

**Minutes of a Meeting of Doddinghurst Parish Council Finance and Resource Committee held on Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> October 2013 @ 19.30, Parish Room, Doddinghurst Road, Doddinghurst.**

**Present:** Cllrs. Mrs Dicker (Chairman), A. Farrow, G.W. Bateson, C Enderby, G Smith as committee members and Councillors D Potter, Adrian Oliver and Diane Rogers-Harrison.

1. **Apologies for absence.** None absent.
2. **Declaration of Interests relating to items on the agenda.** None declared.
3. **Resolved:** Approved the minutes of the meeting of the 15<sup>th</sup> May 2013.
4. **Information:** Noted, updates on the following:
  - External audit signed off and notice of audit completion posted.
5. **Resolved:** Agreed that the Parish Council will change its Barclays account from a tandem operated Business Saving/Current Account to a Barclays Community account as savings interest is at an all-time low and bank charges are rising. A community account is free of bank transaction charges for Cheques and Direct Debits. At present Bank Charges are in the region of £15 per month. Cheque signatories would remain unchanged.
6. **Resolved:** Funding arrangements for future projects for recommendation to full council. It was agreed that to reduce initial costs the Children's Play Area refurbishment would focus on the provision of new equipment and exclude replacing the existing play surface. Replacement of the playchip safer surfacing is to be considered as a second stage of the project. Three competitive quotes would be obtained for the equipment replacement identified at the GP meeting of the 17<sup>th</sup> July 2013. A CIF grant application for £20,000 has been made and other grant applications will be made where possible. If short term funds are required to cover cash flow requirements for VAT payments a PWLB borrowing will be established in the year of the project. The Council noted that such a loan would bear administration fees and interest.
7. **Resolved:** Agreed in principle, a policy for 14/15 precept and future year's precept strategy for recommendation to full council.
  - a) In the light of forecast income, prior years below inflation increases and limited potential cost savings, the Committee recommended a 20% increase in precept spread over three years. At £40 per annum for a Band D property the parish precept is below the £50 national average for Parish Councils and it accounts for just 2.66% of the total Council Tax bill payable by a village householder. The increase would be 6.66% or £2.64p per annum for a Band D property. It was recognised that this recommendation extended into the 2016 Council period.
  - b) The Council also agreed a caveat that, should it occur, a loss of LCTS grant and/or Brentwood Discretionary Grant funding would be made up in precept increases in addition to the underlying increase set out in (a) above.
8. **Any Other Urgent Business strictly for information only.** None raised.

**The meeting was closed at 21.50.**

Signed:.....Deborah Dicker (Chairman)

Dated: 2014