

PORLOCK PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Extraordinary Parish Council Meeting held at Porlock Village Hall on Wednesday 18th. May at 7.30pm

Present: Cllr. Alan Wright, Chairman
Cllr. Keith Jacobs, Vice-Chairman
Cllr. Britnell, Cllr. Edward, Cllr. Mrs. Gable
Cllr. Mrs. Haynes, Cllr. Latham, Cllr. McCoy,
Cllr. Mrs. Palmer, Cllr. Mrs. Rowe,
Cllr. Mrs. Russell and Cllr. Sage
Also present: Cllr. Frances Nicholson (SCC/ENP)
Cllr. Jon Freeman (WSC/ENP)
Cllr. Karen Mills (WSC)
The Clerk, Mrs. C. Fitzgerald

1. Apologies

The full Council was in attendance.

2. The Chairman opened the meeting by welcoming those present and explaining that the meeting had been called to provide an opportunity for public discussion on the Parish Council's overall financial position, and how this will be impacted by proposed funding cuts and future devolved services. The Parish Council wished to obtain the views of the community in order that these could be reflected in future decisions.

3. Presentation of facts

By the means of slides the Chairman outlined the present financial situation and explained how the Council received its funding through the precept. He then explained how this money was spent by the Parish Council on the various services and facilities in the village. Finally he advised the meeting of the various options available to the Parish Council to fund the £10K shortfall in the finances following the closure of the Library.

- **Cut costs** : The Council will be monitoring its accounts very closely to identify possible savings. One way of doing this would be to cut support to local organisations such as the Village Hall and Visitor Centre.
- **Raise the Precept**: A £20 per year increase on the Council Tax for a Band D property would cover the immediate shortfall and would give basic funding to provide a community Library.

The Chairman concluded his presentation by informing the meeting that the Parish Council felt these decisions were too important to be taken without first consulting the electorate. The Council needed to know which facilities were most valued and which the community wished to support by raising the Precept, or whether they felt the precept should be kept flat and organisations left to manage by other means.

4.Part Night Street Lighting

Before the meeting was opened to the public Cllr. Mrs. Haynes gave background information on the SCC part night street lighting scheme being proposed for participating rural areas. The public were asked to give their views in the questionnaire as to whether they considered this scheme appropriate for Porlock.

The meeting was then adjourned and the floor thrown open for public discussion.

Notes as attached.

5. Summary

By a show of hands there was overwhelming support for an increase on the precept by £20 on a Band D property to cover the immediate shortfalls and enable the Parish Council to fund a community Library.

It was understood that all organisations at present supported by grants from the Parish Council would in future have to make a case for needing that grant rather than receiving it automatically, and would also be expected to look very closely at how they could cut costs or increase fund raising themselves.

Once details of other services likely to be devolved to the Parish Council were known the Chairman had assured the meeting that any sums added to the precept would be kept below an overall increase of £30 on a Band D property, and if the sum required was greater than this there would be further consultation with the community.

Those present were asked to complete a questionnaire with their views on which services and facilities the Parish Council should support.

A vote of thanks to the Chairman was made from the floor and the meeting was closed