

**VIRTUAL ANNUAL PARISH ASSEMBLY  
1900 FRIDAY 30<sup>th</sup> APRIL 2021 – BY ZOOM**

**Present:** Cllr Sophie Walters (SW) – Chairman  
Cllr Angie Filippa (AF) – Vice-Chairman  
Cllr David Burnfield (DB)  
Cllr Ivan Gibson (IG)  
Cllr Charles Grieve (CG)  
Cllr Selina Musters (SM)

In attendance : Clerk Mark Flewit (MF), County Councillor Andrew Gibson (AG), and three local residents .

**Apologies.** Colin McIntyre (CM) (Leckford Estate), District Councillor Tony Ward (TW), and PC Janet Foley (Stockbridge Police Station)

1. **Welcome:** The Chairman welcomed our electors present,
2. The **Minutes** of the Annual Assembly of 2019 were approved and signed. There was no APA in 2020 due the Covid-19 lockdown
3. **Matters Arising.** There were no Matters Arising from the 2019 APA Meeting
4.
  - **Police:** PC Foley had submitted the following report before the meeting, which had been distributed to attendees:

**Crime in Longstock over the last 6 months**

- ▶ Poaching
- ▶ Theft from vehicles
- ▶ Burglaries (shed breaks/shipping containers)

The level of crime in Longstock remains very low, with minimal reports over the last 6 months. The only crimes that have occurred in Longstock are related to poaching, theft from vehicles and shed break burglaries.

I have included some crime prevention tips relating to these crimes in the following slides.

**Crime in surrounding villages/towns**

- ▶ Theft from vehicle
- ▶ Criminal damage
- ▶ Burglaries (shed breaks)
- ▶ Poaching

There is generally a very low level of crime in the rural villages of Test Valley, but crimes that are being reported are often thefts from vehicles, reports of criminal damage, shed breaks and poaching incidents.

**Crime Prevention Tips**

There are a number of things that residents of Longstock can do to prevent crime from happening in the area. When it comes to burglaries and thefts, criminals are trying to avoid two things:

1. Getting caught

## 2. Getting hurt

As such, utilising the following methods can help to put off criminals and make your property look unappealing:

- Installation of CCTV
- Installation of floodlights
- Putting up visible signs stating that you have CCTV (even if you don't)
- 'Beware of the dog' signs (even if you don't have a dog)
- Ensuring that sheds are secured with quality locks
- Keeping small machinery and valuables somewhere in the house where possible (as opposed to in sheds)
- Remove valuables from vans and other vehicles

Ultimately, the more unappealing your house looks to a criminal, the less likely they are to find it viable to attempt a burglary or theft from a vehicle.

If there's a higher chance that the criminal can be caught (through identification on CCTV/good lighting from floodlights), then they are far less likely to attempt a crime and will move on to another property.

If all the residents of Longstock are diligent in utilising these crime prevention tips, criminals will realise that it's not worth attempting shed breaks and thefts in Longstock and will move on elsewhere.

### **Your Local Policing Team**

The policing team in Stockbridge has more than doubled in size in the last few months.

From one police officer we now have four officers (one of which is from Country Watch), and two PCSO's:

- PC Allen
- PC Atkins (Country Watch)
- PC Usher-Barrass
- PC Foley
- PCSO Cleary
- PCSO Hill

- **Hampshire County Council: County Councillor Andrew Gibson** had e-mailed his report which had been distributed in advance.

### **Introduction**

This is my last report to the Longstock Parish Council as I retire next week from my role as the County Councillor for Test Valley Central.

I would like to thank the Parish Councillors and Parish Clerks who have supported me during the last 12 years. I am also pleased to have been able to support local projects including the Longstock Allotments' new Deer fence, Replacement street lights and village book share phone box.

