

**WALFORD PARISH COUNCIL**  
**FINANCE & SCRUTINY – 2009/11/25 – 01**

**NOTES OF THE FINANCE & SCRUTINY MEETING** held at Bishopswood Village Hall, Walford on Wednesday 25th November 2009 at 7.30pm.

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:** Cllr E Drummond & Cllr F Myers (Ex-Officio).  
Mrs J Smailes - Clerk was in attendance.

**WALFORD PARISH COUNCILLORS IN ATTENDANCE:** Cllr A Whitlock, B Vine, Sandra Cole, D Allen and G Symonds

**There were three members of the public present.**

**The start time of the Finance & Scrutiny Meeting was postponed in order to allow for any other Committee Members (Cllrs Simeon Cole, H Evans or M Thomas) to arrive as no apologies for absence had been received by the Clerk.**

**At 0.7:45, Chairman to Walford Parish Council, Cllr F Myers declared the meeting to be non quorate. Therefore the Finance & Scrutiny meeting which had been convened to address the Budget/Precept for 2010/11 was duly abandoned at 07:50pm**

Chairman

Date:

**(Councillor Surgery) – 2009/11/25 – 01**

**NOTES:**

Due to the three members of the public and a number of Councillors being in attendance it was considered appropriate to instead 'host' a Councillor Surgery which was aimed at inviting 'open' informal discussion upon any given topic.

Several points were raised in connection with Quality Status and the Budget/Precept discussions relating to the forthcoming year - 2010/11, these points included;

- **Benefits vs Negatives associated with the attainment of Quality Status**

**Negatives:**

**Associated costs were noted as being:**

- a) Employment of a qualified Clerk or training costs to ensure a non qualified clerk would be successful in attaining CiICA or equivalent so to qualify for mandatory requirement as part of Quality Status criteria.
- b) Additional employment costs i.e. Minute taker/Administrator and equipment costs.
- c) Costs associated with improving councillor/electorate communications i.e. Website, Newsletters, Public Meeting etc

# WALFORD PARISH COUNCIL

## Councillor Surgery) – 2009/11/25 – 02

- d) Would Walford Parish Council then be 'heard' by the principle authority (Herefordshire Council) in regard to such matters as;
- 'Material Considerations' relating to local Planning Applications?
  - Would having had a 'qualified clerk' improved the timeframe associated with the 'adoption' by Herefordshire Council of the Parish Plan?

### Benefits

Cllr F Meyers firstly advised that Full Council had already resolved to work towards the attainment of Quality Status.

The decision by Council to work towards such an accreditation had resulted in the retirement of the previous Clerk, Mrs Perry, therefore Council had considered it appropriate to use this given opportunity to employ a qualified Clerk, namely Mrs Smailes.

Cllr Myers then read the following passage from 'The Good Councillors:

*(quote from Good Councillors Guide)*

- *A Quality Council represents all parts of its community and creates a sense of belonging.*
- *It provides community leadership and a vision for the future*
- *It listens to local people and articulates their needs.*
- *It works closely with community groups*
- *It keeps them informed of what it does and why*
- *It performs in a professional manner; this means that its finances are properly managed; it conforms to high standards of behaviour ; and it is served by a qualified clerk.*
- *It works in partnership with other organisations especially principal authorities and other parish councils.*
- *It is committed to ongoing training and development, not only for its staff but*
- *most important, it is active and elected by its community.*

**A number of further related points were also informally discussed:**

-The deficit against the previous budget in respect of the Lengthsman's charges and why an individual councillor had assumed the responsibility over said Contractor?

- How Walford Parish Council's financial records should be kept in the future so to conform with 'good practice' and accountancy regulations, the need for greater transparency in respect to Budget/Precept discussions etc.

**It was noted by Mr Daniels - Member of Public, that the lack of attendance at this evenings Finance & Scrutiny Committee Meeting by those Councillors who had previously put their names forward had hindered the Budget/Precept discussion process and he felt was not therefore constructive.**

**Councillor Surgery closed at 8.30pm**