

Greencroft Parish Council



Jacqui Toase
Clerk to the Council

Tel:- 07931719503

19 Harvey Avenue
The Meadows
Durham
DH1 5ZB

19 September 2017

I hereby summon you to attend
the next Ordinary Meeting of Greencroft Parish Council
which will be held at **Lynwood House**
on **Tuesday 26 September 2017 at 7.00pm.**

Press and public are welcome to attend.

Clerk to the Council

AGENDA

- 1. Apologies for Absence**
- 2. Declarations of Interest**
- 3. Public Participation**
- 4. Minutes of the last meeting**
 - (i) To confirm and approve the minutes of the Ordinary Meeting held 2 August (attached A)**
- 5. Appointment of new Parish Clerk**
- 6. Planning**

None to consider
- 7. Roadworks**
 - (i) A6076 Howden Bank, gas main replacement sent via email – should all be complete**
- 8. Correspondence**
 - (i) Durham Miners Association Pitman's Parliament – sent via email deadline 16 Oct 17**
 - (ii) Dementia Action Alliance – sent via email**
 - (iii) Medium Term Financial Planning – (attached B)**

- (iv) **Clerks and Councils Direct** – magazine received
- (v) **Learning Library** – donation request
- (vi) **LCR** – magazine received
- (vii) **NALC newsletter from S Ragg** – sent via email
- (viii) **HR Training Course from S Ragg** – sent via email

9. Parish Councils Committee

Await minutes from meeting Saturday 16 September. Fly Tipping any problem areas to be reported to Sally to pass to the appropriate officer.

10. Flower Beds and Grass Cutting

11. Clerk Update

- (i) Training Update – None attended
- (ii) Meeting Update – None attended
- (iii) Recreation Area Fence – quotation for repair (attached C)
- (iv) Tree survey – seek quotation

12. Financial Information

13. Budget

See Budget Sheet (attached D)
Current Bank Balance information - £8866.31
Consider budget and precept 2018/19 at next meeting

14. Clerks – Hours Worked and Subsequent Payment

To consider and approve the hours worked in July (10 hours) August (17 hours)

15. Accounts for Payment

None

16. BDO External Audit

Report received – qualified opinion only minor issues no fee to be paid

17. Seat and Fence Inspections

CL to update from monthly inspection

18. Chairperson's Announcements

Tree in recreation area

19. Questions from Members – Information only

To deal with questions submitted by Members. Members are reminded that questions to be asked at the meeting must be submitted to the Clerk by 12 noon on the day preceding the meeting.

20. Date of next meeting

To set the date and time

A

Greencroft Parish Council

Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting held at Lynwood House, Lanchester on
Wednesday 2 August 2017 at 7.00pm

Present Mr J Johnson – Chair
Mr C Lee
Mr D Quayle
Mrs V Self
Mrs J Toase (Clerk)
Mrs D Singleton
Mrs S McDonagh
Cllr O Johnson (Observer)
K McDonagh

Apologies

Mrs D Parry – Apologies Accepted

129/17 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

130/17 Public Participation

None.

131/17 Minutes of the last meeting

(i) **Resolved** - that the minutes of the Ordinary Meeting held on 27 June 2017 confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

132/17 Planning

Resolved – DM/17/01574/FPA Howden Bank Works – members informed planning authorised

133/17 Roadworks

Resolved –Stoneyheap Road Closure for resurfacing 20 to 23 July complete

Resolved – A6076 Howden Bank 7 Aug to 1 Sept Gas Main Replacement 2 way lights

For information only – Station Road to Front Street, Lanchester 10 to 13 August 7am until 7pm temporary road closure for resurfacing

Resolved – Maiden Law Crossroads white line remarking will be undertaken as a matter of urgency by DCC.

Signed.....

Resolved – Tower Road Street Lighting replacement will be done asap (no date available from DCC).

134/17 Correspondence

- (i) **Transparency Funding 2017/18**
Resolved – Cheque received.
- (ii) **Draft Charter between DCC and Local Councils**
Resolved – via email deadline end of July.
- (iii) **CDALC New Elections**
Resolved – received via email.
- (iv) **CDALC – AGM 21 October and Exec Comm nominations**
Resolved – Chair to attend.
- (v) **Training for Cllrs**
Resolved – DS and SMC unable to attend. Await invoice £54
- (vi) **AAP Village Plan 2017/2020**
Resolved – plan from Andy Coulthard shared with members
- (vii) **Clerk and Councils Direct x 2**
Resolved – magazines received

135/17 Parish Councils Committee

Resolved – minutes received from 18 March and agenda for 22 July 2017.