### **General**

**Facts and Figures** Hampshire's population is **1,376,300** (2018) the third most populous county in England (85% is rural and 15% urban). Hampshire CC maintains **5400** miles of roads, 4300 miles pavements, 133,000 streetlights, **481** schools, **45** libraries, **3 Discovery Centres and 1 e-library**, **16 care homes with 960 beds for older people**, **9 residential homes for children and young people**, **24 Household Waste Centres and 5 Country Parks**. Every year 94% of all household waste is

diverted from landfill (40% recycled) is burnt for energy and powers 50,000 homes. Every day 454,000 people travel to work by car or van, 86,000 bus journeys are made, and 4% journeys are by train. More than half of Hampshire's EU citizens have signed up to the Government's EU settlement scheme.

**Public Health -Coronavirus (Covid-19)** Hampshire County Council continues to play a significant role supporting vulnerable residents and providing local guidance and information. To date over **32 million people** in the UK have received their first dose of vaccine.

The **Hampshire County Council helpline is available** for frail or vulnerable residents who do not have support from families, friends or their local community, and who need urgent assistance with essential food or household supplies, collection of medication, or who are at risk of loneliness.

### **HCC approves £2.1 billion spending on local services in 2021/22**

Plans for the next financial year focus on the county's ongoing work associated with the **pandemic, support for vulnerable children and adults, investment in Hampshire's roads and infrastructure to support economic recovery, as well as climate change mitigation.**

The annual council tax charge for a Band D property will be £1,350.45 – an increase of £1.23 per week, equating to 4.99%, of which 3% is for adults' social care – a Government request. The budget includes **£13 million** for the maintenance of 5,500 miles of roads and an extra £1.2 million in carbon reduction measures across the County Council. **HCC's four-year capital programme of £744 million is one of the largest in the country.**

<https://www.hants.gov.uk/News/25022021HCCbudgetdecisionFeb2021>

The proposed capital programme includes: • **£68 million** in new and extended school buildings to ensure there is a school place for every child in Hampshire • **£118 million** for structural maintenance and improvement of roads and bridges in Hampshire over the next three years • **£91 million** for integrated transport schemes including over **£18 million** specifically focused on walking and cycling improvements • £141 million for major improvement of school and other County Council buildings and land holdings over the next three years • **£33 million** for decarbonisation schemes covering solar PV, single to double glazing window replacements, transition from oil to gas and the implementation of heating controls.

### **Climate Change**

Hampshire County Council has been taking active steps to ensure Hampshire is resilient to climate change and in mitigating further changes through carbon reduction measures. HCC's own emissions have reduced by more than 43%, with more than a 50% reduction by 2025 and carbon neutrality by 2050. The **2050 Hampshire Commission of Enquiry** placed climate change and the environment as its top priority. In the budget HCC pledged £2m towards climate change measures in addition to the capital schemes outlined above. HCC is aware its greatest leadership and influence will be achieved by working in partnership with the District, City and Parish Councils, businesses and communities via the Expert Forum. At a household level HCC is supporting the county-wide Greening Campaign (aims to find simple

solutions around reducing and measuring power consumption, insulating housing stock, reducing water usage, sourcing local food, community travel and renewable energy schemes), the Help line, Solar Buy-in scheme and community energy projects.

<https://www.hants.gov.uk/landplanningandenvironment/environment/climatechange>

### **Countryside and Country Parks**

As I step down as a County Councillor after 12 eventful years I can reflect that my greatest success was the Country Parks Transformation strategy as the Portfolio Holder for Culture, Recreation & Countryside, which included Overseeing a significant investment in the Country Parks which will now make them self sufficient for many years to come. Please visit the newly constructed Lepe Country Park pavilion to experience one of the many projects undertaken. Another of my responsibilities was for the HCC Farming estate which includes the following:

**Hampshire County Council Farms Policy 2021-2050** Hampshire County Council has a 1,900-hectare farm estate. Holdings range from 1.8 hectares (4.45 acres) to 114 hectares (282 acres). These provide an affordable first step on the farming ladder for aspiring farmers and makes a significant contribution to the rural economy. The new policy for county farms in Hampshire sets out a clear direction for the management of these public assets in the coming decades.

