

Freshford PC Chairman's Report – 13 Jan. 2020

1. FY2020-21 Budget

The initial draft budget for FY 2020/21 was presented at the December meeting and reviewed again at the January PC.

The key factors are:

- Fixed costs:
 - Loss of the Street Cleaning grant, providing a shortfall of £2,034.
 - Bulletin costs of £302.
 - Increase in the SSE Lighting Maintenance Contract of £186

This provides an increase in fixed costs of £2,552.

It is proposed that the budget is set taking these costs into account, along with a 2% inflation increase, on average, across other services.

There are some further projects, such as the moving the bus stop to village hub that the PC is looking to finance through external grants so as to minimise the pressure on the budget.

2. Precept

The increase in the fixed costs, plus a small inflation increase (2%) would be covered by a precept increase of £2,886 to provide a balanced budget.

The PC is requested to Approve a precept increase of £2,886.

3. Funding for Projects

BANES stated at a meeting of the Community Forum, that there is money available for projects that are 'ready to go'.

I mentioned the current position of the Freshford Surgery, and the feeling was that it should be more than possible to find funding. A warning was given as, whilst there have been successful projects, some have failed to obtain funding due to the projects not being well structured and not able to meet timescales as they were not 'ready to go'.

This bodes well for the Village Hub bus stop, and also provides a possible further source of funding for the surgery facility.

4. Clerk

Ruth Talboys has found full time employment and is not in a position to continue in the role of Clerk.

The PC wishes Ruth all the best in her new venture.

The role has been advertised through the school, the Galleries and Parish Communications.

Queries on the role have been received, so we remain hopeful of funding a replacement from within the local community.

5. Lighting

SSE have provided a new maintenance contract.

The PC is requested to Approve the new maintenance contract.

The electricity supplier for the street lights has been found to be SSE – but a different SSE that provides the maintenance. Apparently SSE Group consists of a number of different SSE companies, each of whom are not allowed to share information.

SSE Energy do not solely use renewable energy. As the PC has passed a Climate Emergency motion that should run through the PC decision making, investigations should be made into the cost of using an energy supplier that solely relies upon renewable energy.