

# **FAR COTTON AND DELAPRÉ COMMUNITY COUNCIL**

## **Council Meeting 28 JANUARY 2021**

**To: All Northampton Borough Councillors for the wards set out in Schedule 1 to the Northampton Borough Council (Reorganisation of Community Governance) No.3 (Kingsthorpe Parish Council) Order 2020**

**You are summoned to attend a meeting of Kingsthorpe Parish Council to be held by remote means through Zoom at 19:00 on 28 January, 2021.**

**Kate Houlihan  
Interim Clerk and RFO**

### **A G E N D A**

1. Apologies for Absence
2. Declarations of Interest
3. To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on the 14 January 2021 and to authorise the Chairman to sign them as a true and correct record of the proceedings
4.
  - a) To further consider and agree the budget recommended by the Cross Party Working Group
  - b) To agree the precept (council tax) demand for 2021/2022
5. To agree the dates for the next meetings of the Council
6. Items for Information

**Press and public can witness the proceedings at  
<https://www.youtube.com/user/northamptonbcTV>**

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# Agenda Item 3

## NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL

### FAR COTTON & DELAPRE COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Thursday, 14 January 2021

**PRESENT:** Councillor Walker (Chair); Councillor Roberts (Deputy Chair); Councillors Davenport, T Eales and Oldham

#### **APOLOGIES:**

#### **1. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN**

The Deputy Monitoring Officer invited nominations for the election of Chairman for the Far Cotton and Delapré Parish Council.

Councillor Oldham proposed and Councillor T Eales seconded that Councillor Walker be elected as the first Chair of the Far Cotton and Delapré Parish Council.

The motion was carried and Councillor Walker was appointed as Chair and accepted office, delivering the Declaration of Acceptance to Office. He agreed that the Declaration of Acceptance would be signed after the meeting.

Councillor Walker then took the Chair.

#### **2. ELECTION OF DEPUTY CHAIRMAN**

The Chair invited nominations for the first Deputy Chair of the Far Cotton and Delapré Parish Council. Councillor Oldham proposed and Councillor Walker seconded that Councillor Roberts be elected as the first Deputy Chair of the Far Cotton and Delapré Parish Council.

The motion was carried and Councillor Roberts was elected as Deputy Chair and accepted office.

#### **3. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

There were none.

#### **4. TO CONFIRM THE APPOINTMENT OF THE INTERIM PARISH CLERK AND RESPONSIBLE FINANCIAL OFFICER WITH IMMEDIATE EFFECT**

The Chair confirmed the appointment of Kate Houlihan as the interim Parish Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer for the Far Cotton and Delapré Community Council.

#### **5. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were none.

#### **6. TO ADOPT, SUBJECT TO REVIEW AT THE ANNUAL COUNCIL MEETING, THE DRAFT STANDING ORDERS, DRAFT FINANCIAL REGULATIONS AND CODE OF CONDUCT AND OTHER KEY DOCUMENTS TO BE SET OUT ON THE COUNCIL'S WEBSITE**

The Chair introduced the item and explained that the draft Standing Orders, draft Financial Regulations and Code of Conduct and other key documents were to be adopted subject to the review of these documents at the Annual Council meeting which would take place after

the election in May 2021.

**RESOLVED:** That these documents be adopted subject to review at the Annual Council Meeting

**7. TO CONSIDER THE DRAFT CONTINGENCY BUDGET RECOMMENDED BY THE CROSS PARTY WORKING GROUP**

At the Chair's invitation, the Deputy Monitoring Officer introduced the report and explained that the draft contingency budget was prepared in light of the start up costs required for the Kingsthorpe Community Council and that it was hoped that in the future the Community Council would be able to spend their finances on local projects and initiatives.

The Deputy Chief Executive from NCALC, Lesley Sambrook Smith continued that a lot of work had gone into preparing the budget, which contained election costs, staffing and running costs of the Council as well as contingencies and transfer to reserves. The Cross Party Working Group had scrutinised the draft budget and had recommended the draft contingency budget for the initial year of the Far Cotton and Delapré Community Council.

