


OPEN EVENING
Hemingford Abbots Parish Council – 8th March 2023




The Village Street Lights



Peter Keen – Who am I?


- Lived in the Hemingfords for 40 years, 10 years in Abbots
- A Chartered Accountant by training, semi-retired but worked primarily in healthcare technology businesses either as an executive or representing an investor.
- Joined HAPC in May 2021



The Village Street Lights

- We have 46 of them in total
- 36 are galvanized steel columns
- 8 are brackets on wooden poles
- 2 are mild steel poles

All the lanterns were updated and installed at the same time in 2017



The Village Street Lights



Why does this matter to us/HAPC?

- Because at some time in the past, believed to be in the 1970s, the Parish Council took on the responsibility / ownership of the lights
- We have to insure and maintain them
- We have to pay for the running costs i.e., electricity
- We have to replace them at the end of their useful life!



What have we done?

- We have obtained costings and estimated the current cost to replace all the poles and lanterns, along with the related disconnection/reconnection fees, as being £136,000.
- Our annual precept this year for all expenditure is £26,000.
- Because of the costs involved we have undertaken an exercise this year with the assistance of external consultants to assess the useful life of the lights to enable us to plan our finances accordingly.



The Outcome of Our review

- Of the 36 galvanized steel columns
 - 9 are in "excellent" condition, average life left 25 years
 - 26 are in "good" condition, average life remaining 18 years
 - 1 is in "OK" condition, life remaining 13 years
- Of the 8 on brackets on wooden poles
 - Average life remaining 8 years
- Of the 2 mild steel poles
 - Average life remaining 13 years

All the lanterns were installed at the same time in 2017

- Estimated average life remaining 20 years



Financial Consequences

- It is possible to do nothing and leave future generations to pay the costs “as and when” but this is neither prudent or fair and would require significant and sudden fluctuations in our precept
- We have already established the principle of a “Street Light Sinking Fund” to build up reserves for their repair / replacement
- At the end of the year this will be to the order of £50,000
- Within the planned 2023/2024 precept of £28,600 we have included an allocation of an additional £5,000 for the Sinking Fund



Financial Consequences

- Allowing for modest inflation, to build sufficient reserves to cover the costs as and when they arise, the current estimates are that this needs to be to the order of £9,500 a year, an increase in the precept of another 15% or £13.63 for a Band D property
- We will review the sinking fund contribution on an annual basis and assess the condition of the lights and lanterns every 5 years
- Finally, we asked Cambridge County Council if they would take them back and they said “no”. It is their policy to only adopt street lighting assets that are installed as part of new roads on developments or that form part of an approved highway infrastructure schemes

