

Notes on the proposed budget for 2025/26 for the Parish Council meeting 16.12.24

A draft budget document is attached to be discussed. The draft budget document shows the budget and outturn for 23/24, the budget and projected outturn for 24/25 (the current year) and a proposed budget for 25/26. This budget columns are highlighted in green for clarity.

The budget plan also includes several tabs at the bottom of the spreadsheet, including salary information and a list of regular contractors and suppliers to be reviewed and agreed.

The precept needs to be agreed and submitted before the end of January, but at the moment we only have the estimated tax base for Holbrook. This has yet to be confirmed, although it may not change. The Tax Base has increased from 24/25 which results in reducing the percentage increase for a Band D property.

Subscriptions and Memberships: this is a fairly straightforward part of the budget: it is proposed that we continue with the current subscriptions. Both SALC and SLCC offer very good advice and training for Councils. The other subscriptions are historical. 2.5% has been added to both SALC and SLCC subscription rates.

Grants and Donations: despite quite extensive advertising on noticeboards, website, facebook, etc. there have been few applications for funding. All Saints have been prompted to submit a request but nothing has been received from the Village Hall Committee. Holbrook Helpers is again not submitting an application this year, as their funds are healthy at the moment. Toddler Group have requested a further grant of £500 so that they can continue throughout next year. We had a requests from EAAS, the P3 Group, The Citizens Advice and Headway for a small grant, all of which have been included in the draft budget.

Salaries and Expenses: The Clerk's salary includes an estimated 2.5% increase for 25/26 which is the same as the belated agreement for the current year. There is a huge increase for Employer's NI, as the threshold for liability has reduced from £9,100 to £5,000 and the rate has increased to 15%. There has been a lot of debate about whether or not local authorities will be liable to the increase, but the latest information is that they will have to pay it. In our case it increases the salary bill by £658 p.a. if my calculations are correct. The outturn includes payment from Tattingstone PC for some help. This is offset by their equivalent payment to HPC.

Councillors' expenses have been left the same: The assumption is that there will be no change to the Clerk's homeworking allowance and the Chairman's allowance. The minimum wage will increase to £12.21 so the Community Caretaker's salary has been calculated on that basis. The grant from BDC's Cleansing Department will offset this salary. The Community Caretaker is also entitled to an expense allowance. SALC payroll charges have been increased by just over 2.5% which has not been confirmed.

Asset Maintenance and Other Works: Footway lighting had a huge increase in 22/23 and the budgets have been affected by the remaining conversion to LEDs, I

have added 10% increase to the final charge for 24/25 to cover an increase in electricity costs.

Grass cutting – I have amalgamated the budget for Church Green and Reade Field other grass cutting, as the invoices are never itemised. I have added 7% to the contract grass cutting. The increase was slightly larger than budgeted last year.

Tree Work – I included a budget for 24/25 on the advice of the tree warden. I have consulted Cllr Allinson and he has recommended a budget of £1,000 for 25/26

Playground Renewals and Maintenance: I have worked on the basis that the basketball court surface will have been completed and paid for by the end of this financial year. No major new equipment included in the budget for 25/26

Pavilion Maintenance: have included PAT testing and LX and water charges plus any nominal repairs. Budget similar to 24/25

General Maintenance – a one off payment for a new strimmer for the P3 group resulted in an overspend in the current year. Next year (26/27), the 3 year maintenance contract for the SID will need renewing, so there will be a large increase in the 26/27 budget.

Fitness Classes – we have sufficient in reserves to carry on with the fitness classes until the end of December 2025, although this is slightly dependent upon whether or not we finally receive an invoice for cleaning from the Academy.

CSHG – a small budget for incidental costs

ADMINISTRATION

Most of these are self-explanatory and are budgeted at similar levels as last year.

Insurance: despite quite dramatic insurance increases generally, we managed to achieve cover at a similar level. I have added 15% for next year.

Information Commissioner: the rate has been the same for many years and the government are now proposing an increase to £50. I have assumed that a £5 discount will apply if paid by DD.

Neighbourhood Plan - no budget included. I am not sure when, or if, we have to do a complete review.

Water testing: we have just over £100 in reserves from a locality grant and have received one contribution from another council already, with three more promised in the new financial year. The budget includes the reserves and anticipated contributions. However, a new coordinator for the scheme has to be found and some new people willing to test on a fortnightly basis.

Parish Papers: as already discussed at Council meetings, the Parish Papers have increased dramatically in cost but the quality has improved and the cost of publication is offset by advertising revenue, which the Council agreed to increase by 10% this year.

Lottery: the budget is just for the prize money, as the income is paid into the Reade Field Account. Before the end of the year, we will transfer enough to cover the prize money and the licence fee.

Bank Charges: this is a new category in response to the introduction of monthly bank charges by Lloyds.

Biodiversity/Climate change: a new line has been included containing a small budget

Youth Council: there are plans to form a youth council and a small budget has been allocated for the Youth Council to utilise.

INCOME

PRECEPT

In order to calculate the precept Council needs to consider the difference between the income and expenditure totals, plus the reserves. We have received the indicative tax base from Babergh and the tax base has increased from last year, which results in a lower percentage increase for Band D properties (the precept is divided by the tax base to determine the amount payable by a Band D property).

The VAT claim is estimated based on the VAT paid this year.

Football charges remain the same – perhaps we could increase if and when the pavilion is completed. We have added an income from the Veteran's team who are hoping to play once a month.

Advertising: invoices have been sent out for current advertisers – assume a similar level next year.

Water testing: There is an assumed contribution of £50 each from other councils for the water testing project.

Interest is paid on the NSI account annually, usually in January or February.

Grant Funding: There is no anticipated grant funding for next year at the moment, with the exception of the grant for the **Community Caretaker**.

The reserves tab will be populated with actuals once the end of year accounts are agreed.