The Deputy Chief Executive from NCALC summarised that if the draft contingency budget was £148,000, and if this was accepted the cost for a band D property would be £48.40pa which equated to 93p a week. However, this would differ depending on individual circumstances and band costs. For a Band A property, the cost would be £32.27pa which equated to 62p a week. She reiterated that the budget would allow the Community Council to deliver projects that would benefit residents, and the precept would allow the Council to cover staffing costs and the money raised would be spent in the local area.

Members discussed the report and agreed that the budget would be reviewed and discussed further at the next meeting.

**RESOLVED:** That the draft contingency budget be reviewed and brought to the next meeting on 28<sup>th</sup> January 2021.

**8. TO NOTE THE PURCHASE OF A WEBSITE**

At the Chair's invitation, the Deputy Chief Executive for NCALC explained that the website would contain all the information needed for a Parish Council and would display all the statutory information that needed to be published as a legal requirement. The website would also display candidacy, and important information for residents in Far Cotton and Delapré. It would help to inform residents and spread the message of the Kingsthorpe Community Council and keep everyone up to date on current projects and initiatives.

**RESOLVED:** That the purchase of a website be noted.

**9. TO AGREE THE DATE FOR THE NEXT MEETING OF THE COUNCIL**

The date of the next meeting of the Far Cotton and Delapré Parish Council would be held on Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> January 2021 at 7pm.

**10. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION**

There were none.

The meeting concluded at 19:30

## Updated Budget Report Far Cotton and Delapre Community Council

### 1. Budget

- 1.1. Councillors requested a more detailed narrative to accompany the proposed budget for Far Cotton and Delapre Community Council. The budget included with this report is very much a budget to meet the deadline for setting a precept and at the same time provide adequate financial flexibility to the Community Council after the May elections to determine its own priorities. As elections were cancelled in May 2020, the appointed councillors from NBC must agree a budget to be used by the newly elected councillors in 2021, however items within the budget can be modified during 2021 if the elected councillors so wish.
- 1.2. The budget has been split into its constituent parts to allow councillors to understand how the final figures have been arrived at.

Budget item (detailed)	2021/22 £
Staffing costs	£41,429.00
IT equipment hardware (laptop & printer/scanner)	£800.00
IT equipment software (Microsoft 365 & antivirus)	£200.00
Website (2Commune)	£3,000.00
Office IT & phone costs (Mobile and internet)	£800.00
Accommodation (NBC figures)	£10,000.00
Insurance	£500.00
Training (staff and councillors)	£2,850.00
Subscriptions (NCALC, SLCC)	£3,000.00
Audit fees (internal and external)	£845.00
Election expenses (NBC figures)	£9,000.00
Contingency (to include legal)	£25,000.00
To develop future services/ transfer to reserves	£50,000.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>£147,424.00</b>

Estimated tax base	3,058
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<b>Band A charge</b>	<b>£32.14</b>
<b>Band D charge</b>	<b>£48.21</b>

It should be noted that 21% of properties in Far Cotton and Delapre fall within the Band A category of council tax banding.

1.3. This report will provide the background to each line item as shown above.

#### 1.3.1 Staffing costs

The Interim Clerk has been appointed to the council and will be in post until a permanent clerk is appointed (this is anticipated to be August 2021). The Council is required by law to appoint a Proper Officer (Parish Clerk) who is responsible for signing and serving official documents and receiving such documents on behalf of the Council and a Responsible Financial Officer (RFO). An experienced, trained clerk is an invaluable asset to a council, especially a fledgling council. The clerk will be able to guide the council in all aspects of the powers and duties the council has and is able to apply for grant funding on behalf of the council which would allow further funds to be accessed to allow the newly elected councillors to identify and work on projects within the Far Cotton and Delapre area. The clerk would also work with the principal council to identify any S106 monies that may be owed to the council.

The table below outlines the costs associated with the interim clerk, permanent clerk and part time member of staff that may be required to run the council.