The council's farm estate features a range of units that support dairy, arable, horticultural and livestock businesses. The new framework is published as the agricultural industry faces significant change following the exit from the EU, the Agriculture Act 2020 and Defra's publication of its Path to Sustainable Farming.

Key features of the new policy include:

- Continuing to support new entrants into farming to build sustainable businesses and offer progression opportunities for existing tenants where possible
- Delivering sustainable, high standard, land management and farming systems, to promote animal welfare and soil health, better air and water quality, a network of thriving wildlife habitats and contribute towards the county council's climate change targets. The authority declared a climate emergency in June 2019 and has pledged to bring carbon emissions in Hampshire down to net zero by 2050.
- Maintaining the scale and diversity of the County Farms estate - encouraging innovation and farm diversification where this brings benefits to the tenants and the surrounding rural communities.

### **Ticks and Lyme Disease**

As spring approaches and more people are outdoors Hampshire residents are urged to be 'tick aware' especially when walking in wooded areas or long grass where ticks attach themselves to people or animals as they pass by. Further information is available here:

<https://www.hants.gov.uk/News/20210401ticks>

### **HWRC - Book your Spring Recycling Slot**

The HWRC booking system offers more than 50,000 booking slots each week and, from 1 April, sites will be open for longer: 9am – 6pm every day during the summer months.

A wide range of household items can be taken to one of Hampshire's 24 HWRCs for recycling or disposal and information about what can and cannot be deposited can be found online at <https://www.hants.gov.uk/wasteandrecycling/recyclingcentres>

Bookings can be made online at [www.hants.gov.uk](http://www.hants.gov.uk) or by telephone **0300 555 1389**.

Cancellations - Anyone who is unable to make their booking for whatever reason is asked to please use the link in the confirmation e-mail to cancel it, so it may be made available to another resident. Bookings can also be amended, in this way, to another time if needed.

### **Highways**

The latest Highways report is attached. Over the next 3 weeks I will attempt to resolve the outstanding drainage and pothole issues.

SW thanked Cllr Gibson for his interest in and support of our parish council over the years.

- **Test Valley Borough Council: Councillor Tony Ward** had e-mailed his report which had been distributed in advance

### **Test Valley Borough Council – A year dominated by Covid-19**

£440k	Provided £440,000 of council tax support to more than 2,000 households
2,705,424	Collected 56,363 bins per week - that's 2,705,424 bins since lockdown began in March
£56m	Paid out £56m of grants and rate relief to support over 3,200 local businesses
181 days	We suspended parking charges for 181 days to support people picking up supplies
£23k	Provided £23,124 to 54 community groups to help them deliver food supplies and prescriptions to residents
1,966	Worked with 1,966 volunteers providing vital support to their local communities

79,075	We responded to almost 80,000 customer enquiries
3,003	Answered 3,003 calls to the Test Valley Community Helpline
440	440 households helped into housing

### **Mid Test Borough Councillors – supporting our communities**

- Despite restrictions we continued to attend most Parish Council meetings via Zoom sometimes even having to attend three in the same evening. These meetings remain a key focus for us in keeping us abreast of local issues and concerns. We have continued to help on any issues raised with us.
- We issued monthly editions of Mid Test Matters and the circulation has now been extended either directly or via a co-ordinator to virtually all the community Covid-19 volunteers.
- We continued to fully represent Mid Test in TVBC with two of us being Cabinet Members, two Planning Committee Members and one as a representative on Overview and Scrutiny. These meetings together with full Council meetings were all attended via Teams.
- During the last 12 months there have been 490 planning applications in Mid Test. Many were relatively straight forward but some required considerable effort on our part answering residents’ questions, providing advice on the planning process, site visits, acting as an interface with the Planning Officers and of course the planning meetings themselves. An example requiring all those facets came to a conclusion this week when an application to build 18 houses on the Kings Somborne Allotments was refused by the Committee.
- We helped a number of community projects with grants during the last 12 months
  - Test Valley School - £1000 for improvements to the animal area
  - Stockbridge Town Hall - £6250 for theatre curtains
  - King’s Somborne School - £1000 for eco garden
  - Houghton Parish Council - £1000 for speed indicator
  - King’s Somborne Village Hall - £642 for web site
  - Nether Wallop PC - £1000 - NDP support

