

ARTICLE FOR MAGAZINE February 2019

FINANCE UPDATE

At January's meeting, the Parish Council agreed its Budget and Precept for the coming financial year. The Precept is the "proportion" of your Council Tax Bill managed by the Parish Council and represents a small proportion of your overall Council Tax charge. It was agreed that a 2.5% increase in the Band D equivalent was necessary this year, a rise from £92.46 to £93.46 i.e. an increase of £1.00 a year. The Precept will increase from £23,830 to £24,390 which is necessary to meet the cost of services needed in our village. Our Tax Base figure increases from 257.74 to 260.97 meaning we have more "taxable" properties in the Parish which is affected by the amount of properties that are either exempt of council tax or those that get a discount.

Why the increase this year? As we know, County Council has made a huge £15m cut in its own budget affecting many of the services they provide; and the Support Grant that the District Council used to give us will not be passed on this year. All of this means that parish councils in South Somerset may well have to face paying for the services no longer funded e.g. the provision of the Winter's Rock Salt and highway verges. Although our own budgeted costs for next year have risen by an inescapable 4%, we are limiting the increase to 2.5% for residents by "cutting our cloth" wherever we can and looking for further efficiencies.

Our major projects are still the new pavilion and the play area on the recreation ground, and we are continuing to set money aside for these projects. One of our main areas of expenses is the ground maintenance and we will be looking at making savings in this area with a more efficient way of working. This will be discussed in the forthcoming parish council meetings. Also, in the next financial year, we have a potential local government election; all the cost for this will come out of the parish precept.

In summary, this year may be tough, councillors have tried to be sensitive to the likely impact of rising Council Tax costs particularly in light of what is happening nationally.

RECREATION GROUND

Community Pavilion:

The Parish Council have now submitted a planning application to SSDC for the erection of a new pavilion and we have made tentative enquiries on how much the building would cost. The Parish Council won't be able to carry out a more formal tender process until the planning application has been approved and, once this has happened then we can look at other funding possibilities.

So where are we now? The Parish Council has ring-fenced money out of the precept over the past few years and we have received a fantastic donation from the Bonfire Committee in 2017 to which councillors are extremely grateful and we thank the committee for their generosity. Set out below is a table showing the estimated and actual costs and the income so far.

	Estimate Costs £	Actual Costs £	Income/Donations Received £
Ring-fenced from Precept			21,195
Donation from Bonfire Committee 2017			3,700
Building	40,551		
Groundworks	10,437		
Internal Fixtures & Fittings	25,210		
Plans, Surveys & Tree Report		3,158	
Planning Application Fee		231	
Total	76,198	3,389	24,895

£

Total Estimated Cost	79,587
Total Income	<u>24,895</u>
Balance	<u><u>54,692</u></u>

The Parish Council have ring-fenced £5,000 in the 2019/20 budget and are now looking at funding possibilities for the remaining £49,692; one of which is SSDC with a hope to get some s.106 funding from the recent development in the St Michael Ward of Stoke sub Hamdon.

As this new pavilion would be available for the whole community to use for any event on the recreation ground, we would like to ask you for suggestions on what you would like to see being held on the recreation ground. Is there a particular sport or activity you are interested in that could be held on recreation ground once the facilities had been improved? Please let us know, it may help us with our fundraising applications.

The Parish Council would also appreciate some help with the fundraising so if there is anyone who would like to assist us with our fundraising endeavours please contact one of the councillors or our parish clerk.

CHRISTMAS TREE LIGHTING EVENING

Thank you to everyone who attended the lighting of the Christmas Tree and joined us at the village hall afterwards. We made £59 on the raffle which will go towards the new play equipment.

HIGHWAYS

Speed Limit

It was confirmed at the January Parish Council meeting that the 20mph speed limit roundels will be painted on the road shortly and our County Councillor, Mark Keating, is looking into increasing the 20mph speed limit to take into account St Michaels View. However, no time scale has been given on this and may take quite some time to implement.

Dropped Kerb

Highways have confirmed that the dropped kerb in Middle Street adjacent to the church wall should be removed before the end of March.

Road Closure

TAKE NOTICE that in pursuance of Section 14(1) of the Road Traffic Regulations Act 1984, as amended by the road Traffic (Temporary Restrictions) Act 1991, the County Council of Somerset Propose to make an Order PROHIBITING ALL TRAFFIC from proceeding along **Ham Hill Road** from **the junction with Street Lane to the junction with Old Road, Odcombe** for a distance of **335 metres**.

This Order will enable Somerset Highways to carry out drainage works in this road. The Order becomes effective on **18 February 2019** and will remain in force for eighteen months. The works are expected to last for **26 days**.

Please see the parish noticeboard for more information and a map.

POLICE REPORTS

For any advice and further/up-to-date information on incidents please go to the website: www.police.uk. If you are a witness to or the victim of a crime then it is imperative that you report it to the police immediately whether it is during the day or at night. When reporting an incident please telephone either 101 for non-emergencies or 999 for emergencies only.

PARISH COUNCIL MEETINGS

Parish Council meetings are held on the third Monday of every month with the exception of August and December. Parish Council meetings are open to the press and public so residents are welcome to come along and listen to what we have to say. There is also a short public session at the beginning of every meeting.

The next meeting will be held on the 18th February 2019 at 7pm in the Baptist Chapel Hall.

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