

Frodsham Town Council



**Minutes of an Extraordinary Meeting of
Frodsham Town Council
To be held on Wednesday 20 January 2016 at 7pm
At Castle Park House, Castle Park, Frodsham.**

Present: Cllr Pusey (Chair), Brown, Collins-Doyle, Jones, Martin, Oulton, Pennington, Poulton & Reynolds and Mrs Catt (Town Clerk).

In Attendance: Cllr L Riley and one member of the public.

Meeting 16

No	Item	Note/Decision/Action
178	Apologies	Cllr Ashton, Knowles, Sutton & Wakefield
179	Declarations of Interest	As stated at the meeting on 11 January a Dispensation under s.33 of the Localism Act is in place to allow all Councillors to take part in decisions about budget and precept setting.
180	Agreement on budget requirements for 2016-17	The budget requirement for 2016-17 had been proposed by P&P Committee and accepted by the budget setting meeting on 11 January 2016.
181	Consider and set precept for 2016-17	<p>TC had spoken to the Internal Auditor about the level of reserves it would be appropriate to hold. She explained it was up to the Council to agree appropriate levels and suggested we should use the guidance in the 'Governance & Accountability for Local Councils' guide produced by SLCC which states:</p> <p>"A well-managed council will also look forward beyond the end of the year for which the budget is being set and think about whether there are any substantial commitments that it would be prudent to set aside funds for...</p> <p>Most Councils, therefore, budget to carry forward a balance, to cover contingencies or specific spending plans."</p> <p>Cllr Pusey pointed out that it is impossible to know what is around the corner and gave an example of the Red Lion Bowling Green which had suddenly been under threat when the pub changed ownership and FTC had purchased it to save it for the town. FTC would be discussing options for its office base in coming months and one option might be to build our own facility on one of the parcels of land we own. Having money in reserves gives us more options for the future.</p> <p>Cllr Riley gave an update on CWAC Community Charge setting. There is the potential for them to raise their charges by 4% (approximately £50) - 2% general increase plus an extra 2% for adult & social care services. Nothing had been agreed yet. The Police and Fire services will also be increasing by 2%.</p> <p>Cllr Pusey outline 3 options: Option 3 – was what had been discussed at the last meeting and represented a £2 a year rise (£40.38 precept)</p> <p>Option 2 – Would include £46k from reserves to cover budgeted contingency costs and represented a £24.45 increase (£62.83 precept)</p>

		<p>Option 1 – Didn't include any reserves and the rise would be £37.15 (£75.53 precept).</p> <p>There was lengthy and detailed discussion about these options and each Councillor had an opportunity to express their views. Key points were:</p> <p>Concern about affordability for low-income families. Having no reserves would be irresponsible. We could sell off some of our assets. Cost of Castle Park House too expensive. We don't have the capacity to maximise income potential of CPH. Each committee had already reduced their budgets to a minimum. We could work closer with CWAC and take on new services for a fee including responsibility for the whole house. Any further reductions in budget might mean the loss of our dedicated PCSO, Christmas Festival & lights and reduction in grants to the community. No-one wanted to see the precept rise but there was general acceptance of the financial pressures.</p> <p>Following this discussion an alternative option was proposed and seconded:</p> <p>To include £63k of our cash reserves which would mean an increase of £17.76 above the £2 increase already discussed at the last meeting representing an increase of £19.76 in total (£58.14 precept).</p> <p>Recorded vote:</p> <p>For: Cllrs Pusey, Collins-Doyle, Jones, Martin and Oulton Against: Cllrs Brown, Pennington, Poulton and Reynolds.</p> <p>The proposal was carried.</p>
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Meeting close: 9.05pm.

Signed _____

Dated _____

Town Clerk: Mrs Hazel Catt
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Chairs Initials _____