

LISKEARD TOWN COUNCIL

AT A MEETING of the **PROPERTY COMMITTEE** held in the Council Chamber on Tuesday 13 January 2015 at 6.45 pm there were present:

The Mayor - Councillor Phil Seeva Ex-officio

The Deputy Mayor - Councillor Jane Pascoe Ex-officio

Councillor Ian Goldsworthy - in the Chair

Councillors: Sally Hawken, Hella Tovar and Christina Whitty. Councillor Powell apologised for his late arrival.

Town Clerk - Mr Steve Vinson

Minute Clerk - Mr Stuart Houghton

Head Caretaker - Mr Tony Misson

Members of the Public - None

The Chairman advised those present of Housekeeping matters

554/14 APOLOGIES

An apology was received from Councillor Sue Pike

555/14 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None

556/14 MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 11 NOVEMBER 2014

The Deputy Mayor proposed, Councillor Tovar seconded and the Committee **RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the meeting held on the 9 December 2014 were **APPROVED**.

557/14 TOWN CLERK'S REPORT FOR INFORMATION

The Town Clerks report had been circulated and was noted.

558/14 MAUDLIN FARM REPORT ON AMENITY LAND

The Town Clerk reported that he had included this item in his report that had been circulated. He recommended that the Council was advised not to obtain ownership of this land. Members discussed the options for the use of this land;

- As the land was adjacent to a school it could be used by it for expansion. This would be the decision of the school, not Cornwall Council
- Cornwall Council did not have a future use for the land as the access was unsuitable for expansion of the school
- Costings for the maintenance of this land were not yet available
- An allowance, up to £2k, should be made in this years budget for basic maintenance
- The Town Councils insurers should be consulted of its intention if it takes the land
- The Town Clerk reported that he had obtained the original deed for the Addington Allotments and the land had been acquired by the Town Council without encumbrance
- If a portion of the allotments at Addington were used for building, the money could be used to provide additional new allotments on the Maudlin Farm amenity land
- A games area could also be provided at Maudlin Farm
- Financial assistance might be available if it was a multi-use amenity area
- If this option was taken up there would need to be public consultation for the proposal
- The use of the Maudlin Farm land was ring fenced by the Section 106 agreement for amenity purposes
- Allotments were deemed to be an amenity
- The additional allotments could provide a further revenue stream for the Council

Councillor Powell proposed, Councillor Hawken seconded and the Committee **RESOLVED** to **RECOMMEND** that the Council adopt the Maudlin Farm amenity land.

559/14 BUDGET REPORT TO 31 OCTOBER

The budget report, as circulated, had previously been discussed.

560/14 BUDGET 2015 - 2016

The Town Clerk had included the fact that a 2% cap would not apply to our Budget for the next year in his report.

Councillor Goldsworthy gave details for Option 2 for the Committees budget for 2015/2016. The provision of the Photovoltaic Panels on the Public Hall was a priority; they would give a future income stream for the Council which would help to offset the effect of the reduced grant that would be available, from Cornwall Council, in the future.

Councillor Goldsworthy proposed, Councillor Hawken seconded and the Committee **RESOLVED** that Option Two for the 2015/2016 budget be **RECOMMENDED** to the Council.

In response to a question, the Chair responded that scheme could not progress until certain points with regard to planning and other constraints had been clarified

561/14 CORRESPONDENCE

None.

PART II

Not required

562/14 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was agreed that the next meeting would be held on Tuesday 10 February 2015.

5. Clerk's Report – For Information – Property 13th January 2015

Meeting & Action	Update	When
P Sept Set up Public Hall working group to consider use.	Public Hall working group met and considered range and scope of issue. If Public Hall improvements go into next year's budget hold further meetings to progress issue.	TC Mar 2015
P Sept Multi Use Games Area Rapsons lease renewal but with a longer than 7 year lease and Neighbour issue.	11th December CORMAC tree surgeon attended site meeting with neighbour, Cornwall Council Property and Liskeard Town Council. Scope of issues identified. CORMAC tree surgeon gave advice on various options and agreed to obtain rough costings to allow all parties to consider way forward.	TC P in Feb 2015
P Sept Allotments – Bring about improvements in untidy plots by inspection and follow up.	15th Oct visit 6 plots identified. Letters written and follow up phone calls. Oct and Nov inspections. Carried out. Visible progress on 2 plots. Offer to give back part plot on third. Ongoing inspection of the allotments is being undertaken. Replacement wooden covers for the taps have been provided. Replacement fencing investigated. Replacements posts needed. Hedge cutting specification is being considered. 5th January additional plot given up by previous plotholder. This is a large plot. Re-letting options are being considered.	TC Feb 2015

6. – Amenity Land at Maudlin Farm, Liskeard - Update Cornwall Council's Planning Service has been contacted to follow up on questions raised by Councillors at the last meeting of the Town Council. Cornwall Council planning service has indicated:

1. The site has been repossessed so there is not a developer involved, viability information has been submitted and assessed by our affordable housing team and it clearly illustrates that the scheme is not financially viable to provide contributions.
2. The parcel of land that has been offered is outside of the application red site line but has been offered as a good will gesture, and therefore there would be no financial support available to the Town Council via this application.
3. We have a deadline of the 28th January to complete this application and therefore it may be too late to include the land transfer at this late stage.
4. The land is allocated on the past Section 106 a land for amenity purposes and therefore if any different uses were proposed for the land it would be subject to a full planning application and assessment.
5. The Council (Cornwall Council) are not looking to adopt any more land a present.

