

Council meeting Tuesday 21 November 2023

Agenda item 13 - Budget proposal for 2024/25

Introduction

Broadland District Council have asked the Parish Council to set its precept for 2024/25 by early January 2024. The latest Parish Council meeting at which this can be achieved is on 21 November 2023.

This report will inform the Parish Council budget debate.

Comparison with neighbouring parish councils Appendix A

Proposed Band D Appendix B

Outline of the draft Strumpshaw PC budget for 2024/25 Appendix C

Expenditure

There are six aspects of the Parish Council's expenditure:

Allotments

Buckenham Wood maintenance

Community Hall development

Community Hall operation

Council administration

General services

The Community Hall Committee have assessed the Community Hall expenditure. The Committee's proposals are at item no. 7 on this agenda.

Income

There are five aspects of the Parish Council's income:

Allotments

Buckenham Wood

Community Hall operation

General, including the proposals relating to the precept for 2024/25

Grants

Stone Pit borehole rental income from Norfolk County Council £100 pa

The Community Hall Committee have assessed the Community Hall income, and it is shown at item no.7 on this agenda.

Reserves

The Internal Auditor has recommended that the parish council strengthen its general reserve fund, previously this was £400 per annum. These proposals recommend increasing the general reserve fund by £500 per annum. Council will be asked to agree amending its reserve policy to reflect this.

The Parish Council maintains the following reserves (as of 10 November 2023):

Allotments - £1,484.50

Buckenham Wood maintenance - £1,910.95 (funds from Strumpshaw Trust)

Buckenham Wood Green Infrastructure - £2,448.50 (to be returned to BDC for BAWT grant match funding - less £100 new posters for noticeboards)

Community Hall operation and maintenance - £23,295.30

Community Hall grounds improvement - £3,889.73

General (NALC advice this should usually cover between 3-6 months normal expenditure) - £975.00

Bus Shelter - £0.00

SAM2 - £31.59

Parish Noticeboards - £0.00

Bin emptying (Mill Road - Page's sponsorship money held) £110.50

General fund - £5,468.62

Total funds £39,614.69

The Scribe reserves balance report enclosed shows the balances detailed above as of 10 November 2023.

Allotments

The allotments reserve is built up from allotments rental income less any spending. It does not include any provision for the maintenance of the fences, the allotment shed or the rainwater supply system.

The pump for the underground tank has not been serviced since installation, quotes now obtained - deduct from allotment reserve fund

It is forecast to increase the amount to £80 by March 2024 depending on whether the Council decides to increase the allotment rents by £1 per annum in line with previous year's increase to £15 pa (except plot six - half rent).

Buckenham Wood Maintenance

The Buckenham Wood maintenance reserve was created by a grant of £3,000 from the Strumpshaw Marsh Charity in 2019/20. This may only be used to maintain the Parish Council's part of Buckenham Wood in consultation with the Strumpshaw Trust.

This is being spent over three to four years on felling sycamores and replacing them with species such as hawthorn, buckthorn, gelder, crabapple and field maple.

Buckenham Wood Green Infrastructure Project

The Buckenham Wood Green Infrastructure Project was funded through a payment of £26,466.67 from the developer of Mill Meadow to Broadland District Council for use on green infrastructure within Strumpshaw.

Broadland District Council and the Parish Council signed a Memorandum of Understanding in February 2021 outlining how the project was to be developed.

The project timetable (within the Memorandum of Understanding) requires the funds to be used by 25th November 2024. Broadland District Council released the funds to the Parish Council for specific pieces of work on receipt of approved quotations.

The BWPC has now ceased, the reserve funds are to be returned to Broadland District Council for match funding BAWT grant application.

Community Hall Operation and Maintenance

The Community Hall operation and maintenance reserve is provided through the amount of the Community Hall income that is greater than the expenditure.

This reserve was created in November 2020 to build up a repairs and renewals fund from which payments to maintain, redecorate and re-equip the community hall could be paid in future years.

By 1 April 2024, the forecast is that the reserve will stand at approximately £25,249

Community Hall Improvement and Development

The Community Hall grounds improvement reserve was created through grant income for the Community Hall. £1,225 of this reserve had previously been earmarked in case of a late invoice relating to the creation of the Community Hall and an outstanding snagging issue with regards to rainwater drainage from the disabled parking area.

By 1 April 2024 the forecast is that this reserve will stand at approximately £4,011

Budget pressures

Cessation of the Buckenham Wood Green Infrastructure Fund, £800 general maintenance budget allocation for ongoing maintenance/safety. May be able to request funds held by Strumpshaw Trust.

Grants/donations to PCC, BADCOG and Parish News, suggested increase to PCC, reduction to BADCOG in line with other parishes and contribution to Parish News.

Whole council training - suggested bi-annual, separate reserve fund.

SAM2 consumables, bus shelter maintenance (replacement panels etc), refurbishment of noticeboards. Litter and dog poo bin emptying at Buckenham Wood (new bin at Mill Road sponsored by Pages Garage)

Budget Proposal

2024/25 Precept requirement £12,850 (increase of £1,199)

This amounts to 10.29% increase in precept above the 2023/24 (previous precept increase was 10.74%)

This equates to £45.08 per Band D house based on the current number of Band D houses (tax base) of 285 in Strumpshaw, an increase of £3.91 for each Band D house (9.51% increase).

Previously £41.17 and a 10.74% increase.

Recommendation

Councillors were asked for their input with the draft budget proposals for 2024/25.

The revised budget proposal (spreadsheet) is attached, it is recommended that Council agrees the precept at £12,850 for 2024/25.