

NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL

FAR COTTON & DELAPRE COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Thursday, 28 January 2021

PRESENT: Councillor Walker (Chair); Councillor Roberts (Deputy Chair); Councillors Davenport, T Eales and Larratt; Mr Mark Plowman.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

The Chair welcomed everyone to the Far Cotton & Delapr  Community Council and announced that Cllr Oldham had stood down as a member and welcomed Cllr Larratt as a member of the Far Cotton & Delapr  Community Council. There were no apologies received.

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2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none.

3. MINUTES

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 14 January 2021 were agreed subject to the inclusion of Cllr B Markham on the attendees list and the amendments in items 7 and 8 to correct Kingsthorpe Council to read Far Cotton and Delapr  Community Council.

4. TO FURTHER CONSIDER AND AGREE THE BUDGET RECOMMENDED BY THE CROSS PARTY WORKING GROUP AND TO AGREE THE PRECEPT (COUNCIL TAX) DEMAND FOR 2021/2022

At the Chair's invitation, the Deputy Chief Executive from NCALC, Lesley Sambrook Smith presented the report and explained that as members requested at the previous meeting and updated budget report had been provided. She explained that the proposed budget had changed slightly, as a rounded figure had been provided previously with the updated report giving a more detailed breakdown of costs giving a total of £147,424.

Members were concerned with the accommodation cost of £10,000 allocated in the budget and the level of reserves. Members also felt concerned regarding the transfer of allotments which were currently managed as part of the Ide Verde contract, as the income costs and running costs were not detailed in the report. Members recognised the current situation with the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic and requested that further consideration of the budget would be made so that the precept costs to residents could be accounted for as it would affect those experiencing financial difficulty.

However, some members felt that the budget would help set up the Far Cotton and Delapr  Community Council for its first year and would allow the Council to invest in the local community. The contingency budget would be for those elected onto the Council to decide on which services and initiatives were important to the community, and the budget would be reviewed by the future Council after its first term.

The Chief Executive of NCALC expressed that he empathised with members as it was a

difficult task to agree a budget for a Council that did not officially exist until after the election. In addition, members were aware of the current situation with Brexit, Covid-19 and other contributing factors. He reminded members that they must set a budget at whichever level they decided, to allow the Far Cotton and Delapré Community Council to be safe and legal, as well as financially secure from its first day of operation with sufficient reserves as required by audit. The Chief Executive NCALC encouraged members to consider the positive aspects of the budget, and the services that the Council could potentially deliver such as covering accommodation costs to provide a 'One stop shop' for residents which would deliver a variety of services to benefit the community. The Council required the necessary budget and resources in order to thrive, and it was important for the promotion of the Council so that members of the community would come forward to work for the Far Cotton and Delapré Community Council in a professional manner as well as members to stand as Councillors for the election in May 2021.

Members requested an explanation on the £50,000 allocated in the budget for the development of future services and the transfer to reserves. The Deputy Chief Executive, NCALC explained that the £50,000 presented in the budget represented 6 months of reserves for the Council and members could use funds from this budget to deliver services if they needed to do so, as long as 3 months of reserves were left.

The Deputy Monitoring Officer assured members that the contingency budget was legal and contained what was required under legislation for Parish Councils. From his experience of setting up councils, this was usual practice and the modest budget would allow the Far Cotton and Delapré Community Council some flexibility to deliver initiatives as they wished to after May 2021. He encouraged members to consider and discuss the budget, and explained that the Ide Verde contract was currently being looked into and it was hoped that an agreement could be made to lower costs and comprise of allotments across the three new Councils: Far Cotton and Delapré Community Council, Kingsthorpe Parish Council and Northampton Town Council.

The Chair moved Council to vote on the motion and the motion was carried. Councillor Roberts abstained from voting and commented that she could not vote as she felt she had not received enough detailed information on the budget to inform her decision.

RESOLVED: That members:

- Agreed the budget as shown in 1.2 of this report and to use the figures as the basis of the first precept to be set by Far Cotton and Delapré Community Council.
- Set a precept of £147,424 for 2021/22.

5. TO AGREE THE DATES FOR THE NEXT MEETINGS OF THE COUNCIL

The Chair proposed that the date for the next meeting would be held on 25 February 2021 at 7pm.

RESOLVED: The date for the next meeting was agreed.

6. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

At the Chair's invitation, Councillor Roberts proposed that the Council included the crime figures for Far Cotton and Delapré as a monthly item on the agenda. Councillor Roberts then introduced the report received from the Northampton Neighbourhood Policing Team which detailed the burglary residential, burglary non-business, criminal damage and vehicle crime figures for January 2021 with comparative figures in brackets from the previous month December 2020.

The Chair thanked Councillor Roberts for the suggestion and welcomed the police report as a regular item. He hoped the Council would continue the good working relationship with Northamptonshire police and welcomed their attendance at future Far Cotton and Delapré Council meetings. Kate Houlihan, Parish Clerk, informed the Council that a report from the police would be provided at the next meeting and the Council would be able to appoint a police liaison representative to act as a single point of contact with Northamptonshire police.

The meeting concluded at 8:00 pm