136/17 Flower Beds and Grass Cutting

Resolved – Members agreed payment to P Snowdon of £225 for summer flower beds which have been completed.

137/17 Clerk Update

Resolved – No training attended.

Resolved – No meetings attended.

Unresolved – Await DCC decision on ownership of the brick unused bus shelter. NFA until decision or maintenance required.

Unresolved – Recreation fence insurance confirmed no claim available from underwriter. Chair await response from Police, KMc to seek quote from Emerson Fencing.

Resolved – Chair and Vice Chair delegated to interview and appoint new Clerk.

Unresolved – Medium Term Financial Planning 2018/19 will be on the next meeting agenda.

Resolved – BDO External Audit decision was to accept qualified opinion rather than incur a charge of £30 plus VAT. Await report.

Signed

138/17 Financial Information

Resolved – Transparency Funding Cheque £121.08

139/17 Budget

Resolved – Members agreed monthly budget sheet.

Resolved – Members agreed monthly bank balance information
£8866.31

140/17 Clerks – Hours worked and Subsequent Payment

Resolved – Members approved 11 hours worked June 2017, 10 hours July 2017 and subsequent payment of £410.59 for end of March, April, May and June 2017.

141/17 Accounts for Payment

Resolved – Clerk Salary as detailed above £410.59

Resolved – HMRC - £102.60

Resolved – P Snowdon £225.00 (Summer Flower Beds)

142/17 Seat and Fence Inspection

Resolved – CL inspection undertaken and no major issues. Cleaning of seats undertaken. NFA with Marmax required at present. CL to produce receipt for reimbursement of cleaning products.

Unresolved – Wooden Seats along Tower Road. Chair to take photographs for next meeting which the members can consider replacing or maintenance with Marmax type product.

Unresolved – Clerk delegated to contact Oliver's Tree Surgeon to meet with Chair and undertake a survey/quotation for trees in the Recreation Area.

143/17 Chairperson's Announcements

The Chair thanked all for attending.

Signed

144/17 Questions from Members

No questions.

145/17 Date of Next Meeting

Resolved - that the next Ordinary meeting of the Council be held in Lynwood House, Lanchester on Tuesday 26 September 2017 at 7.00pm.

Meeting ended at 8.00 p.m.

Certified as a true record

Chairman.....

Date.....

Contact: Paul Darby
Direct Tel: 03000 261930
email: paul.darby@durham.gov.uk
Our ref: PD / CM



Mrs J Toase
Greencroft Parish Council
19 Harvey Avenue
The Meadows
Durham
DH1 5ZB

19 July 2017

Dear Parish / Town Clerk

Medium Term Financial Planning and 2018/19 Budget Setting

As you know the Government abolished the national Council Tax Benefit System on 1 April 2013, replacing it with a requirement for local authorities to work with their precepting bodies to establish a Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme (LCTRS).

These schemes provide a discount against Council Tax, rather than a benefit, and as such impact on the Council's overall Council Tax Base and each Parish and Town Council's Council Tax Base.

For the five years that the local scheme has been working, Council Tax Reduction Scheme Grant has replaced the previous Council Tax Benefit subsidy and is payable directly to the Council and the major precepting bodies being Police and Fire. The Council's grant payment includes an element relating to Town & Parish Councils and whilst local authorities are encouraged to pass this on, there is no statutory requirement to do so. The Council has previously made a commitment to pass on this grant, albeit with pro-rata reductions to the core funding reduction applied to the Council by Central Government.

To help with medium term financial plans, in July 2016, based on information published by Government at the time, the Council wrote to all Town & Parish Councils to provide them with indicative forecasts of reductions in LCTRS Grant for the period 2017/18 to 2019/20.

Town and Parish Councils received £1.417m of Council Tax Reduction Scheme Grant from the County Council in 2017/18. This was net of a reclaim of £0.058m in respect of

Resources

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overpayments in 2016/17. The amount of Council Tax Reduction Scheme Grant due in respect of 2017/18 was estimated at £1.470m.

The LCTRS adopted by the Council for 2016/17 was retained in 2017/18 and for your updated information, there are no plans to change it in 2018/19. The Scheme continues to mirror the previous entitlement under the Council Tax Benefit System for all claimants.

No local authority settlement figures have been published for 2018/19 and 2019/20 as yet, however, using the information contained within the final finance settlement for 2017/18, the Council has updated its forecasts with regards to Government grant reductions across the period 2018/19 to 2019/20.