- Wallop Pre-School - £1000 – Tapestry project
- Longstock Allotments - £800 – Community garden
- King's Somborne PC - £1000 – Preschool canopy
- King's Somborne Village Hall - £22,167 for audio/visual system

We look forward to working with you all in the next 12 months

Local Resident, Sue Parish, thanked TW for his support in providing grants to support a community wildlife area at Longstock Allotments.

- **Longstock Parish Council: Cllr Sophie Walters**, Chairman of the LPC, had circulated her report in advance..

As you all know there was no Annual Parish Assembly last year due to Covid and we were told by Government to just “Stay calm and carry on!” So we did. None of our meetings could be held face to face so we all had to grapple with the delights of Zoom. Have to say it just doesn't have the same good feeling of camaraderie that we very much enjoy here in Longstock, but needs must, we have soldiered on. We have had members of the public joining us which is nice and reassuring that there is someone out there who is interested in what we are doing for the good of the village. The Corona Virus has touched us all and devastated many. We have had incredibly sad losses in Longstock and the pain for the families is tangible. Not only did loved ones die but numbers were restricted at funerals to rub salt into the already gaping wounds. This is where Longstock really shines through, the sense of community is amazing, and I hope has comforted those who grieve. A food bank was started up in the Village Hall by very generous donations from Home Sense in Salisbury. The food was distributed to everyone in the village, by an army of helpers. We divided the village into groups of roughly 10 houses and a person per group was appointed area liaison. You all know who you are, as indeed does everyone in the village – a huge thank you for stepping up without hesitation. After John Milne stepped down from the Parish Council, his shoes were filled by John Eastwood who has been the driving force behind our new website [www.longstockparishcouncil.co.uk](http://www.longstockparishcouncil.co.uk) really worth a look and any comments welcome. John is now sadly standing down and we hope to have people putting themselves forward soon. Thank you very much John for all your hard work, it really is appreciated. Daniel Busk and Peter Boulton, our previous Borough Councillors have retired, so Cllr Tony Ward, Cllr Alison Johnston and Cllr Ian Jeffery of TVBC now cover Mid Test. Cllr Ward, who covers Longstock, has been such a positive and constructive contributor to our meetings. Very many thanks Tony. Sadly, this year Cllr Andrew Gibson from HCC is retiring, and it is with great sadness we see him go. He has championed our village over so many matters and been very generous with his personal grant allowance, for Longstock. We wish you all the best for your retirement and good luck in Italia, Andrew! On a really exciting note for the village, we now have a very real chance of some affordable housing for this village. Here I would like to copy and paste what I wrote two years ago, just as a reminder – Affordable Housing – no progress on this as per the past 25 years. It seems we either have to sell our souls to allow Daniel Busk to build 46 houses behind Roman Road or

