

NEWTON on the MOOR & SWARLAND PARISH COUNCIL

7.	<p>Requested agenda items</p> <p>a. Budget and precept for 2017-18. The Chairman had circulated a Finance Report and draft budget shown as Appendix 1 and 2. This had been produced following a meeting of the finance group on 16th January. Key proposals include increasing the grants to both the Swarland Village Hall, and Jubilee Hall. The draft budget requires a precept of £19,000 (an increase of £1000 on 2016/17) to break even by March 2018. Currently the reserve is £14,021.29 and it was agreed that this would be split between being a general reserve, and one for village halls. The draft budget was agreed, and Cllr Francis said he hoped that the finance group would get together sooner to discuss the budget for 2018/19.</p> <p>b. Vyner Park update (Councillor Stanley/Councillor Brotherton/Cllr Bettel) and draft Vyner Park Budget. Cllr Stanley said that the Vyner Park Management Group met in December to agree the budget for Vyner Park. The amount asked for from the PC was £7140 plus payment of the insurance for the site. There were no questions regarding the VP budget. Cllr Bettel had chaired the second annual review meeting with Nelsons. Issues had been raised about gritting during icy weather and the provision of litter bins. Nelsons had provided a report and finance information for 2016/17. They have now registered for VAT and 2017 looks encouraging. The charge to Nelsons for out of hour's community events will continue to be waived until next review meeting in January 2018, but the Charity's charge for room hire to private hirers outside Nelson's hours would be applied. Nelsons are looking at saving electricity costs by installing a wood burning stove and are currently seeking quotes. Some slight amendments are to be made to the Licence schedule 2 eg to clarify alcohol can be sold without food. Cllr Stanley said that due to the works being done to the rear of the pavilion in 2016, the patio was not usable by Nelsons customers but everything is in place now, with an expanded patio to increase potential numbers of users. Cllr Brotherton reported he was tying up loose ends on the transfer of agreement with Sport England. Work on the lease is completed but vesting is to be done. Cllr Stanley thanked Cllr Brotherton wholeheartedly for continuing with resolving the issues with Sport England. His work is much appreciated.</p> <p>c. Diversion from A1 re: Slip Roads – (Cllr Mansfield) - No information has been received from AONE so the Clerk will contact them regarding diversions during planned 'bell mouth' works.</p> <p>d. Update on provision of bus service (Clerk) – NEED had provided an update, the service is now running from Longframlington and has around 6 people a week using it. Uptake is good from the Percy Wood Caravan Park. Timetables to be sent to Parish Cllrs.</p> <p>e. Funding applications – Applications from Active Northumberland, Northumberland Age Concern, Great North Air Ambulance, Age UK etc. previously circulated - A further letter has been received from Alnwick Playhouse and Bailifgate Museum. As the PC has no formal policy it was suggested that grants should be awarded on the basis of tangible benefits to the Parish. It was agreed to give a grant of £30 each to Great North Air Ambulance, Alnwick Playhouse and Baillifgate Museum.</p> <p>f. Affordable housing and how this is integrated by developers. – This is to be discussed with NCC Housing Officer Ian Stanner. Parish Cllrs felt it was important to keep affordable housing affordable.</p> <p>g. NCC Consultation – Planning Application validation checklist consultation – No comments made.</p> <p>h. Letter from Nathaniel Litchfield and Partners, planning consultants for Percy Wood Country Park – It was agreed that Cllr Stanley would be the lead person on this and pull together a group to follow up the request to meet and open up dialogue on possible development at Percy Wood.</p> <p>i. Email from local resident about 16/01703/OUT Land East Of Old Hall Farm Old Swarland NE65 9HU – This application was recommended for refusal by the case officer at NCC and so as this was in line with the request from the PC, no one attended the planning meeting on 24th January. The resident who had contacted the PC on this issue had been advised of this.</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Clerk</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Cllr Francis</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Cllr Stanley</p>
8.	<p>Report by County Councillor and meetings attended by Councillors Cllr Brotherton said he had accepted an invitation to join the Northumberland Coast and Lowlands LEADER Local Action Group (LAG) as an executive member.</p>	

