

09-21 CHRISTMAS LIGHTS COMPETITION

The Christmas lights competition, launched in the Council Newsletter issue 105, received entries from 14 individual dwellings and 2 streets. Individuals were asked to consider a donation of £5.00 to enter the competition. Street entries were not given a guide other than the individual entry amount.

A total of £340 was received in donations. This included £100 from individual houses and £240 from the two streets.

Voting received:

Individual dwelling

1 Tylecote Crescent	10
13 Hawkesmore Drive	9.8
15 Green Close	9
54 Oldfields Crescent	8
7 The Uplands	7
33 Tylecote Crescent	7
The Laurels, Coley Lane	7
4 Hillview Grove	7
1 Cliff Road	6
3 Tylecote Crescent	6
11A Pinewood Drive	6
11 Oldfields Crescent	5
12 High Chase Rise	5
46 Hillside Drive	3

Street

Devereux Gardens	10
Green Close	7

RECOMMENDATION

That the Council note that, following voting by residents, that the entry from 1 Tylecote Crescent has been voted the winner of the individual dwelling competition.

That the Council note that, following voting by residents, that the entry from the residents of Devereaux Gardens has been voted the winner of the street competition.

10/21 COUNCILLOR SUPPORT

From Cllr Rattray

Title COUNCILLOR SUPPORT

Issue Poor communications to councillors

Recommendations

Consider and Agree response expectations

I raised this last year however I was unable to attend the meeting, hence not discussed

Background

Agenda items.

- No acknowledgement is received when councillors send proposed agenda items
- No communication is sent if an agenda item is not included, giving reason why

Notification off Absence:

- No acknowledgement is received when councillors send apologies

E-mail requests for information/assistance:

- No acknowledgement is received
- No agreed response times

Supporting Documents.

List support documents detailing pertinent sections if a large document to aid the reader. If there are no supporting documents write 'none'.

11/21 FLAILING OF THE BOUNDARIES OF THE NEW FIELD

From Cllr Rattray

Title FLAILING OF THE BOUNDARIES OF THE NEW FIELD

Issue.

The boundaries have not been maintained and contain a lot of dead wood and plants smothering other plants and hazel bushes (to be used for coppicing)

Recommendations

Consider and Agree proceed to flail the boundaries as a first step the work on the boundaries

Agreeing a budget of £500-£700

Background

Approach to securing boundaries

- Flailing of boundaries c£500
- Agree other removals exposed after flailing, Elder etc
- Agree planting and approach to hazel coppicing
- Planting

Supporting Documents

List support documents detailing pertinent sections if a large document to aid the reader. If there are no supporting documents write 'none'.

12/21 FLOODING

From Cllr Rattray

Title **FLOODING**

Issue

Flooding is an increasing issue in the villages, however there is a problem in trying to understand why the drainage system cannot cope. There does not appear to be a complete set of drainage plans for the villages,

Recommendations

Consider and agree to investigate what would be required to compile a full set of drainage diagrams for the villages

This will help us understand what the issues are and provide evidence when requesting work from County/Severn Trent etc.

Background

Raised this possibility as mentioned in conversations with Andy Young, that he has carried out this exercise for a village before

Supporting Documents

List support documents detailing pertinent sections if a large document to aid the reader. If there are no supporting documents write 'none'.

13/21 CLEAR CENTRAL RESERVATION JPF CARPARK

From Cllr Rattray

Title **CLEAR CENTRAL RESERVATION JPF CARPARK**

Issue

The central reservation will need to be removed as part of the carpark refurb. We will have machinery sitting idle as part of the porosity test, it will save us money if this machinery is used to clear the central reservation.

Recommendations

Consider and Agree to remove the central reservation as part of the porosity exercise

Background

The central reservation will need to be removed as part of the carpark refurb.

Supporting Documents

List support documents detailing pertinent sections if a large document to aid the reader. If there are no supporting documents write 'none'.

14/21 CLEAR LARGE CONIFERS AT JFP

From Cllr Rattray

Title **CLEAR LARGE CONIFERS AT JFP**

Issue

Conifers have not been maintained and have grown very large smothering other trees and plants.

Recommendations

Consider and Agree to proceed with removal of the Conifers at JPF as a first step the work on the boundaries

Agreeing budget spend to clear the conifers of £700 - £1000

Note: this does not include removing stumps, decision on whether to remove to be made as part of addressing the boundaries

Background

Approach to securing boundaries

- Remove conifers c£750
- Secure Lichfield trust track, path
- Agree other remove and planting and boundaries
- Remove other trees, fencing, hedges etc.
- Planting

Supporting Documents

List support documents detailing pertinent sections if a large document to aid the reader. If there are no supporting documents write 'none'.

