

Datchet Parish Council

MINUTES OF THE EXTRA ORDINARY MEETING HELD IN THE VILLAGE HALL, ON MONDAY 9TH JANUARY 2023 AT 19:00

Present: Cllr. D. Buckley (Chairman) Cllr. E. Larcombe, Cllr. Mrs. M. Davies,
Cllr I. Thompson, Cllr. A. Verma Cllr. Mrs M. Fitzgerald
Mrs J. Freeland

Apologies: Cllr. A. Clemens, Cllr. D. Loveridge, Borough Cllr. D Cannon

Public: There were 2 members of the public present.

Recording of this meeting is available on Datchet Parish Council's Website

22.131 Announcements

None.

22.132 Public Questions

Resident 1 –The resident does not want the precept put up for the following reasons i) the current cost of living crisis, ii) Datchet has a high level of deprivation and iii) funds will be due from the Community Infrastructure Levy for the development in London Road.

Resident 2 – Why should the precept be increased when there are sufficient funds in the bank accounts and changes can be made to the budget to help.

The Chair advised that this would be answered during the meeting.

22.133 Declaration of Interest

None

22.134 Lead Members Report and Recommendations

The Lead Member referred to her report which had been circulated to all councillors and was available on the website.

She commented that in order to remove the deficit on the draft budget the precept would need to be increased by £10,840, which is around 9p per week on a band D property.

It was also noted that more money should be moved into the reserve account to ensure there is enough funds to keep the Council running should this be necessary, she also noted that the interest rate was better in this account and would therefore increase the income.

The Chair advised that all lead members had been involved, in detail, with the preparation of the draft budget and was confident that in-depth discussions had taken place and that the proposed spending and projects would be carried out.

The Chair would like to add a recommendation of the option of borrowing money for larger projects instead of raising the precept, although the deficit needs to be made up.

The delayed projects need to be carried out as there is a need for these projects to happen as costs are increasing.

The lead member commented on the Ditch Phase 2 project, which Cllr Thompson elaborated on and advised that this had been looked at prior to the pandemic and needs re-evaluating and current costings were required and he would progress this and bring it back to the Council, there may be a need for a loan and for the money ear marked to be used to pay this back.

In relation to general grounds work, he advised that there would be increased costs from all sub-contractors and there was a need to keep the precept in line with this.

The lead member commented that at the start of the budget process there had been a deficit of £40,000 but she had managed to bring this down. The precept increase would allow projects to be completed and money to be moved to the reserve account, where it would gain interest.

The Chair asked if interest was in the budget and it was confirmed that it was. The Chair referred to the Ditch project and the possibility of borrowing money and asked what is the money for? Cllr Thompson advised it would cover the preliminary works, and that monies have already been spent on this project, there may not be a requirement for spending all the money on the preliminary works, but he had no up to date prices at the moment, but any residual money can be used to reduce the amount of the project or borrow the full cost of the construction of the project and use this to make the payments on the borrowing costs. He needs to go back to the company for prices. Cllr Davies ask for an idea of costs, Cllr Thompson advised that the original quote was some 6/7 years and materials, methods and costs have since changed but these will be considered when he speaks with the company. The Chair commented that costs have doubled over the last few years.

Cllr Larcombe commented on the possible future need for funds for the River Thames Scheme.

The Chair advised that on the last audit it was noted that the Council needed an investment strategy for the money currently held in the bank accounts.

- i) **To approve the movement of monies for EMR projects to the Recreation Ditch Phase 2 project** – This was proposed by Cllr D. Davies, seconded by Cllr I. Thompson and unanimously agreed.
- ii) **To consider and approve an event for the Kings Coronation and the movement of funds from account codes in the 2022/2023 budget.**
It was proposed by Cllr M. Davies, seconded by Cllr M. Fitzgerald and unanimously agreed for the movement of funds for the Kings Coronation.

22.135 Councillors Questions & Comments

Cllr Buckley commented that in the absence of the lead member for events, that this event would go to a further meeting of the Council once Cllr Clemens has had a meeting with the Fete committee, but would hope that he could rely on more councillors to help and to get involved and support the event.

22.136 Public Questions

Resident 1 – Commented on the £10,000 deficit and the fact that the jetty project had been pushed back and that the money can be used for this. She was advised that monies had been moved from ear marked projects to the recreation ditch project.

Resident 2 – Why put the precept up and put the money in bank accounts to collect interest. He needs a clear vision on what the Council want to do with the money and why.

The Chair commented that the project discussed which may be over 12 months was the recreation ditch project but other projects will be carried out sooner, if the council spends its monies, it will see a deterioration of its money, the issue is how to replace the funds to continue to support the assets and requirements of the Council.

All projects have been discussed at the council meetings many times.

The question from the resident on why the council want the money now, the Chair informed him that there was only one opportunity to ask for the Precept from the Borough and this was now.

The resident requested a copy of the figures and the Chair advised that all residents can see these and they will be on the website on Wednesday 11.01.23.

The meeting closed at 20:03

**THE NEXT FULL COUNCIL MEETING WILL BE HELD ON
MONDAY 16TH JANUARY 2023 AT 7:00PM**

CHAIRMAN