

Newdigate Parish Council

Minutes of Finance Committee Meeting held in the Village Hall at 7pm on Monday 2 November 2020

Present: Mr Bill Kear (Chairman), Mr William Harmsworth, Mr Robin Gardner, Clerk

1. **Apologies for Absence:** Mr Crutcher.
2. **Minutes of previous Finance Committee meeting held 4 August 2020:** The minutes of the previous Finance Committee meeting were agreed at the meeting of the full Parish Council on 10 August. There were no matters arising.
3. **Review of income and expenditure to date and estimated expenditure to 31 March 2021:** The document was discussed in detail (Annex 1).

Mr Harmsworth asked the clerk about the auditor's previous advice on keeping the bank balance at a level comparable to the annual precept. In his letter dated 28 June 2019 following an audit, Mr Mulberry said: *"The council has £16,684 of reserves – there was no evidence of any of these being earmarked. In respect of general reserves, rule of thumb calculations would suggest that 50% of precept as adjusted for local conditions would be reasonable being circa £5k. The council has significant reserves for a council of its size. I recommend council review these with a view to earmarking them for future use."*

On receiving this advice, the council allocated sums to various projects for future spending, most of which remains unspent at this time. The clerk explained the various expenditures which had gone over budget this year and was asked to amend the document by itemising each of the miscellaneous items on page 2.

4. **Possible expenditure on future projects and an increase in precept requirement for the financial year April 2021 to March 2022:** Progress on projects agreed previously was discussed. There has been little progress on most projects this year owing to the widespread controls of public movements and restricted working practices in the public sector since March.

The Parish Council's agreement with Surrey Wildlife Trust regarding management of the Newdigate Brickworks Nature Reserve is at a reasonably advanced stage. There will be legal and other professional fees and the clerk was asked to continue her present hours to assist with the project. £2,500 allocated in October 2019 remains in the bank account to cover these expenses. It was agreed that the precept requirement for next year should be discussed at the next finance committee meeting when more information will be available to enable an informed decision to be made.

5. **Any other business:** The clerk asked if the council wanted an interim audit and it was agreed that it will not be needed this year and the annual audit is sufficient.

The meeting ended at 7.40pm.