15/21 MEETING DOCUMENTS

From Cllr Rattray

Title **MEETING DOCUMENTS**

Issue

There is no naming convention and not all relevant documents are included in the meeting folder.

(Note: This is all part of Document Management, a project being overseen by Wendy, I believe. However would be helpful if this issues is addressed now)

Recommendation

Consider and agree the following as a minimum for all meetings.

All agenda items and supporting documents should be in the meeting folder.

Document naming, when documents are put into the folders: the documents

- Names should not contain the word template in the title
- Names should contain the agenda item number in the title
- Within the document the heading should reflect the agenda item name.
- Background.

Background

This an extract from the December 16th meeting folder

(Note: A list of file names followed.)

16/21 NEWSLETTER

From Cllr Rattray

Title **NEWSLETTER**

Issue

Production of newsletters always appears to be rushed and mistakes some times are not picked up (Note: I raised a paper on this last year, and unfortunately I could not attend the meeting and hence the paper was not discussed)

This is in no way intended to demean the effort put in by Annette in particular in getting the Newsletter to press. Improved processes should alleviate some of the stress.

Recommendations

Consider and Agree to document a Newsletter Process and produce Plans

A clear process should be defined/documented showing the steps and approvals required to produce a Newsletter.

As part of the planning and budgeting for the year ahead prepare plans with times and resources for developing and distributing the newsletters

Background

Over the past year or so I seen the following:

- Some newsletters going to FC for approval, other not
- One newsletter was rushed – review/approval was the day before the newsletter was due to go to print, leaving no time for any major changes
- Newsletters we were struggling for articles
- Errors not being picked up before printing and distribution

Supporting Documents

List support documents detailing pertinent sections if a large document to aid the reader. If there are no supporting documents write 'none'.

17/21 BUDGET ASSUMPTIONS

From Cllr Rattray

Title **BUDGET ASSUMPTIONS**

Issue

Assumptions made for each budget item do not appear to be available

Recommendations

Budget assumptions for each item are considered and agreed

I am not sure if this is what actually happens, if so apologies. Needed to make sure.

Background

If assumptions are not documented, performance cannot be measured.

Supporting Documents

List support documents detailing pertinent sections if a large document to aid the reader. If there are no supporting documents write 'none'.

18/21 PRECEPT SETTING

From Cllr Rattray

Title **PRECEPT SETTING**

Issue

It does not appear that there is a document that states how we set a precept (see background where Anthony has responded to my question regarding baseline from Borough). I understand some of it, rather than keep going back to Anthony, I believe that all councillors should understand the process. Hence Agenda Item.

Recommendations

Councillors note the process and that the process is documented for future reference.

Background

- A “tax base” is the number of Band D equivalent dwellings in a local authority area. To calculate the tax base for an area, the number of dwellings in each council tax band is adjusted to take account of any discounts, premiums or exemptions.
- The tax base is used to determine the level of council tax an authority charges each dwelling.
- Some dwellings are subject to a premium especially properties that have been empty for two years or more. Some dwellings are subject to a discount especially those occupied by a single adult, while others are exempt from paying council tax.
- A new tax base is calculated each year and advised to us by Stafford Borough Council (SBC). Generally, the more houses in our parish the higher the tax base figure advised to us, which means we can spread our budget bill between more houses. Unfortunately, the tax base advised to us this year has reduced for the first time since I have been here. We are advised that this is the effect of Covid 19.
- When we finally decide our budget and how much we will have to raise to cover it, we will make some adjustments to our budget figure and then multiply it by the “tax base” figure. This will tell us how much precept to charge for each Band D property in our parish. The resulting figure for each band is then multiplied by its proportion relative to Band D (from 6/9 for Band A to 18/9 for Band H) and so the total across all eight bands is calculated. The figure we advise to SBC for our Band D properties decides how much we will receive in precept for 2021-2022 to run the parish.

Supporting Documents

List support documents detailing pertinent sections if a large document to aid the reader. If there are no supporting documents write ‘none’.

19/21 LENGTHSMEN'S HOURS

From Cllr Bloor

Title

TO CONSIDER WHETHER THE COUNCIL WISHES TO INCREASE THE LENGTHSMEN'S HOURS TO MEET THE REQUIREMENTS OF SERVICES TO BE PROVIDED, TO CONTRACT OUT SPECIFIC TASKS OR A COMBINATION OF THE TWO.