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<p>9.</p>	<p>Finance</p> <p>a. Bank statements – Lloyds Treasurers Account £8,089.99 & Lloyds Instant Access £14,021.29 @7/1/2017</p> <p>b. Clerk’s salary (for December 2016 and January 2017) £334.29 Clerk’s expenses £9.50 HM Revenues & Customs PAYE (For December 2016 and January 2017) - 2x £66.80 = £133.60. Payment to Clerk (For December 2016 & January 2017) = £668.58 + £9.50 - £133.60 = £549.88.</p> <p>c. Other receipts and payments:</p> <p>i)Receipts: None.</p> <p>ii)Payments: Forestry Commission for Christmas Trees (Confirmation approval) £70.00 inc VAT. Wensleydale Roofing Ltd – Reroofing of Bell cote at Jubilee Hall £5574 inc £929 VAT (Confirmation approval) Information Commissioners Office – Annual payment by Direct Debit for Data Protection Registration fee £35.00. (Confirmation approval)</p> <p>All the above were noted/agreed.</p>	
<p>10.</p>	<p>Planning</p> <p>a. To report on any planning decisions made by NCC:</p> <p>16/03546/PRUTPO Tree Preservation Order: Crown reduction and thinning by 25%, remove weight of side branches overhanging on north side of tree, general thinning of side branches to improve shape by 10% and uplifting of lower branches by 10% to one sycamore tree - 2 Chesterwell, Swarland, Morpeth, Northumberland NE65 9NA. No objections from PC. Granted 10th November 2016.</p> <p>16/03868/FELTPO Tree preservation order to fell one Ash tree due to bracket fungus causing severe decay/deadwood throughout the tree. 4 Studley Drive, Swarland, Morpeth, Northumberland NE65 9JT.Granted 1st December 2016.</p> <p>16/03164/OUT Outline permission for the development of a small motorhome site to include approximately 10 pitches plus a site managers chalet. Land East of the A1 Felton, Northumberland. Objections made by PC. Application refused 7th December 2016.</p> <p>14/01980/OUT Reserved Matters application for appearance, landscaping, layout-approved planning application14/01980/OUT. 2 The Paddock, Swarland, Morpeth, NE65 9BS – Granted 19th January 2017.</p> <p>b.Applications pending decision by NCC</p> <p>14/02284/OUT - Residential development of detached houses with access road and turning area to enable vehicles to enter and leave onto Percy Drive in a forward facing direction. Provision of widened vehicle access to improve vehicle passing on Percy Drive. – Objections made by PC.</p> <p>16/01703/OUT Outline planning application including access with all matters reserved for up to 5 detached dwellings (amended number of dwellings and red line boundary submitted 12.7.16) Land East Of Old Hall Farm Old Swarland, Swarland NE65 9HU. Parish Council made objections. Application to be discussed by NCC planning committee on 24th January 2017 at 2pm at County Hall.</p> <p>16/03457/BT Removal of Telephone Box Number 01670787382 ADJ Bus Shelter, The Square, Swarland, Morpeth, Northumberland. PC made objections.</p> <p>16/04129/OUT . Outline planning permission with all matters reserved except for access for the construction of up to 9No residential units Land South Of Mereburn House Low Wood Swarland Northumberland. PC made objections.</p> <p>16/04160/FUL Proposed new detached dwelling on land to the rear of 8 Newton on the Moor. Land North Of 8 Newton On The Moor Newton-On-The-Moor Morpeth Northumberland NE65 9JY. PC made objections.</p> <p>c. Planning matters for Parish Council to consider</p>	
		Clerk

