

Minutes of the Meeting of Brundish Parish Council, held on 10th January 2013
in Brundish Parish Rooms.

Members present	Tony St Quinton (Chairman); Arnold Crudgington; Gerald Western; Anthony Bryant; Mark Hitchings; Celia Drakard; Helen Gillingham
Other persons	Sandra Apps, Clerk; Matthew Hicks, MSDC; PCSO Dave Faulkner
Apologies	None
Declaration of interests	None
Minutes	Minutes of meeting of 22 nd November 2012 were read, agreed and signed.
Matters arising	None
Finance	<p>Agenda items agreed.</p> <p>Precept briefly discussed but agreed no change was necessary. £2,300.</p> <p>NB Following communication from Mid Suffolk District Council, after both the meeting and after the precept request had been submitted, councillors were asked to consider a range of options (see attached email trail). Responses were received from six councillors, the majority of whom agreed to the precept request being reduced to £2,200, with the addition of the taxbase and discretionary grant of £196. This will give a total of £2,396.</p>
Planning	None
Roads	<p>AB has now started to photograph everything he reports – now has to go through a call centre and it is taking several calls for anything to be done, and repairs are of poor quality and not lasting. AB is now linking report reference numbers to his records and would like people to liaise with him when making reports. He is very concerned over the number of potholes locally and the fact that repairs take so long and are not lasting. MH suggested that mass reporting might produce better responses. Discussion ensued, various experiences noted; PCSO said that in terms of the road itself if police consider it is dangerous they can speak to council but it is no different to the parish council or a member of the public reporting it. AB will continue to monitor; will also pass on concerns to Eddie Alcock (SCC)</p>
Neighbourhood Watch	<p>PCSO reported on the burglary in The Street just before Christmas, a daytime break-in where jewellery was stolen – real increase in daytime break-ins recently. 5 crimes in Brundish reported to the police in 2012. Priorities in the next few months – road safety including problems with mud, potholes etc., also out building security – encouraging people to make sure everything is locked. Suspicious activity – the police rely heavily on the public reporting anything unusual – the public should ring 101 to report.</p> <p>AB talked about resurrecting the neighbourhood watch email system – members are willing to do it; a note to be put in the parish news to ask those interested to send their email clerk to go on the list – any report can then be flashed round. Clerk to compose & send to mag.</p> <p>GW asked about stolen property – was it ever available for identification? PCSO said that identifiable things could be – good idea to mark property and keep a record of serial number.</p>
Village Green	Estimate for repairs to play area fencing needed following site meeting presented – £270 approx – all agreed to go ahead.

	War memorial – proposal to raise funds to complete it by holding an event on a weekend in May – a presentation of photos, film, audio etc of memories of a WW1 veteran that lived locally. To be arranged by AB & ASQ; £15 a ticket to include lunch; two sessions on the Saturday and Sunday with 50 places available per session. All agreed that event could be held under auspices of the parish council.
Correspondence	Emails had been previously circulated – nothing required discussion.
MSDC councillor's report/SCC report	Tim Passmore has now resigned from MSDC to become police commissioner, replaced by Derek Hayes who was deputy; Marilyn Curran now deputy. Precept –Matthew explained that the recent changes made by central government mean if we leave it unchanged we would effectively get £128 less, but MSDC would make it up through a grant. Enforcement of planning decisions – MSDC has a large backlog and each parish council is being asked to comment on how important their issues are – there were currently three in the parish; each one was briefly discussed, and none was considered worth pursuing. SCC report had been previously circulated, no discussion needed other than AB's comment regarding road repairs – see roads.
Any other business	ASQ announced that he would like to stand down from the Chair this year at the AGM.
Date & time of next meetings	Thursday 14 th March 2013 Thursday 9 th May 2013 – PC AGM & Annual Parish Meeting Both at 7.45 pm in the Village Hall

Meeting closed at 8.46 pm

The email received from MSDC on 8th February 2013 and forwarded immediately to all councillors with the following note from the Clerk:

