



PARISH COUNCIL FINANCIAL STATEMENT

There has been considerable change and uncertainty in the Parish Council over previous months. In November last year seven Councillors resigned from the Council and the Clerk left her post in December. Since then, members of the community have joined the Council resulting in one position remaining unfilled at the time of writing and the Council operating with a Locum Clerk.

In January, the Parish Council was required to submit its Precept request to cover costs for the financial year 2022-2023. At January's meeting, Councillors had to decide on the level of Precept and budget based on the information that was available to them. A key factor was uncertainty over costs to be levied by Shropshire Council following contested elections in May 2021 and subsequent possible bye elections. Costs would be higher as the parish contains five separate wards.

As Shropshire Council had not yet informed the Parish Council of the costs a worst-case scenario was assumed to ensure that the Parish Council did not run out of funds within the year. For this year, key costs were considered to be elections, parish and environmental maintenance and Clerk/Council Administration. The table below sets out last year's costs and this year's budget.

2021/22 Actual	COSTS	2022/23 Budgeted	COMMENT
£0.00	Election Costs	£9,000.00	Worst case £1,800 per ward
£1,995.20	Clerk Salary	£3,000.00	Comparable to similar council
£1,387.60	Clerk Administration	£2,500.00	Laptop, Contingency, IT support
£4,959.00	Parish Environmental Maintenance	£5,400.00	8% increase
£2,543.45	Parish Maintenance Projects	£250.00	No major items identified
£486.94	Insurance	£515.00	6% increase
£352.65	SALC Affiliation Fee	£375.00	6% increase
£222.00	Defibrillator Parts	£60.00	Pads
£90.00	Training	£240.00	New Councillors development
£65.00	Audit Fees	£75.00	Alternative auditor
£72.00	Village Hall Rental	£140.00	Increased meetings
£40.00	ICO Commission Fee	£40.00	Standard fee
£30.00	Website	£250.00	Presentation enhancement
£12,243.84	Total	£21,845.00	

The Council is undertaking detailed analyses of its parish and financial obligations. Savings may result in some quarters but offset by new expenditure as it identifies the needs of its parish and residents. Details on these will follow. Councillors believe that previous levels of Precept were not sufficient for the long-term viability of the Council and careful consideration was given to future needs. This resulted in the request for an increased amount of £18,000 for the current year.

Where savings can be made, the resulting increase in financial reserves will be maintained to minimise future demands. Subsequent advice by Shropshire Council that election costs for 2022 would amount to £1,515.41 was welcome news.

Council will provide a further financial statement in October reflecting performance in the first six months of the year and subsequent expectations.