<b>Far Cotton Parish staffing</b>	<b>Interim</b>	<b>Salary</b>	<b>NI</b>	<b>Pens</b>	<b>Total</b>
Interim Clerk	8,789				<b>8,789</b>
Permanent Clerk (starting August, 30 hrs per week)		16,460	2,271	4,938	<b>23,669</b>
Part time member of staff (starting August; 15 hrs per week)		6,238	861	1,871	<b>8,970</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>8,789</b>	<b>22,698</b>	<b>3,132</b>	<b>6,809</b>	<b>41,429</b>

#### 1.3.2 IT equipment (hardware and software)

The council will need to purchase a laptop and printer/scanner for the parish office, the laptop will require an antivirus package and access to Microsoft 365.

#### 1.3.3 Website

A website (with domain and one email address) has been purchased. The website will be live before the end of February and will be used to actively promote candidacy to the council as well as fulfilling the statutory responsibilities of the council.

#### 1.3.4 Office and IT costs

The council will need a dedicated phone number to allow residents to contact the parish office. The office will also require an internet connection. A budget of £800 will be sufficient to acquire a mobile phone contract and to purchase office broadband connections.

#### 1.3.5 Accommodation

Accommodation costs of £10,000 have been included as an estimated figure. It is anticipated that this would be sufficient to cover accommodation costs whether that be rent, lease, or maintenance of property owned by the Council. As the council does not have an agreed base of operation, it is impossible to give absolute costs for

accommodation. It is anticipated that the Recreational Centre in Far Cotton would be the ideal base of the community council, but negotiations for office and meeting space will need to occur between the council and West Northamptonshire Council, until those negotiations have been concluded, an estimated figure must be submitted.

#### 1.3.6 Insurance

As a minimum, the council should have insurance to cover public liability, employers liability, fidelity guarantee and assets.

#### 1.3.7 Training

The training budget will allow the clerk and all 12 councillors to attend up to 5 training courses in the first year.

#### 1.3.8 Subscriptions

It is recommended that the council continues with membership to Northants CALC and for the clerk to remain a member of the Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC). Membership fees are £2,773 and £234 respectively.

#### 1.3.9 Audit fees

As a new council, the council must undergo both an internal and external audit. Internal audit costs are £445 and external audit costs are £400.

#### 1.3.10 Election costs

NBC recharge all town, parish and community councils election costs as standard.

#### 1.3.11 Contingency

The contingency includes estimated amounts for potential legal fees to complete any lease agreements for accommodation, a small grants fund to help the community groups in Far Cotton and Delapre, any allotment costs and any project work the elected councillors may wish to undertake in their first year in office. The actual breakdown of these items will depend on elected councillor decisions therefore cannot be provided in detail.

Far Cotton and Delapre Community Council will have Mereway and Pleydell Road allotments transferred as part of the Reorganisation Order. The cost of the above allotments is not available as they are currently managed as part of the Ide Verde contract with NBC. It should be noted that the allotments will also provide an income to the council.

#### 1.3.12 Transfer to reserves

As the council will not have reserves, it is essential that the budget includes a sum to allow reserves to be built from year one. The recommendation is that between 3-12 months of the net revenue is held as a reserve amount. The amount presented in this budget represents 6 months of reserves.

## **2. Operational Fixed vs Variable Costs**

It should be noted that some costs in the budget are operational costs for the council which are common across both new/community parish councils (website, office costs, IT costs and insurance), however some costs are variable costs which are dependent on either the total budget figure (internal and external audit, SLCC subscription) or the number of electors per council area (NCALC membership and election costs).

## **3. Summary**

The budget is a contingency budget, the councillors elected in May will be able to use the budget as a starting point for the council. Some items are known (staffing costs, professional services, website), some are the best estimates available to officers in the current climate (running costs, accommodation costs, election costs) whilst the contingency and amounts to develop future services and transfer to reserves are the best estimates available to allow the elected councillors the freedom to achieve the goals they set in year one.

Community Councils can access grant funding and it is anticipated that the council will wish to explore all avenues of funding available to them. Any unspent provision in year one, would be added to reserves and may be used to off-set costs in year two.

## **4. Recommendations**

- 4.1 To agree 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 Delapre Community Council.
- 4.2 To set a precept of £147,424 for 2021/22.