

Abbots Langley Parish Council

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15th October 2020.

To Members of the Leisure Committee

Councillors Sara Bedford, Jean Bowman, Liz Burns, Jane Lay, Simon Stanley, John Wyatt (Chairman) & Roxanne Yau.

The next meeting of the Leisure Committee will be held virtually ^[1] on Wednesday 21st October 2020 when your presence is summoned for the purpose of transacting the business outlined below.

The meeting will be held on the Zoom platform. Login details are available from the Clerk to the Council.

The press and public are welcome to attend the meeting.

Tim Perkins
Clerk to the Council

^[1] *Permitting legislation - The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020.*

AGENDA

1. **Apologies for Absence**
To receive and accept apologies for absence.
2. **Declarations of Interest**
To receive declarations of interest in items on the agenda.
3. **Public Participation**
To note if any members of the public have requested to speak at this meeting, in accordance with the Parish Council's Public Speaking Arrangements.
4. **To confirm the Minutes of the Meeting held on**
19th August 2020.
5. **Reports from Allotments Representatives**
To receive reports from the Allotments Representatives.
6. **Reports from Sports Representatives**
To receive reports from the Sports Representatives.
7. **Budget 2021-2022**
 - i. To consider the latest update of Key Projects. (Key Projects report enclosed ^[1])
 - ii. To consider the first revision of the committee pages for the above. (Committee pages from budget book v1 enclosed and Clerk's report item 1. ^[1])
 - iii. To consider the first draft of Fees & Charges 2020-2021. (Fees & Charges v1 enclosed and Clerk's report item 2. ^[1])

^[1] *Committee members only, others on request.*

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8. Updates

To consider updates from the Clerk on the following:

- i. Pitch Fees 2020-2021
- ii. Works Team Staffing
- iii. Christmas Carols and Lights On

(Clerk's report item 3.)

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Abbots Langley Parish Council
Clerk's Report - Leisure Committee - October 2020

1. Budget 2021-2022

Introduction

This is a very early first cut of the budget. Usual health warnings, lots of work in progress and analysis still to do.

This budget as I have said previously is going to be challenging, this is the first committee review of the budget and it is important that the committee stays within its terms of reference.

Due to the drop in income this year and an expected slow recovery next year the projected General Fund balance at the end of this financial year will be lower than budgeted, going into next year income will be slow to recover.

This committee needs to consider project priorities for next year, which projects can be deferred and which should go ahead.

Projects like the lights at Primrose Hill and the Depot Surface could be funded from the Community Infrastructure Levy funds, these funds cannot be vired to support the revenue budget, they can only be used for infrastructure capital projects.

It will then be the responsibility of the Finance & Administration Committee to "balance" the budget and it may have to come back to this committee, possibly at an additional meeting, with specific expenditure challenges.

Budget Expenditure 2020-2021

No major issues with spend in this financial year.

The main budget line that will come under pressure will be Tree Works (Playing Fields 7234). Current estimated expenditure is £20,000 (+£6,500) due to extensive works required after the latest Tree Risk Assessments and the Tree Management Plan for the High Street.

The trees in the High Street have become over bearing, are restricting light to the properties and are also generating complaints due to strikes from high vehicles.

The additional expenditure on this line will be covered by underspends elsewhere in this budget head.

Income

To try and come up with some objective income numbers for Year End 2020-2021 and new Budget 2021-2022 working with colleagues I have come up with some income assumptions.

These are baselined on the actual income at the end of the financial year on 31st March 2020, which were only marginally affected by the pandemic and look forward into this financial year and next, estimating income as a percentage of the baseline.

The assumptions take account of the bookings that are returning (slowly), look forward into next year taking account of the bookings already made and also include a fair amount of gazing into foggy crystal balls.

The percentages set can be argued, and we have argued them amongst ourselves as being optimistic, pessimistic, or just plain wrong.

If we estimate income too high there is a risk the financial hole will just be deeper next year, if the bookings do not return.

If we estimate too low, then there is some possible upside, but there is the risk we will take actions that are not needed. Just saying there is not a right or wrong answer.

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But the budget needs to be driven by data that can be explained to the auditors, as it affects the precept we will be raising and this is the most objective method with which I could come up.

Refer to the enclosed "Commercial Income - Year End & Budget Assumptions" spreadsheet for discussion.

Overall Summary

Following will probably be a common theme through budget discussions this year:

Positives

- COVID Support Grant from TRDC (£25,000)
- Expenditure particularly on Leisure codes lower than usual due to lockdown and hot weather impacting usual summer works.
- Higher than budgeted General Fund balance at 31st March 2020 (c.£35,000).
- Saving one Groundsperson's salary and on costs. (Left Feb 2020 replacement earliest Nov 2020.)
- Saving Grounds Apprentice salary and on costs from October 2020.
- Pitch hire income 87% of budget.
- Large committed expenditure funded from Community Infrastructure Levy (Primrose Hill Play Area), so does not impact revenue budgets.

Negatives

- Complete loss of Manor House hire and bars income for financial year. Offset by no bar staffing costs and stock purchases.
- Likely slow recovery of hire and bar revenue in 2021-2022.
- Tanners Wood Hall hire income slowly coming back in this financial year (20% of 2019-2020 forecast).
- A potential budget challenge for next financial year if Henderson Hub Co. decide to break their lease at the November 2020 break point.

I will expand on this for the upcoming Finance & Administration Committee.

2. Fees & Charges 2021-2022

The allotments, pitch fees and lease rentals have been increased by between 3%-4%, which is in line with previous years increases.

The charges for hiring the Manor House and Tanners Wood Hall have been frozen in line with the current charges.

The loss of booking and bar revenue in 2020, which will extend into 2021, will be very significant. Whilst the society/club type bookings are good community events, the rental and bar income are generally low. The important bookings from a rental and bar income perspective are the Friday/Saturday night functions and events such as weddings, these generally provide the bulk of the profitable income.

When the situation starts to return to normal these bookings need to be aggressively pursued.

It is recommended that Delegation of Authority is granted to the Facilities Manager/Clerk to agree discounts as appropriate to secure bookings which offer a significant booking and bar revenue opportunity. Any discounts of greater than 10% to be reported to this committee.

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3. Updates

i. Pitch Fees 2020-2021

Follow up to the discussions at the August meeting of this committee (min. 106.).

Invoices to the football clubs based on the charging arrangements agreed by members have been raised. The feedback from clubs on the revised arrangements was generally positive.

Under delegated authority I agreed charging arrangements with the cricket clubs for the significantly curtailed season. The teams that played competitive games were charged in line with the Fees and Charges rates, less a 50% discount which reflected the games played. The arrangements were consistent for both clubs.

ii. Works Team Staffing

The Grounds Apprentice left on 9th October and is re-joining the military. She has been a hard worker and a credit to the team, hopefully her future career will be as successful.

A member of the Works Team was on extended sick leave, they have returned to work full time but are on restricted duties.

Recruitment is underway to replace the member of staff who left just before lockdown. Some promising applications have been received.

iii. Christmas Lights

The lights in the High Street have been rigged, this is much earlier than usual but the contractor was concerned about possible local lockdowns and availability of qualified staff if their business was impacted by C-19.

A Christmas Tree has been ordered for the church grounds, this will be lit as last year. The lights will still be turned on as planned on 3rd December but there will be no public event organised. The Chairman and Vicar will still switch on the lights. Discussions are currently ongoing and final arrangements will be confirmed nearer the time.

Tim Perkins
15th October 2020.

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