum for the works was approximately £8000.

d. Costessey Centre. Possible need to take out loans to fund in the short to medium term.

7/08 Consideration of arrangements for hire of Cricket wicket for 2009 and fees for same

RESOLVED to recommend that Council takes over the maintenance of the Cricket wicket on very strict terms and conditions but the costs be reflected in the fees charged. The Clerk was asked to draw up a provisional Terms of Agreement with the Head Groundsman and also an accurate figure for the costs of maintaining the wicket in this financial year and bring this to the next meeting of this Committee. It was noted that if Council did assume responsibility for maintaining the Cricket Wicket a new mower would need to be purchased the maximum cost of which would be £4500.

8/08 **Consideration of hire fees and charges for 2008/9.** RESOLVED to recommend a rounded 5% increase in line with inflation on fees as per the lists attached to these minutes. In addition the Duke of Edinburgh Office should be £2470; the Police - £400 but the party hire deposit should remain unchanged at £60.

9/08 **Other matters which may affect budgets** Mr Cockaday said that from 1st October 2008 all public buildings had to have Energy Certificates. This, he thought, would mean the buildings would have to be professionally assessed which would of course carry a cost. Mr Cockaday said he would research the matter and give the information to the Clerk.

10/08 **Consideration of precept requirement for 2008** The Committee noted that the projected figures submitted by the Clerk would leave very little surplus once the recommended 6 months day to day expenditure which is recommended to be carried forward, had been removed. However, the Committee felt that in the current economic climate they must stick to inflation or below if possible. As South Norfolk had not yet issued the Tax Base figures it was difficult to know at this time what increase would be realised at the current rate of inflation, ie 5.2% The Committee therefore asked if it would be possible for the Clerk in conjunction with the accountant to draw up a provisional budget but provide a varying contingency to give a 5.2%, 4.9% and 4.7% increase to Band D so that the Committee will be able to assess which it feels will be sufficient for its needs.

11/08. **Other Finance Issues – Verge Cutting.** Concerns were expressed about the standard of verge cutting this year. It was recommend the Clerk seek at least 4 quotations for next year based on the specification of last year but with the proviso that street furniture and verge edges should be strimmed as least every other cut and there should be no weed killers used. The Committee also recommended the current Contractor be asked to do one further cut.

12/08 The next meeting was arranged for Tuesday 2nd December at 10am in the Parish Rooms.

The meeting closed at 12.15pm

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