Dear Councillors

You may remember that this matter was discussed at the last meeting, after some input from Matthew Hicks, and it was agreed that, as long as we got the grant, we would keep our precept amount at the same level as last year, £2,300. We have already submitted our precept request form (the cut off date was 31st January), but this landed in my inbox today. Essentially, you have to decide, very quickly, if you want to go for a slightly lower precept, plus the grant, so residents will not have an increase in council tax, or keep it the same, accepting the grant, that will mean residents having a small rise in their council tax, despite our not requesting any more money, but will protect us from the possibility of the grant not being available next year. You may remember there was a little disquiet last year as we didn't ask for more precept but changes to the tax base meant there was an increase. The whole thing is as clear as mud to me, but I suggest your best option is Option 1, where we would get a smaller precept plus the grant that will actually give us the amount we are asking for, and our residents won't get a hike in their council tax bills. However, it is pointed out that we may not get the same level of protection next year, so requesting £2,300 next year might mean a rise in CT and could possibly trigger a referendum (though I would have thought the amounts we ask for wouldn't be enough to do that, but I don't know enough about the subject to be sure.) Anyway, read it all closely, and respond asap.

IT IS VERY IMPORTANT THAT **ALL** OF YOU RESPOND, VIA 'REPLY ALL', AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE - you will see that the cut off date for our decision is very close. It will be a real pain to try and arrange an extraordinary meeting to discuss this, but it is vital that your decision is recorded properly, so an email trail of everyone's response can be attached to the minutes of the next meeting instead, as long as EVERYONE responds.

I know it's complicated, and I've done my best to work out what it all entails for us.

Mrs S Apps

Clerk to Brundish Parish Council
Chantry Cottage
Brundish

IP13 8AZ

Please ask for: Sue Palmer/Barry Hunter

Direct line: 01473 825816/825819

Fax number: 01473 823594

Your reference:

Our reference: Parish Precepts 13/14 (4)

E-mail: sue.palmer@babergh.gov.uk or
barry.hunter@babergh.gov.uk

Please reply to: Babergh District Council Offices

—

Date 8 February 2013

Dear Mrs S Apps,

URGENT: Brundish Parish Council Precept, Taxbase and Discretionary Grant – Financial Year 2013/14

Further to our previous letters, I am writing to provide further details and important clarification on the above. This is to ensure that all Town and Parish Councils have an absolutely clear understanding of the implications of their precept levels and the discretionary grant on Band D Council Tax levels in 2013/14 and the potential position for 2014/15.

I apologise for writing to you again at such a very late stage in the process and asking you to consider and confirm the approach to setting your 2013/14 precept, but wanted to give all Town/Parish Councils the opportunity to confirm their wishes on what is a complicated matter and one that has potential implications beyond next year. This letter, therefore, sets out some

additional information for you to note and, more importantly, precept options on which we are seeking your confirmation.

I appreciate that the timing of this will undoubtedly cause you difficulties in terms of getting approval from your Council - however, having considered the matter very carefully, we believe this course of action is preferable to the potential difficulties that Town and Parish Councils may face in 2014/15, which may not be immediately apparent and which is explained further later. We feel on balance, that it is better to seek your views on this now rather than wait for a potential problem to arise later in the year.

1. Additional Information on taxbase and grant

First of all, we have undertaken a final review of the tax base and grant levels that would be payable as a result of the various changes brought about by the introduction of the Local Council Tax Support Scheme (LCTS).

This review has been around the way the government's calculation and allocation of grant impacts on individual parishes in 2013/14 and this has produced a different tax base figure from the one notified to you in our previous letter. As a result, the discretionary grant for your Town/Parish Council has also changed, in direct and equal proportion to the change in the tax base. So, in overall terms, there would be no or very little difference to the resulting level of Band D Council Tax for your Town/Parish in 2013/14 compared to the previous taxbase and grant figures.

For information, therefore, the final tax base for your Town/Parish Council for 2013/14 has been calculated as 65.75 Band D equivalent number of properties. In relation to the grant to offset the impact of the various changes relating to introducing the new Local Council Tax Support Scheme, I have calculated that this would amount to £196 for your Town/Parish. I am pleased to confirm that these are now the final tax base and grant figures.

2. Confirmation of Precept Level for 2013/14

The remainder of this letter concentrates on how the discretionary grant, taxbase and precept works in practice, with regard to what the position might be in 2014/15. Previous letters indicated the District Council's intention to offset the grant against your notified 2013/14 precept and calculate the Band D Council Tax using that lower figure, thus resulting in a Band D Council Tax for 2013/14 that reflected the reduced taxbase brought about by the Local Council Tax Support Scheme.

Based on that approach and the amount you have requested on your Precept Form (or 2012/13 precept amount, if 2013/14 precept form not yet returned) your parish would receive £2300 in cash terms being:

(a) An amount from the Council Tax, £2104, representing a lower precept as a result of the grant

Plus

(b) The amount of the discretionary grant £196.