go without. If only we had a philanthropic landowner who would donate ½ acre to the village for this purpose. Well, it seems we DO have a philanthropic landowner - thank you to The Leckford Estate and especially Simon Borthwick for the very many, many hours of work put in with English Rural Housing to have this beautiful proposal within our grasp. This proposal has been through the pre application process with Test Valley Borough Council and there have been no adverse comments from Highways. It was then presented to LPC and was supported unanimously. At the end of the public consultation process a detailed planning application will be submitted. So, this means that finally the sons and daughters of our community will be able to remain and live in the village where they were born, it means the elderly who are in tied houses can remain in the village that they have given the best years of their life to, it also means we keep the history within the village, stories passed down, memories shared, and the community kept truly local. A big thank you to Cllr David Burnfield who has been championing affordable housing for us for years. Thank you, David. We have viewed and visited many planning applications over the past two years. Most people have obtained permission to alter their houses in some way, but it never seems straightforward, always a bit of a battle, draining, stressful and expensive. I don't blame the Borough Council; Government just seems to pass the buck down the line and no money to implement. We seek to support applications where possible to lend a bit of weight, but our opinion is often overlooked. I think we should have more importance put on our opinions, at the end of the day it's our village and we have to live with the decisions. The Parish Council battles on with reporting potholes, overgrown footpaths, blocked drains, speeding traffic, hedges and the like but slowly, slowly I think we are making progress! Our Clerk, Mark is as dogged as our previous clerk at rattling the right cages to get things done. There have been several potholes at Roman Road, and I was going to say the road leading into Fullerton is still appalling but some work has been done there just yesterday. One big area of concern is the speeding traffic. The Bunny is an accident waiting to happen but being chased up by David Hall hopefully. The residents of Bottom Road are also particularly worried, and rightly so. There are lots of young families in the near vicinity and they walk up Bottom Road regularly. The size and speed of the ever-larger tractors and lorries really do pose a problem, legally allowed to travel at 30mph but it just isn't appropriate for a single-track road. We are hoping Hampshire Highways will repaint the white lines at the triangle and put Give Way and Slow signs. Longstock's streetlights have been overhauled by the very tenacious Cllr Selina Musters. I have to say that this was an enormous project that required a huge amount of work. So, we have wonderful heritage lights at the crossroads with Houghton and Stockbridge and in the historic centre of the village. They are so in keeping and gone are the ghastly orange lights. Other lights have been upgraded and replaced so I think we can safely say that we are all 'lit up' here in Longstock. Our footpaths have not been in better shape, under the watchful eye of Cllr Charles Grieve. He has marched, well meandered, the length and breadth of the Parish and sorted what needed sorting! He has managed the workload of our very valued Lengthsman, Shane Ling who has continued to do a fabulous job keeping our village tidy. Charles has also been our liaison with Ian Armitage who has bought Charity Down Farm from the Leckford Estate. Ian has been very amenable and constructive when approached about issues. We hope he will become a Longstock resident before too long. Many thanks Charles. The playground continues to be well used, loved and enjoyed. We had to close it for a few months over the first lockdown and it was hugely missed by the children particularly. RoSPA didn't inspect the ground last year but are doing so in May this



