

A special meeting of the Alcester Town Council was held on Tuesday 28 January 2014 at 7:00pm, in the Council Chamber at Globe House (Seggs Lane entrance) Alcester.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AT DISCRETION OF MAYOR

Residents were invited to give their views and question the Town Council on issues on this agenda, or raise issues for future consideration at the discretion of the Chairman, before the start of the Town Council meeting and no later than 30 minutes after the start. None were received.

Present

Councillors M Cargill (Mayor), Y Hine (Deputy Mayor), C Neal-Sturgess, E Payne, L Cumberbatch, C Brannigan, J Styles, C Gough, A Brown, Y Morrison, S Payne, M Gittus and Town Clerk C Wright

Apologies - 140118

Apologies were received from S Adams, N Knapman, J Kenyon and J Bunting, whose reasons for absence were agreed on a unanimous vote.

Declarations of Interest - 140119

No declarations of interests were received

Alcester Town Council Precept for 2014-2015 - 140120

The Mayor read a report on behalf of Presidium in order to explain the Alcester Town Council Precept for the coming year. He concluded that the main reasons for considering an increase were out of our control, these included inflation, auto-enrolment in a pension scheme and the Chancellors announcement that the minimum wage would increase to £7, an increase of nearly 11%. The last two greatly impacting on our regular workers wages and as a consequence of the 3 reasons we would need to raise the precept by 4% for the coming year. The Clerk was asked to explain the information that was set before members in the form of a spreadsheet and the clerk explained the same arrangement had been used in previous years, whereby the year to date figures for the end of December were used to ascertain draft year-end figures and from these, and factors affecting next years figures such as wages and inflation the budget figures for next year were estimated. An amount had also been included to support the Neighbourhood Plan Project, which was getting increasingly important. Cllr Cumberbatch and Cllr E Payne gave reports relating to their own committees supporting the need for the proposed increase. Cllr Gough and Cllr Hine, the remaining members of Presidium, also supported the need for a 4% increase, which was followed by comments from other councillors, Cllr Styles commenting that she had investigated the pension and minimum wage schemes and found we were legally obliged to do them and would be fined if we did not. The other factor that affected the budget, but did not show in it is the amount of time and effort that is put in by councillors as support which does contribute a large amount free of charge.

Cllr Cumberbatch proposed that the Alcester Town Council precept be increased by 4%, Cllr Hine seconded the proposition which was then supported unanimously by all councillors present.

The clerk then read a response from WALC regarding possible capping of council precept demands, which was unlikely to affect the decision this year and movement towards a change in the law regarding abolishing the necessity for 2 councillors to countersign enabling the council to use internet banking and standing orders.

The Mayor thanked all the councillors and closed the meeting.