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	<p>16/04570/FUL Proposed conversion of studio to provide holiday accommodation/ residential annexe for dependent relative. 11 Newton-On-The-Moor Morpeth Northumberland NE65 9JY. Comments invited until 31st January 2017.</p> <p>16/04557/REM Application for approval of reserved matters (appearance, scale, layout and landscaping) following approved outline planning application 15/03824/OUT (1no. dwelling with driveway and car turning area). Land To The Rear Of 2 Kenmore Road Swarland Morpeth Northumberland. Comments invited until 1st February 2017.</p> <p>16/04686/RENE Installation of solar PV array and associated infrastructure. Land At North West Of Whittle Ponds Acklington Northumberland. Comments invited until 6th February 2017.</p> <p>No: 17/00070/FUL Replacement of existing bungalow and ancillary outbuildings with new cottage and garage. The Bungalow, Old Swarland, Swarland, Morpeth Northumberland NE65 9HU. Comments invited until 10th February 2017.</p> <p>Parish Cllrs reported having difficulties in accessing the NCC planning portal (messages of 'server not available'). It was suggested over the next two or three weeks that Cllrs make a note of the date/time of problems and pass this information to the Clerk to collate, and contact NALC to check if other PC's are having similar problems.</p> <p>Cllr Cunningham spoke in connection with 16/04570/FUL (which does have on site parking) and said that the PC should object to future applications which do not have adequate on site parking.</p>	
11.	<p>Correspondence NCC Copy of Archaeology in Northumberland Volume 22. Letter from Anne Marie Trevellyan MP about new funding from Government to NCC for pothole repairs (previously circulated).</p>	Clerk
12.	<p>Urgent items a.Cllr Richardson said the planter in The Square (with a weather board false bottom to protect electric) has rotted through and needs repair. She agreed to ask John Richardson to provide quote for repair costs. b.Cllr Spurling said the Stephen Carey Fund are offering a round of defibrillator training which may be of interest to Nelsons staff, the VP Cttee and members of the public. c. Cllr Francis has asked the Clerk to obtain a copy of the draft Register of Electors so the PC can check for inaccuracies before publication in March. d.Parish Litter Pick – Cllr Anderson agreed to organise the litter pick in 2017. It was agreed it would be Sunday 19th March at 10.00 meeting at The Square. Item to go in The Column.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Cllr Richardson</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Cllr Anderson</p>
13.	<p>Requests for next agenda a.At the next election in 2017, this Parish Council will reduce from 12 to 10 Parish Councillors. At the next meeting Parish Cllrs will discuss who is minded to stand again.</p>	Clerk
14.	<p>Date of Next Meeting - 22/2/2017 JH, 22/3/2017 SVH, 26/4/2017 JH, 24/5/2017 SVA.</p>	

Meeting finished at 20.55

- 1) **Summary:** this paper provides an update of the current year's (16-17) financial position, and it makes recommendations regarding the Parish Council's budget and precept for 2017-18. Briefly:
 - i) Overall, we should be close to break-even at the year-end, 31 March 2017. However, both our income and expenditure have significantly increased due to several new grant-aided projects
 - ii) For next year (17-18), we recommend a precept of £19k
 - iii) We propose to establish a 'community projects fund', using some of our current reserves, which can be used in future to support improvements to our community's village halls and VP, beyond our normal annual donations.
 - iv) We wish to develop our relationship further, with the two village halls, to promote their work, to secure greater VAT recovery on their behalf, and to give them greater confidence re their future programme of improvements.
 - v) We will bring-forward the timetable for the following year's (18-19) budget exercise, with the aim of finalising our precept at our November 2017 meeting.

- 2) **Current year (16-17):** the accompanying spreadsheet shows both the original budget for this year, as agreed in January 16, and also an up-to-date revision.
 - i) We planned for income and expenditure of roughly £18k, but this has significantly increased due largely to our role in two community projects (see below), plus some Government-funded work to increase our website 'transparency'.
 - ii) Aside from these new projects, we are not heading towards a significant surplus or deficit at the year-end.
 - iii) On behalf of Vyner park, we received a £10k grant from the County Council Members' Small Grants Scheme (courtesy of Cllr Thorne), all of which will have been spent by the year-end, on various capital works.
 - iv) To maximise our lawful reclamation of VAT on the Jubilee Hall's bell tower renovation, we paid directly for part of this work. See para 7 below
 - v) We did not need to meet our planned expenditure on community transport, due to the introduction by the County Council of a new service, at no further costs to us.