year. We have been incredibly lucky to have Cllr Angie Filippa's husband who has volunteered to help with the ongoing maintenance, or maybe he was volunteered by Angie!! Whichever, he has been a breath of fresh air, skilled, hands on and cheerful to boot! Many thanks Richard Leckford continue to cut the grass for us which is so kind and Cllr Ivan Gibson deals with the overgrowth round the equipment as part of his contract with the Parish Council. Several people have been spotted gathering up litter, not only in the playground but through the village. It doesn't go unnoticed and many thanks, you know who you are! The inspection rota will be back up and running soon, anyone interested in this easy task (new families with small children?) please contact me. Huge thanks to all the stalwarts who have helped for years. Colin McIntyre attends these Parish Council meetings as a liaison between us and Leckford. He has worked his magic and managed to provide us with a glass recycling station at Longstock Park Nursery. There had been many complaints from residents of Roman Road after the recycling bin was removed from Stockbridge, our Key Service Centre and placed in our parish without any notice. Many thanks to Colin. The Longstock Newsletter is such a vital part of our community and an important communication link for one and all. This is no mean feat, a lot of time goes into this production – information gathering, history to relate, adverts to procure, events to advertise and so much more. Rosie Flewitt and Heli Cole have been fabulous as editors and have produced several really great editions, now in colour too! Everyone is asked to contribute – any achievement, marriage, birth, scholarship, do please let the editors know. Thanks so much Team Longstock Newsletter, editors, proof-readers and deliverers. The cemetery is looking a picture, it's such a peaceful, serene place amidst all the daily toil and turmoil. Many thanks to Cllr Ivan Gibson for maintaining it and to Peter Moore who tends the central cemetery garden, Notwithstanding Covid we did have a really splendid Remembrance Service at our 'Cenotaph.' In line with regs we took names and addresses, just in case of an outbreak. Four wreaths were laid and Tim Nedas with Craig Foster nailed the music! Sadly we couldn't go into the pub for the usual hospitality but hoping for great things this year! Many thanks to the Peat Spade for your support of the Parish Council, we look forward to our return post meetings! A huge thank you to Dave Watts for maintaining this special heart of our village. I, for one am very proud of our allotments. It's a real beating heart of the village, produce growing, gardening tips being swapped, expertise given generously and a really beautiful area of community pride. A huge thank you to all our allotmenters and especially to Gareth Evans, the Chairman. The Henry Smiths Charity has been unbelievably supportive to us through this pandemic. Realising that people might be struggling, on furlough, losing jobs, kids at home for schooling and sadly deaths, we asked them for more financial support. They stepped up immediately and have offered to help with more if needed this coming year. We have helped many families and also children for school trips this year. Fortunately, we arranged our annual Henry Smiths lunch for February last year and as always was a huge success. We are hoping to organise something this summer, watch this space. Many lovely letters have been received from recipients that all get forwarded to the Trust. Please let us know if you think someone could use some help. Our Village Hall has been closed for so long due to Covid but our very diligent committee have been opening up, following very strict regulations for Covid hygiene protocol. Thank you everyone for keeping this vital building in such good shape. We have been working hard on the Neighbourhood Plan over the last 2 years, somewhat slowed by Covid. You have all been asked for views on housing and more, as soon as restrictions allow, we will hold a Community Engagement Event. The Chairman of the NHP is Cllr Angie Filippa

who has been the powerhouse behind this commitment and is ably guiding us on with the help of our advisors Plan-et, Liz Bourne and Becky Hopkinson. Test Valley School has a new head, Toni Wildern who has taken over from Luisa Hiscock. She has many new ideas to rejuvenate the school, breathe new life into a school that has been struggling for a while. As a Parish Council we are working very closely with our school. They are moving towards some more agriculturally based subjects and have found a lot of support from our farmers and landowners. Many thanks to our Vice Chairman Cllr Angie Filippa for keeping us up to speed with all things Test Valley School and the Neighbourhood Plan. Mark Flewitt took over the reins as Clerk from John Musters two years ago and has worked tirelessly to keep us on the straight and narrow. Meticulous in our minutes, attention to detail and a very calm hand on the tiller. As far as finance is concerned, we are in very capable hands and in a good position. Our Clerk will give a full report as to our position. We are hoping the audit, due in May will achieve a clean bill of health. Thanks to Patrick Coates, local chartered accountant, for agreeing to do our internal audits. Many thanks Mark for all you do for us and always with a smile. And last but by no way least, a very big and sincere thanks to all my fellow Parish Councillors as a whole, who give so freely of their time. It has at times been challenging but we have got through with perseverance, dedication, and integrity.

On behalf of the Parish Councillors, CG submitted the following report regarding the Council Chairman:

In 2019/20 Sophie Walters as Parish Council Chairman, led with energy, enthusiasm and a determination to do her utmost for all villagers, such as establishing the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group. During the last year her cheerful, inspirational leadership and initiatives shaped the Village's approach to the challenges of Covid. Amongst other things, she instigated the Covid Coordinators, acquired foodstuffs for an emergency food bank and kept an eagle eyed overwatch for any who might need Henry Smith's intervention. A massive thank you Sophie; your wholehearted, caring efforts exemplify what makes this village what it is.

- **Longstock Parish Council Finance:** Clerk **Mark Flewitt** had circulated his report on LPC's Finances in advance.

The 2020 APA was cancelled due to the first Coronavirus lockdown, so this report will cover both the 2019/20 and the 2020/21 Financial Years (FY).