Looking at 2013/14 in isolation, this would keep the Band D Council Tax for a lot of Towns/Parishes at a similar level to 2012/13. Effectively though, this reduces the starting point for the 2014/15 precept.

However, for 2014/15, we know that there is the prospect of a Council Tax referendum trigger being introduced by the Government for Town and Parish Councils. Also, there is no guarantee that the District Council will receive or be able to pass on the same level or any grant in 2014/15. Both of these, either individually or together could clearly cause significant financial issues for a number of Town/Parish Councils.

It is crucial, therefore, that all Town and Parish Councils confirm from the options below their 2013/14 precept level taking into account the information in this letter (please put "Yes" in the relevant box):

☐

Option 1 (as previously notified):

Accept the grant with no or minimal impact on Council Tax – other than from local spending changes between this year and next year. Result: Precept is the Town/Parish spending requirement less grant

☐

Option 2: Accept the grant to offset the impact of LCTS but increase the Council Tax charge for additional Town/Parish spending, either equivalent to the total value of the grant or a proportion of it, which will increase the Band D Council Tax, but offer protection to the council against loss of grant or restriction on raising precept in future years (see note below).

Result: Precept is the (revised) Town/Parish spending requirement

☐

Option 3: Decline the grant which will increase Council Tax charge

Result: Precept is the Town/Parish spending requirement

Note: Under option 2, your precept could, therefore, be any amount between option 1 and 3, which would then result in a Band D Council Tax (precept divided by taxbase) somewhere between the result from either options 1 or 3. Please indicate the revised amount below:

Revised amount £.....

Below is a table illustrating the Precept, spending requirement and Band D Council Tax impacts in 2013/14 of each option, which you should consider carefully in finalising your decision.

Please return by email to sue.palmer@babergh.gov.uk or, if you don't have email, by post (with verbal notification please to the hotline number before the dates shown below) to Babergh District Council (Finance Division), Council Offices, Corks Lane, Hadleigh, Ipswich, IP7 6SJ marked for the attention of Sue Palmer by the following dates:

For Parishes in Mid Suffolk 10.00am 19th February 2013

For Parishes in Babergh 10.00am 22nd February 2013

I am sorry for all the uncertainty surrounding this and having to contact you once more. Please contact the following hotline should you wish to talk to someone about the options:

01473 825816

I and my staff will be very happy to help in whatever way to deal with your calls. Can I thank you for your continued understanding and co-operation on what has been a difficult situation to manage in terms of timing and changes of direction by the Government.

Yours Sincerely

Barry Hunter
Corporate Manager - Financial Services

Table to illustrate Options

	2012/13 Actual	2013/14 Option 1	2013/14 Option 2	2013/14 Option 3
Spending Requirement	£2300	£2300	£2496 (maximum)	£2300
Less Grant		£196	£196	
Precept	£2300	£2104	£2300*	£2300
Taxbase	70.24	65.75	65.75	65.75

Band D Council Tax	£32.74	£32.00	£34.98*	£34.98
Amount of increase / reduction (-) of Precept on 2012/13		£-196	£0*	£0
Percentage of Band D Council Tax increase / reduction (-) on 2012/13		-2.2%%	6.8%*	6.8%%

* Or lower if spending requirement/precept is somewhere between Options 1 and 3.

The 'email trail' of replies/responses from councillors after receipt of the communication from MSDC:

Celia Drakard
To Brundish Parish Clerk .

Sandra

the option 2 does seem the most sensible.

Regards

Celia

From: Brundish Parish Clerk . <brundishparishclerk@msn.com>

To: Anthony Bryant <bryantanthonyp@hotmai.com>; Arnold Crudgington
<millhouse@framroadband.com>; Celia Drakard <celia.drakard@btinternet.com>; Helen Gillingham
<gillers1@gmail.com>; Mark Hitchings <mark@markhitchings.co.uk>; gerald.western@farming.co.uk

Sent: Saturday, 9 February 2013, 16:43

Subject: RE: The Precept thingo

Anthony, I think it remains an annual thing; the referendum trigger is if any council asks for a rise above a certain percentage (though what that is I'm not sure)

And thank you to those of you who have responded so quickly - I think if we get the agreement of a quorum (3 of you) we should be ok, though a majority (ie 4 or more) would be better.

