

Withersfield Parish Council

Draft Budget for 2020-21

Recommendation:

Councillors are asked to:

- i) approve the draft 2020-21 budget estimate for submission to West Suffolk District Council as set out on the attached sheet.
- ii) maintain the earmarked reserve for future investment on parish infrastructure at £5000 and that this be called upon to fund the Parish Council's contribution to the introduction of reduced speed limits in 20-21
- iii) that £2630 from Parish Council reserves be included in the budget
- iv) agree that the Parish Council should not seek an increase in Council Tax rate for 2020-21

Background:

Each November Parish Councils in Suffolk are asked to submit their estimated budget for the next financial year to their district Council. The District Council estimates the Parish Precept calculated on the basis of the number of inhabited properties with the Parish.

This is only the estimated or DRAFT budget as the final budget cannot be approved until the spring when the County and District Councils formally approve their overall budget.

The Precept and Council Tax support Grant:

This year's precept (the amount of funding the Parish Council gets from residents' Council Tax) has decreased slightly from £9,335 to £9,324 over 2019-20. Calculated against the number of number of occupied properties in the Parish over the year - this fell marginally from 323.54 to 323.15. The Parish Precept takes account of a fully complete and occupied Arboretum development. Should further housing be developed on the Research Park site, the tax base will again increase by the number of new properties completed and occupied each year.

Estimated expenditure:

Having reviewed the current year's budget and projected spend, and taking account of known changes in costs in the coming year the following estimates are set out below for 2020-21:

Administration: £5,954 (a decrease of £231 over 2019-20)

Reduced admin costs reflect:

- 1) The provision of £200 set aside last year to cover GDPR responsibilities has not be required to date due to changes in the application of the Act to small Councils. No provision is proposed for 2020-21.
- 2) The 2019 election was uncontested, therefore we have not had to call on the £800 provision in the budget for this. Costs associated with an uncontested election were just £22.

Other admin costs are on track to increase over last year. With a new clerk in post there has been a requirement for some additional hours as she got to grips with the procedures and requirements placed upon the Council. Expenses have been a little higher as we needed to ensure that our clerk

had the tools to do the job. Fortunately, we had invested in a computer and printer from the Transparency Fund a year so back.

Draft Admin Budget:

	BUDGET	Projected	Proposed	
Item	2019-20	2019/20	2020/21	comment
Clerk salary	3000	3800	4000	Increased hours required to manage business
Clerk Expenses	145	250	180	To cover costs of printing
Payroll	120	108	108	
Audit/Bank Charges	150	205	206	
Insurances	770	770	770	All Parish Council assets incl. Pavilion
Leases – village greens	10	10	10	
Village Hall rental	50	50	50	Allows for additional meetings during year
SALC/CAS membership	280	267	270	Final figures not yet known
Training	500	100	300	Has been under used in recent years
Web site	60	60	60	
Magazine	100	0	0	Magazine is cost neutral
Date Protection /GDPR	200	0	0	Reduced provision to meet of GDPR responsibilities
Parish Council Elections	800	22	0	Provision in case of contested elections
TOTAL	6185	5825	5954	

Other: £6090 is a similar amount to this year’s allocation.

“Other” includes all other areas of expenditure incurred by the Parish Council, including environmental works (grass cutting) Parish projects (e.g. VAS) and maintenance of our assets.

Residents have raised the need for better litter management in parts of the village. Emptying of bins incurs a charge from St Edmundsbury Borough Council.

£1500 provision for Parish Projects is included as in this year. This, along with funds in the Parish Infrastructure earmarked reserve (£5000) are likely to be required to fund the Parish Council’s contribution to the introduction of reduced speed limits including 40mph buffer zones.

Draft “Other” Budget:

	BUDGET	Projected	Proposed	
Item	2019-20	2019/20	2020/21	comment
Grass cutting/environmental	5000	4000	4000	No change over the current year
Maintenance of Parish assets including Graveyard maintenance	450	80	250	A provision to cover minor repairs to assets like notice boards or benches and sunken graves & rodent control in graveyard
Speedwatch	100	100	100	No change over the current year
Parish Projects	1500	1000	1500	Provision to respond to issues raised by parishioners for initiatives during the year.
Waste collection	200	60	120	To cover collection of waste from bins areas
Donations	250	120	120	Annual donations to SARS and British Legion
TOTAL	7500	5360	6090	
Earmarked infrastructure reserve	5000		5000	

Use of Reserves & other income:

The proposed level of expenditure will require that the Parish Council once again draws upon its reserves to the tune of £2,630 in 20/21. This is less than in 2019-20. However the Parish Council's contribution towards the costs of implementation of reduced speed limits (buffer zones) will also require a call on the earmarked reserve set aside for Parish Infrastructure projects.

The Parish Council also benefits from occasional income from burials in the graveyard. The amount cannot be guaranteed and has varied between £300 to £2,000 over recent years. Income from this source reduces the amount that has to be taken from Parish Council reserves each year.

Earmarked reserves:

Last year the Parish Council created an earmarked reserve of £5,000 for investment in Parish infrastructure.

It is proposed that this fund is called upon to fund the Parish Council's contribution towards the implementation of the reduced speed limits (buffer zones).

Summary of proposed 2020-21 Budget:

		2020-21			(2019-20)
Projected expenditure		£11,954 *			12835
Financed by:	Precept		£9,324		9335
	Use of Reserves		£2,630		3500
	Council Tax increase		0%		0%

- Not including contribution to reduced speed limits – funded from earmarked reserve

Terry Rich
Chairman
12th November 2019