Based on the final settlement figures for 2017/18 the grant due to Town & Parish Councils in 2017/18 was £1.475m, which is slightly higher than the previous forecasts, which had been communicated to you. Given that many Town & Parish Councils had already set their budgets at that time, the decision was taken to leave the allocation as previously notified and to make an adjustment to the sums due to Town & Parish Councils in 2018/19.

Taking into account the additional funding reductions announced in the December 2016 finance settlement, the following assumptions are now factored into the Council's revised Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP), which was updated and approved by Cabinet in July 2017:

Year	Revenue Support Grant £m	£m Reduction	% Reduction
2016/17	77.143	-	-
2017/18	56.000	21.143	27.41
2018/19	41.860	14.140	25.25
2019/20	27.620	14.240	34.02

Following the change to the structure of local government finance from April 2013, which saw the localisation of Business Rates, the Council's baseline funding level now contains the 49% Business Rates Retention and Top Up Grant. It is expected that these will continue to be increased by RPI on an annual basis. The RPI assumptions built into the MTFP are as follows:

RPI Increase	
2018/19	3.00%
2019/20	2.00%

Assuming the grant passed onto Town & Parish Councils is partially reduced in line with the Council's RSG reductions but partially increased in line with RPI (reflecting the splits in the original Start Up Funding Allocation – details of how this works were provided to Town & Parish Councils in our letter sent in July 2013) then the overall impact on payments to Town & Parish Councils would be as follows:

	RSG Element		Baseline Funding Level		Total	Annual Reduction	
	£m	Reduction	£m	Increase	£m	£m	%
2017/18	0.469	-	1.006	-	1.475	-	-
2018/19	0.351	25.25%	1.036	3.00%	1.387	0.088	5.97%
2019/20	0.232	34.02%	1.057	2.00%	1.289	0.098	7.07%

It should be noted that the above forecasts are based on estimates of reductions in RSG and estimated RPI levels over the coming years. The reductions in RSG reflect a reduction in funding to the Council proportionate to the current formula. The planning assumptions beyond 2017/18 are based on indicative spending totals for Government, based on the 2017/18 final settlement figures, which assume continuation of the austerity measures into 2019/20. If Government amend any of the formula factors to proportionately increase or decrease the allocation to the Council then this could change the above position.

Based on the above assumptions, and taking into consideration a £0.005m adjustment in respect of the 2017/18 grant, the Council has calculated the Council Tax Reduction Scheme Grant due to Town & Parish Councils in 2018/19 as £1.392m (£1.387m in respect of 2018/19 + £0.005m for the underpayment in 2017/18).

Budget Setting 2018/19

In setting the Tax Base for 2017/18 assumptions were made with regards to incidence and demand for Council Tax Reduction and other discounts and exemptions.

The current Tax Base, adjusted for provisions for non – collection and prudent assumptions about demand and take up of Council Tax Reduction discounts for the remainder of the year, is marginally higher than the approved 2017/18 Tax Base. This takes into account new build / demolitions and other tax base changes up to 31 May 2017. Performance in recovering the additional sums levied as a result of the empty homes discount changes introduced in April 2013 continues to be carefully monitored and is in line with budget assumptions.

In considering tax base setting for 2018/19, the Council has taken into account the improvements in collection rates achieved over recent years. The updated MTFP planning assumptions built into the MTFP(8) report approved by Cabinet on 12 July 2017, was to reduce the provision for non-payment in tax base setting from 1.5% to 1.0%. The impact of this will be to increase your tax base planning assumptions.

The updated Tax Base forecasts compared to the existing budget assumptions varies across individual Town & Parish areas depending on local circumstances. Though fine for budget planning purposes, **the current position is not the final position**, as this will be based on the Tax Base forecasts undertaken in October 2017. **The forecasts included in this letter should not be used for final budget setting but for budget planning purposes only.**

Using the updated Tax Base figures and the forecast grant reductions set out earlier it is possible to model the combined impact on your Council next year and I have set this out below:

Greencroft Parish Council	
Current tax base (2017/18) [A]	85.7
Tax base for 2018/19 [B]	85.5
Tax base increase/(decrease) from 2017/18 [C] = [B] - [A]	-0.2
Current Band D Council Tax (2017/18) [D]	£39.24
Increase/(Decrease) in Council Tax Yield [E] ([C] x [D])	(£7.85)
Removal of 2017/18 LCTRS Grant [F]	£0.00
LCTRS Grant Applicable to Your Council for 2018/19 [G]	£9.00
Net Position [E] - [F] + [G]	£1.15

I would also draw your attention to the continued possibility of the Government extending the Council Tax capping controls (the level above which there must be a referendum) to larger Town & Parish Councils from 2018/19. As you will be aware this is something that has been mooted for a number of years now, but not yet enacted.