Sandra

From: bryantanthonyp@hotmai.comTo: brundishparishclerk@msn.com;
millhouse@framroadband.com; celia.drakard@btinternet.com; gillers1@gmail.com;
mark@markhitchings.co.uk; gerald.western@farming.co.ukSubject: RE: The Precept thingoDate:
Sat, 9 Feb 2013 16:18:20 +0000

Hi All,I agree that option 2 and resetting the precept to £2200 is the best option.What I do not fully understand , under this new regime, is if an individual household's parish rate can be altered at any time during a financial year; there by triggering a referendum. Is the rate still fixed annually or can it now fluctuate? Regards,Anthony

Date: Sat, 9 Feb 2013 10:27:50 +0000From: maj_mole@yahoo.co.ukSubject: The Precept thingoTo: bryantanthonyp@hotmai.com; brundishparishclerk@msn.com; millhouse@fram broadband.com; celia.drakard@btinternet.com; gillers1@gmail.com; mark@markhitchings.co.uk; gerald.western@farming.co.uk
I sent this out but I think it only went to Sandra so here goes again.

To All

Like Mark I have studied this Mares Nest of gobbligook.

As I see it:

Option 1)

We get a slightly lower charge on the parish rates (-2.2%) and the shortfall is made up by a £196 grant which is what reduces the local rates charge to £2140 (This idea comes with the caviat that the grant might not materialise next year so we would have to raise the precept substantionally)

Option 2)

We maintain the £2300 precept this year and claim the grant on top of it. This would raise the Parish rates by 6.8% This however would result in £196 in the kitty extra AND the precept would be closer to what it might have to be raised to next year. (I really must get out more!!!)

Option 3)

Seems to consist of refusing the £196 windfall and still raising the precept to the Option 2 level. Even I can see that that is a non-starter.

I will go for Option 2 but instead of a precept of £2300 we specify £2200.

This would have a number of advantages.

- a) We get the £196 grant, free and for gratis so we get £2396
- b) We lower the precept charge (£2200 only £96 above last year) so the parish precept is kept to a minimum
- c) We have £196 more this year than we expected so £96 can go into a sinking fund to minimise any precpt increase next year and the £100 will make up this years income from £2200 to £2300

In a nutshell it would enable us to gain the grant and use half of it to subsidise this years precept and the other half to do the same (if necessary) to next years AND virtually ensure an unnoticable increase on this years Parish rates bill.

Please read this and check to ensure that I have grasped the evil serpent and turned it into a beautiful princess!!!

Yours exhaustedly

Tony

09/02/2013

[Reply](#) 

_Gerald Western

To Brundish Parish Clerk .

It would seem most sensible to adopt what is now referred to as "The Brundish Option" Sandra. I do feel that perhaps we carry a higher reserve than is really necessary, but Tony makes a strong argument which I accept.

Sorry for not replying earlier..... yours ... Gerald.

09/02/2013

[Reply](#) 

_Brundish Parish Clerk .

To gerald.western775@btinternet.com

09/02/2013

[Reply](#) 

_Brundish Parish Clerk .

To bryantanthonyp@hotmai.com, millhouse@framroadband.com, celia.drakard@btinternet.com, gillers1@gmail.com, mark@markhitchings.co.uk, gerald.western@farming.co.uk

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Sandra

09/02/2013

[Reply](#) 

_Anthony Bryant

To brundishparishclerk@msn.com, millhouse@framroadband.com, celia.drakard@btinternet.com, gillers1@gmail.com, mark@markhitchings.co.uk, gerald.western@farming.co.uk

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Regards,
Anthony

09/02/2013

[Reply](#) 

Mark Hitchings

To 'Major Mole', 'Anthony Bryant', 'Sandra Apps', 'Arnold Crudgington', 'Celia Drakard', gillers1@gmail.com, 'Gerald Western'

Tony, couldn't agree more, I vote we go for that.

Mark Hitchings, TnIDHEE, RHP, MCIPHE

Managing Director

Mark Hitchings & Company Limited

2 The Street

Brundish

Woodbridge

Suffolk

IP13 8BL

Office 01379 384714

Mobile 07776 232745

Hi Sandra

My feeling is that we should go for Option 1. However I can see the reasoning for the other option and so if I am on my own with this opinion then I am more than happy to go with the majority. I don't really think we will notice too much hardship either way!!

kind regards

Helen G