### **2019/20**

The Internal Audit was once again completed and approved by Patrick Coates, and because both income and expenditure were less than £25k we are still exempt from external audit requirements.

The 2019/20 FY opening balance was £6,988, and we ended the year on £2,973 following the completion of the first phase of the new streetlighting project. Total income was £16.6k, and total expenditure was £20.6k

Some details:

- The Precept was increased from £7k to £8k to cover the projected streetlighting expenditure
- Grants totalling £5.8k were received, with £4.1k in relation to the launch of the Neighbourhood Plan (NHP) (of which £1k was unused at FY-end and returned to the Locality donor), and a further £1.7k from HCC and TVBC for the streetlights
- VAT Refunds were £1.5k, compared to £0.3k in the previous year, largely due to the costs of the streetlights
- Streetlight installation costs were £7.4k +VAT, and electricity supply costs were £0.4k. The new streetlights will not require any maintenance, so they should generate annual savings of the previous ongoing £0.5k pa maintenance expenses
- Newsletter income fell by £0.2k largely due to delays in advert renewals as a result of the Covid-19 crisis. Newsletter expenses rose by £0.4k with increased content and the introduction of some colour pages
- Cemetery income increased from £0.2k to £0.6k due to a higher number of burials

## **2020/21**

The internal review and audit of the 2020/21 accounts by Patrick Coates is still pending, and is due for May. In the meantime, the initial outline figures are detailed below:

- The opening balance was £2,973, and the closing balance as 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021 was £8,613. Nevertheless this closing balance included an amount of £5.3k in unused NHP Grants which are due to be returned to Locality, so the “real” closing balance should be £3.3k in line with the budget projections
- The Precept was maintained at £8k
- The final stage of the project to install new streetlights was completed at a cost of £2.4k +VAT
- Newsletter income more than doubled to £1.5k with increased colour advertising rates and a “catch-up” on renewals from the previous year.
- Newsletter expenses increased by £0.6k to £1.9k, which included the publication of an extra issue related to the Covid crisis, but the shortfall was covered by a £0.5k grant from TVBC to cover Covid-related communications
- Electricity costs were £0.4k, but there were zero maintenance charges in line with expectations for the new LED streetlights
- Cemetery income was slightly lower at £0.5k
- VAT Refunds were £1.2k, largely as a result of the completion of the streetlights expenditure

## **Budget 2021/22**

The Precept has been increased from £8k to £8.5k as part of the process to rebuild the PC’s cash reserves back towards the historical level of £5k

Ongoing NHP costs should be funded from the related Locality grants, so will have a “net zero” effect on the PC’s financial position

With the completion of the streetlighting project, a return to normal overall operating income and expenditure levels, and a further increase in newsletter advertising income to cover the new printing costs, the 2021/22 budget projects a closing balance of £4.8k (excluding any unused NHP grants pending at year-end).

SW thanked MF for his efforts over the past 2 years.

5. **Questions/Comments from the Public.**

- Local resident and ex-Clerk John Musters, thanked the PC for their efforts, and especially for keeping the PC activities functioning during Covid.
- Local resident, Sue Parish (SP), expressed support for Affordable Housing in principle, but was seriously concerned at the new proposal from English Rural/Leckford Estate for 12 units on Church Road
  - The consultation presentation is a very large document, and the 9<sup>th</sup> May deadline to respond is unreasonable
  - There is an important risk of creating a “backfill” precedent for future development
  - SP was concerned that the PC had agreed to support the project before it had been made public
  - SW indicated that English Rural were asking for all feedback, both positive and negative
  - AF advised that Affordable Housing projects in “rural exception sites” do not create precedents for future commercial housing development outside the settlement boundary
  - AF confirmed that English Rural would be invited to join Neighbourhood Plan “face-to-face” presentations to all residents once Covid regulations allow, hopefully in June
  - SW thanked SP for her input, and for her willingness to engage with important village issues

6. **AOB.** Nil.

The Chairman closed the Assembly at 19.50.