

Westerleigh Parish Council
Minutes of the meeting of the Finance & General Purposes Committee
Held 17th February 2014
Manor Hall Coalpit Heath

Present

Councillors: Cllrs: D Lee, J Butler, D Boulton, A Gibbs, P King, J Wright, K Arathoon,
Officer – F Thornton Clerk/RFO

1. Apologies for absence

Cllr E Carey

2. Declarations of Interest under The Localism Act 2011

None

3. Approve minutes of meeting held 18th November 2013

Decision: proposed by Cllr K Arathoon and seconded by Cllr D Boulton to approve the minutes.
Agreed by all.

4. Council tax base, precept arrangements and LCTR grant 2014/15

The Clerk circulated a letter of 16 December 2013 outlining the arrangements from South Glos. Council.

Confirmation of the 2014/15 Council Tax Base and Local Council Tax Reduction (LCTR) Support Grant allocation following decisions at meetings held on the 6 January 2014 has now been issued.

For this Council the details are:-

2014/15 Council Tax Base 1,332

Local Council Tax Reduction Support Grant £5,093

Potential Referendum Threshold

The Government has not extended referendum principles to Town & Parish councils.

The key element of the recent written ministerial statement by Local Government Minister Brandon Lewis MP on the final local government finance settlement 2014/2015 is below:

"We have not determined principles for local precepting authorities in 2014 to 2015, but we are putting on notice that we are prepared if necessary to apply the referendum thresholds to larger town and parish councils from 2015 to 2016 onwards to provide protection for local taxpayers and extend the principle of direct democracy."

The statement also reiterates the Minister's expectation council tax support funding is passed on to parish councils:

"We have also set out previously that there is some £3.3 billion in the settlement this year for Council Tax support schemes.

There is an element within this national pot that is there specifically to reflect reductions in the parish tax base. We have not separately identified the money because it is not ring-fenced and as caseloads change and schemes evolve, the amount that different parishes need will change. It would be wrong to try to manage that centrally. But we have been clear that we expect billing authorities to carry on passing on support to town councils and parishes to help mitigate any reduction in their taxbase due to the local Council Tax support scheme."

The statement in full can be viewed at the following link:-

<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/final-local-government-finance-settlement-2014-to-2015>

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5. Committee to discuss website

South Glos. Council currently host this Council's website as a community's link on their website. Clerk suggested that Council may wish to now stand alone and have a custom built website.

Decision: proposed by Cllr D Lee, seconded by Cllr D Boulton for Council to have its own website built. Agreed by all. Clerk to investigate costings etc. and report back.

6. Staffing sub-committee notes 20th January 2014

a) Committee to adopt notes to form part of this meetings minutes

Agreed

b) Committee to review Clerking hours

Decision: Proposed by Cllr D Lee and seconded by Cllr D Boulton to increase the working hours of the Clerk to 30hrs per week effective from 1st March 2014.

Vote: 6 in favour, 1 abstention Motion carried.

This to be reviewed after a six month period.

Date of next meeting: 19th May 2014

Signed..... (Chair) Date: 19th May 2014

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