- 3) **Next year (17-18):** we agreed at our November 16 meeting to consult our community, via The Column, on some possible changes to what would otherwise be the status quo, as follows: greater support for the 2 village halls; provision for a review of the parish plan, and a possible heritage project; fulfilling new statutory obligations; reduction in Vyner Park support. We have since received no protests from residents, and so our proposed budget embraces those changes. The accompanying spreadsheet shows proposed expenditure of just over £19k, to be funded almost entirely by a precept of £19k. This is a 5.6% increase on the current year precept, and is actually 5.0 percent lower than the 15-16 figure. Please note that the 17-18 expenditure is a little atypical,

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because our support for the Jubilee hall has been brought-forward to the current year, and because any NCC cost-recovery for the May 2017 parish election will not occur until 2018.

- 4) **Parish council reserves:** although an accurate figure will not be known until after the year-end, our reserves are roughly £14k, which is more than sufficient for our own internal contingencies. Although our external auditor is unlikely to challenge the size of the reserve, at the year-end we propose to designate a significant part of it as a new fund, which can be drawn upon from time to time, on application, to support improvement projects in the premises of the parish's three community charities: Jubilee Hall; Swarland Village Hall; and Vyner Park. This would be in addition to, and not instead of, our normal annual support for the three charities.
- 5) **Vyner Park Charity:** please see the VPC's own budget for 17-18. We are proposing to make a contribution of £7140 next year, which is a modest reduction from the current year's support of £7258. This should enable VPC to carry out (a) 'business as usual' and (b) various improvements. Information supplied to us by VPC: *The former (a) includes*
 - 1) *replacing floodlight bulbs at the tennis courts and car park lights,*
 - 2) *grass cutting, plus the baling and disposal of cutting waste from the natural grassland area,*
 - 3) *fence and hedge work,*
 - 4) *maintaining or replacing fences and equipment in the children's playground,*
 - 5) *carrying out repairs (on taps, fans and the electrics etc) in the Pavilion.*

The latter (b) includes

 - 1) *cleaning the surface of the tennis courts and repainting them,*
 - 2) *replacement of tennis nets,*
 - 3) *overhauling the bowling green,*
 - 4) *having substantial tree surgery carried out (though much of that needs doing before 31st March before the growing season gets underway).*
- 6) **Swarland Village Hall:** SVH is leased from the Parish Council, and its volunteer management committee are responsible for all repairs and improvements. We are recommending a modest increase in our annual support, from £1800 to £1900, due to its very healthy current reserves, but major expenditure will be needed at some stage. Information supplied to us by SVH: *SVH has secured grants from 'Awards for All' to refurbish the kitchen and gents toilets, to install a new sound system, to refurbish the stage area and most recently to replace all the external doors and some windows which were rotten. In order to be successful in securing these grants, SVH has needed to put 20 - 25% of the total costs up front from its reserves. Future projects are: external*

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painting his year (unlikely to be grant-aidable) £1000; and refurbishment of disabled toilet (approx £3000). In addition, due to the number of times the floor has been sanded and re sanded over the years, the T&G joints are dangerously thin and collapsing, causing the problems especially for activities such as karate and qui jong where protruding floor boards could cause serious injury. If the floor needs to be totally replaced, this could be very expensive

