

MINUTES of the meeting of the GRASSMOOR, HASLAND AND WINSICK PARISH COUNCIL held on 17 December 2007 at the Grassmoor Community Centre.

PRESENT

Councillor Mrs P J Hemsley (in the Chair)

Councillors I F Barlow, Mrs J Bedford, A H Booker, D Chapman, B Garbutt, Mrs E Greenall and K Hemsley.

663. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Mrs A Browne, Mrs E A Hill and Ms J A Hill.

664. DECLARATION OF MEMBERS INTERESTS

Councillors I F Barlow, Mrs J Bedford, A H Booker and Mrs P J Hemsley declared a personal interest as members of the Grassmoor Community Centre Management Committee in relation to the consideration of the Parish Council budget for 2008/2009. Councillor D Chapman declared a personal interest in the same item owing to his involvement with Grassmoor Cricket Club (Minute no. 666 refers).

665. ITEMS IN EXCLUSION

There were no items to be taken in exclusion.

666. PARISH COUNCIL BUDGET 2008/2009

The Clerk presented the Parish Council budget for 2008/2009. There were 2 main pressures affecting the budget. The first was park maintenance. As the Clerk had previously reported, the District Council was phasing out the park maintenance subsidy over the next 3 years. The result was that ultimately the Parish Council's costs of maintaining the facilities in Barnes Park and Winsick Park, including the cricket and football pitches, would rise to £13,607 in 2010/2011. The charge for 2008/2009 was £7695.

The change in arrangements meant that the Parish Council would collect income from the football and cricket clubs for maintaining the pitches currently paid to the District Council. In 2008/2009 this income was estimated to be £2,200 or approximately 37% of the costs to the Parish Council. The exact breakdown of the costs between the football and cricket clubs was not known at this stage. By 2010/2011 the income to the Council from the Clubs would be approximately £2,338 or 28% of the costs, if the basis of the payment system remained unchanged. The Parish Council however, could charge whatever it wished for maintaining the cricket and football pitches, although a significant rise would mean that it would be very difficult for the Clubs to afford and may result in them no longer being able to continue playing.

It was agreed that the cricket club and the football clubs be charged a total cost of £2,200 for the maintenance of the pitches in Barnes Park for 2008/2009. This charge would be reviewed on an annual basis and would not necessarily be maintained at such a low percentage of the costs to the Council. The Clerk agreed to arrange a meeting with the cricket and football clubs to discuss the situation.

The second major issue was that of the funding of the Centre Co-ordinators post. The Parish Council had agreed to cover the costs of the post for a one year period to enable bids for funding to be prepared. As had been reported to the last meeting, Peter Hague had resigned from his post as Centre Co-ordinator. It was clear that there needed to be a fundamental review of how the Centre was managed and the Management Committee had agreed that this should take place as soon as possible.

Whatever, the outcome of the review, the funding of staffing at the Centre remained an issue particularly if the bids for funding were unsuccessful. If funding was not received, the likelihood was that the Centre would be forced to close. The costs of funding the Centre Co-ordinators post in 2008/2009 was £25,500. Obviously it would be impractical to cover the costs of this provision from the precept in one year as the percentage increase would be unacceptable. The Clerk proposed a three year budget increase which would allow for staffing costs at the Centre to be covered in incremental stages. In years one and two, the shortfall would be covered from within earmarked Parish Council reserves. This course of action was agreed subject to the position being reviewed on an annual basis and on the agreement that the Management Committee would continue to seek funding for staffing from external sources.

It was agreed that there would be no increases in the charges levied to the football and cricket clubs for the use of the Pavilion and also the rents for the allotments would remain unchanged for 2008/2009.

The Parish Council agreed to set a precept for 2008/2009 of £95,000 which represented an 8.57% increase.

- RESOLVED** that (a) the cricket and football clubs be charged £2,200 for the costs of maintaining the pitches in Barnes Park in 2008/2009;
- (b) these charges to be reviewed on an annual basis;
- (c) the Clerk to arrange a meeting with the football and cricket clubs to discuss the issue of future fees;
- (d) the Parish Council contribute, if necessary, up to £25,500 of the costs of staffing support at the Centre in 2008/2009;
- (e) the payment to the Community Centre to be made on the basis that the Management Committee will seek funding from external sources and that the position will be reviewed on an annual basis;
- (f) charges for the use of the Barnes Park Pavilion and the Mill Lane and Gill Lane Allotments remained unchanged; and
- (g) the Parish Council set a precept for 2008/2009 of £95,000.

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Chairman