I trust you find the above information useful in terms of budget planning for 2018/19, please note my earlier comments about these figures being provisional.

Medium Term Financial Planning

It is good practice to maintain a Medium Term Financial Plan and I am aware that a number of Town and Parish Councils do so. To aid your planning I have set out below the potential impact on Council Tax Reduction Grant payments to your Council over the period 2018/19 to 2019/20 (using the 2018/19 distribution of grant as a basis – note this doesn't take into account any changes in your Tax Base across this period).

	£	Year on Year Reduction
Current Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme Grant Paid in 2017/18	£0.00	Not Applicable
Forecast Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme Grant 2018/19	£9.00	£9.00
Forecast Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme Grant 2019/20	£8.00	(£1.00)

Summary

Whilst the assumptions in the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan forecasts may be subject to change following the 2017 Autumn Budget and on receipt of the finance settlement that is likely to be published in December 2017, the information contained above provides a reasonable overview of potential impacts on your Council, based on the current distribution of grant and information available and published to date.

The actual Tax Base forecasts for 2018/19 budget setting purposes will be compiled in October 2017. At that point, as is usual, we will write to you to inform you of your actual Tax Base for 2018/19 and set out details of the deadlines for submitting precept demands etc., which would usually be by 26 January 2018. The actual Tax Base will be reported to Cabinet in December 2017.

The 2018/19 grant settlement will not be known until December 2017, at which point it will be known whether the Council's forecasts of Government grant reductions is correct. Any under or over payment of the 2018/19 Council Tax Reduction Grant will be taken into consideration when calculating grant due in 2019/20.

A report will be taken to County Council before 31 January 2018 to reaffirm the continuation of the existing LCTRS, with the decision to retain the current scheme (in terms of MTFP planning) being taken by Cabinet in July 2017. The 2018/19 Budget and Council Tax setting meeting of the County Council is 21 February 2018.

Should you require any further information with regards to this letter, please do not hesitate to contact Paul Darby, Head of Finance and Transactional Services Tel. 03000 261930 or email paul.darby@durham.gov.uk

Yours sincerely

John Hewitt

John Hewitt
Corporate Director; Resources

Emerson Fencing Ltd.
7 Edward's Walk
Burnhope
DURHAM DH7 0DD

Pasture Topping
Mini Digger Hire
Flail Hedgecutting

Fencing Contractor
VAT reg: 179114258

tel: 01207 520817
mob: 07932 107813

terms strictly 28 days
all goods remain the property of
Emerson Fencing ltd until paid for in full

Clerk
Greencroft Parish Council

30/08/2017

ESTIMATE

Maiden Law Play Park

to repair existing fence by replacing
top bar & 3 new posts etc

£130.00 + VAT

D.

PRINTED ON 19 September 2017		<u>SET BUDGET</u> <u>2018/19</u>	
	<u>2017 18</u>		<u>THIS YEAR</u>
<u>GENERAL / ADMINISTRATION</u>	<u>BUDGET</u>		<u>ACTUAL</u>
Salary (Clerk)	£ 1,250.00		£ 513.19
Travelling (Clerk)	£ -		£ -
Postage	£ 10.00		£ -
Printing/Stationery	£ 100.00		£ 19.99
Telephone	£ -		£ -
Room Hire	£ -		£ -
Subscriptions	£ 90.00		£ 78.60
Insurance	£ 250.00		£ 240.04
Audit	£ 50.00		£ -
Elections	£ -		£ -
Training	£ 100.00		£ 27.00
Publications/Website	£ 90.00		£ 90.00
Donations/Grants	£ 50.00		£ -
	£ 1,990.00		£ 968.82
<u>RECREATION/ENVIRONMENTAL</u>			
<u>FACILITIES</u>			
General Repairs & Maintenance	£ 100.00		£ -
Seats	£ -		£ -
Grasscutting	£ 880.00		£ -
Flower Beds	£ 500.00		£ 225.00
Xmas Lights/tree	£ -		£ -
	£ 1,480.00		£ 225.00
<u>INCOME</u>			
LCTSS Grant	£ -		£ -
Other and VAT repayment			£ 366.85
	£ -		£ 366.85
<u>EXPENDITURE</u>	£ 3,470.00		£ 1,193.82
<u>INCOME</u>	£ -		£ 366.85
<u>NET</u>	£ 3,470.00		£ 826.97