- 7) **Jubilee Hall:** the JH is leased from the successors to the late Capt Widdrington's estate, and the volunteer management committee are responsible for all repairs and improvements. In recent years they have carried out a range of repairs and improvements, which have been part-funded by external grants, where available. The PC's annual support in the past has been in the region of £1200 pa. The JH reserves have been perilously low, and the emergency major refurbishment of the decaying Bell Tower, initiated during 2016, has been exceptionally challenging. In Autumn 2016, the JH committee asked the PC to bring-forward any grant that we might have made in 2017-18, in order to meet pay the outstanding bills. This, the PC agreed in principle, and also to take steps to maximise the lawful reclamation of VAT on behalf of JH. Having examined the detail of JH's external fund-raising and the final roofing bill of £5574 gross, our recommendation (as included in the 16-17 revised budget) is for the PC's net contribution to be £2000, and also to make a VAT reclaim of £929 for the benefit of the JH; the rest to be reimbursed by the JH committee. The JH reserve at March 17 is likely to be about £3.5k, which is very low. We would envisage recommending a similar annual contribution of £2000 to JH in 2018; the Parish Council does not need to decide this, yet.
- 8) **Future village hall projects:** both SVH and JH are working hard for their communities, and they deserve our support. We have started to show an interest in their plans for the future, beyond just giving them an annual grant. They have incurred expenditure in the past, where we have provided some financial support, on which the VAT could have been reclaimed if an appropriate procedure had been followed. While respecting their independence, we recommend that the Parish Council should open a dialogue with the committees, in order to:
- help promote their work
 - help plan future repairs and refurbishments
 - maximise the reclamation of VAT, that we can hand back to the committees.
- 9) **Finance Group:** note that the Finance group is an advisory body, within the Parish Council. It is not a formal committee, and it has no decision-making powers. It is currently composed of: Robert Brotherton (convenor), Jan Anderson, Helen Handyside, Suzanne Stanley and David Francis.

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APPENDIX 2.

DRAFT PARISH COUNCIL BUDGET 2017/18

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DRAFT BUDGET 5 2017-18 - Following Finance Group meeting 16-1-2017					
	Budget 2016/17	Current at 23/11/16	Expected outturn at 31/3/17	DRAFT 2017/18	Notes
INCOME:					
VAT Refunds	-	-	2,808.40	-	Includes JH Bell tower repair vat
Precept	18,000.00	18,000.00	18,000.00	19,000.00	To be decided
Interest received	-	-	-	-	Re-Investment needed
Allotments	-	-	-	-	Now in VP budget
SVA (Column)	150.00	125.00	187.50	187.50	
Miscellaneous	-	121.93	151.93	-	
Vyner Park Grant.	-	10,000.00	10,000.00	-	
Repayment from JH	-	-	2,645.00	-	
Transparency Grant	-	760.00	760.00	-	
	18,150.00	29,006.93	34,552.83	19,187.50	
EXPENDITURE:					
Admin					
PC Insurance	302.39	302.39	302.39	1,210.00	Increase in policy tax. Includes VP.
Audit fee	100.00	130.00	130.00	100.00	
Clerks Salary	4,000.00	2,674.32	4,011.48	4,100.00	NALC/SLCC recommended increase from 1/4/2017
Clerks expenses	400.00	196.96	296.69	400.00	
Donations	250.00	284.61	384.61	250.00	£100 allowed for 4 current requests.
Subscriptions	220.00	206.49	231.49	240.00	
IT Provision	325.00	180.00	180.00	180.00	
SVH Grant	1,800.00	-	1,800.00	1,900.00	
Newsletter	500.00	250.00	375.00	500.00	
Jubilee Hall	70.00	5,574.00	5,574.00	-	Grant for 2017/18 pd 2016/17. £2645 to be repaid by JH to PC by 31.3.2017.
Davisons Obelisk	160.00	160.00	160.00	160.00	Budget confirmed 10/16
Cemetery & War Memorials	1,750.00	1,702.20	1,702.20	1,750.00	
Bus Service	1,000.00	440.00	440.00	-	
The Square	270.00	-	150.00	150.00	For Christmas Trees
New Projects	-	-	-	1,000.00	Parish Plan and Local History projects new in 2017/18
Recoverable VAT	-	-	2,808.40	-	
Transparency	-	-	760.00	-	
Vyner Park	6,800.00	7,288.61	7,288.61	7,140.00	See separate VPC draft budget.
Grant from NCC for VP	10,000.00	8,851.38	10,486.38	-	Reassignment of blockwork shed wks.
	27,947.39	28,240.96	37,081.25	19,080.00	