Next Steps - The amenity land would appear to still benefit from the protection afforded by the Section 106 and a formal planning application would need to be made to change that status.

The site is directly adjacent to St Martins' School and the question has been asked whether there is a present or future need to expand the school. If so it might be prudent to reserve a part of the site for that purpose.

Recommendation: As there is no funding attached to the transfer of land and the site has development constraints, it is recommended that the Town Council does not attempt to obtain ownership at this current time.

7 – Budget Report to 31st December 2014

Separate budget sheet attached.

8. Budget 2015/2016 – Latest Information

Councillors have previously asked whether Town Councils will subject to the same 2% increase in the Council Tax as are the Principal Councils, such as locally, Cornwall Council.

We have now received the following guidance from Cornwall Council on the next 2015/2016 financial year.

“the Local Government Finance Settlement, that the excessive Council Tax threshold for 2015/16 will again be 2%.

However the threshold will **NOT** be applied to Town and Parish Councils.

The Minister stated:

‘Parishes are an important part of local government, delivering valuable and valued local services. However that is not a reason for them to impose inflation busting increases on their taxpayers. The average Band D council tax in England has risen by 2% since 2011/12 – the equivalent figure for the parish element is 14.7% over the same period. That is why I would welcome views on whether the highest spending parishes should be subject to the same referendum principle as the rest of local government. There is also a question about whether town and parish councils whose failings have been highlighted in a Public Interest Report should be included’.

Approved Strategy for 2015/2016 Budget and Precept Setting.

At the 25th November 2014 Finance and Strategy Committee meeting consideration was given to the strategy that the Council would adopt in setting the 2015/2016 budget and the 2015/2016 precept.

The Committee recommended to Council and its various Committees that they look at two options. Option One has already been developed by looking at the current and known trends and the impact of external funding cuts and external cost increasing factors.

Option 2 seeks to build on Option 1 but to acknowledge the ongoing cuts in external income to the Town Council it would be prudent to develop an alternative income stream through the provision of a photo voltaic scheme on the public hall. It is also considered beneficial to build on the current measures the Town Council is taking to improve the economic health of the town.

Comparison 2014/2015 and draft 2015/2016 budgets

	2014/2015	2015/2016	Change	%
Gross Budget	£388,656	£401,915	+£13,259	+3.4%
Less Income	£-41,200	£-43,800	+£2,600	+6.3%
Net Expenditure	£347,456	£358,115	+£10,659	+3.0%
Less Council Tax Grant	£54,971	£43,064	-£11,907	-21.6%
Precept	£292,485	£315,051	+£22,566	+7.72%

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306/14

The 2014/2015 precept was an increase of £7,915. This equated to a 2.78% increase.

Option 1 £22,566 – +7.72% Standstill Budget taking account of external cuts to our income sources and Government derived increases in costs regarding superannuation, national minimum wage etc.

Option 2 £22,566 + £20,000 (additional economic measures) + £30,000 (photo voltaic panels) = £72,566 – 24.81% increase in precept to permit a range of potential investments by the Council to reduce costs and improve the economic well-being of the town.

Impact on the Town Council portion of Band D Council Tax 2014/2015 Figures.

Band D Town Council Proportion of Council Tax Element 2014/2015 - £107.62

Band D Property Impact 7.72% increase	Band D Property Impact 24.81% increase
£8.30 per year	£26.70 per year
69p per month	£2.23 per month
15p per week	51p per week

Property Committee – Impact Option 2

The proposal to allocate a sum of £30,000 towards photo voltaic panels on the Public Hall will fall within the remit of the Property Committee.

With regards the £20,000 additional economic measures in Option 2 the Property Committee has already identified several prospective schemes.

These include:

Rapsons Field grass cutting approximately £3,000 per annum based upon Thorne Park. CORMAC tree surgeon site visit on 11th December produced recommendations to retain the native hazel and hawthorn trees on the boundary hedge between the Council and neighbours properties. The neighbour has already indicated that they would not contribute to the tree works as they wish to see all the boundary trees cut back. The Cormac quote will be reported when received.

Westborne Gardens grounds maintenance £4,000 per annum once up to standard. Grounds maintenance might be covered by the Town Council as part of a jointly managed asset as per the discussions of 2013. However, if there was a desire to long lease or transfer to the Town Council several items would need attention by Cornwall Council before the long lease or transfer:

- a. include part of the Lawn to make the site fully useful.
- b. ensure that 4 or 5 car parking spaces are decommissioned to allow proper access.
- c. survey and repair the walls
- d. deal with the over age trees especially the Hornbeams

Cornwall Council property response indicated that the value of any land lost at the lawn would need to be capitalised against the scheme.

We have started looking for contractors to conduct the topographical survey. One quote had so far being received. A second is being chased up.

Public Hall Working Group In addition to potential Cornwall Council projects the Public Hall Working Group has been formed to look at measures to improve the facilities and building for the community. The recommendations should ideally be cost neutral or even save money or generate income.

This group has met on 14th October. Should this years' Property Projects budget allow/or if not next year's budget should allow an element for a professional design specification to be prepared once the outcomes of the Public Hall Working Group become clear.

SUMMARY

At the previous Property Committee meeting it was recommended and subsequently adopted by Council that owing to the need to reduce costs and increase income the photo voltaic panels be given priority in budget setting.

It is possible that the two costings being investigated under the Westborne Gardens and Rapsons Field items above can be accommodated within the relevant 2014/2015 budgets and hence would not be put forward for inclusion in the 2015/2016 budget.