Issue

Over recent years the Lengths men have been employed to undertake certain maintenance tasks in the Parish. These tasks have increased over time particularly since work previously undertaken by the Borough/County has decreased in regularity & the lengths men have taken on the shortfall. Their services have proved to be very popular with the villagers. However, it is now not possible for them to complete all the tasks required in the time available to them. If the Council is to continue to provide the services that have recently undertaken then alternatives need to be considered: a) increase the lengths men's hours &/or number of men employed b) contract out some of the tasks required.

Recommendations

I would recommend that the number of hours allocated for Lengths men to undertake tasks and specific projects identified to be contracted out to another firm based on the complexity of the task & equipment required.

Background

The services of the Lengths men have proved to be very effective and have raised the standard of maintenance around the villages

1. To leave their hours as they are would continue to provide services at their present level. However, this can lead to criticism that not all needs identified are met & services are not equally allocated throughout the villages.
2. Any decision to increase hours is dependent upon whether it is agreed that the Parish Council should undertake Borough/ County responsibilities. If it is felt appropriate that the Parish should not make up any shortfall then the Lengths men can continue to do basic Parish requirements & leave the other Authorities duties undone.
3. There will be a financial implication involved which needs to be assessed.

Supporting Documents

No supporting documents submitted. However, it would be helpful if the hourly rate of pay for a Lengths man & the number of hours presently worked could be supplied in order to assess costs for extra hours.

20/21 TAKING ON WORK FROM SBC AND SCC

From Cllr Bloor

Title

TO CONSIDER & AGREE IN PRINCIPLE WHETHER THE PARISH COUNCIL IS IN FAVOUR OF TAKING ON COMMITMENTS THAT WERE PREVIOUSLY THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE COUNTY/BOROUGH COUNCIL.

Issue

Over the past 2 years Councillors have been made aware that due to financial shortfall the Borough & County Councils will be either reducing or discontinuing certain services. The Parish has already supplemented some of the shortfall in these provisions, most significantly in respect of street & drain clearing. This has tended to be on a 'Needs must' basis and a clear and specified decision has not formally been made on this. The Council needs to make a firm commitment as to what projects & in what circumstances it would consider it to be appropriate/acceptable to take on such commitments.

Recommendations

1. Councillors are invited to consider and agree whether it is acceptable and appropriate in principle to take over part or all of certain specified duties for which the Borough/County Council were previously responsible.
2. If Councillors agree the principle of such actions then it is necessary to specify which duties they would consider to be appropriate to undertake subject to monetary funds being available.
3. It is necessary to establish points 1 & 2 before considering whether to allocate a budget to the planned work/scheme. If Councillors are of the opinion that it is not ethically acceptable or in the Parish's interest to accept the principle of taking over work from the Borough Council then it should not be brought before the Finance Committee.

Background

1. If the parish Council does not establish a firm policy on whether it is acceptable to undertake certain commitments from County/Borough then valuable time will be lost in debating this each time such an issue arises. If we have a clear understanding of what we are prepared to do & under what circumstances then we are in a position to consider such issues quickly & concisely.
2. Undertaking work over and above what the Parish Council currently does will obviously have financial costs. It is not the point of this Agenda item to consider what those costs would be for any particular project but rather if the Council agrees that it is appropriate to consider such projects.
3. If the Council feels that the principle of taking work over is not acceptable then we leave shortfalls in the County/Borough Councils provision undone.

21/21 MAINTENANCE

From Cllr Rattray

Title **MAINTENANCE**

Issue

A project has been identified to look at how we maintain open areas etc. (current focus on JPF) within the villages. A key requirement for the project is knowing what open areas are in the villages and who is responsible for maintaining.

Recommendations. Consider and Agree to survey and document (with photographs) all the open spaces and verges within the villages

This would allow us to define the scope of maintenance by documenting what maintenance is required for each area.

Areas in and around the new houses on Little Tixall Lane should be included in the survey also the area around the new junction and the resurfaced part of the lane itself.

Background

This would also influence any Environmental Land Management Strategy we develop. This is flavour of the month with the government with the potential for funding.

This will also need to identify where areas are not being maintained by those who are responsible for maintenance. Allowing us to challenge those responsible.

We want the villages to be environmentally friendly, wild life friendly, easy to maintain and look nice.

Supporting Documents

List support documents detailing pertinent sections if a large document to aid the reader. If there are no supporting documents write 'none'.