

## Wylam Parish Council Ordinary Meeting 8 January 2024

### Budget Setting 2024-25

#### Introduction

Each year the Council must agree its budget based on an estimate of receipts and payments for the following year and must also set its precept for the following year.

The budget request approved by the Council for the 2023/24 Precept request was £54,000. The Society of Local Council Clerks, 2023/24 salary increase has been agreed at 3.88% and will be back dated to 1 April. Northumberland County Council have requested that the Precept Form be returned no later than Friday 26 January.

Wylam Parish Council are in a fortunate position to have surplus funding. This was raised as a concern during the 2023 AGAR, with Auditors expecting more robust planning for the surplus during the 2024 AGAR.

Following the review of the Parish Council spending habits over the last two financial years and allowing for the surplus, the Clerk recommends no increase to residents over the next financial year.

Appendix 1 includes the budget breakdown, forecast, and estimated final budget for the 2023/2024 financial year, and the draft budget for 2024/2025 is along side for comparison. Please note that the break down has been allocated to an updated set of budget lines, to allow for more accurate forecasting.

Explanations of changes to budget lines are included in the table below in relation to the numbering in Appendix 1.

These calculations would result in a precept of **£54,000**, no increase is requested from households.

Although costs from contractors have increased to the Parish Council during the financial year, there was underspend in other budget areas available to absorb the extra expenditure.

Income from Ovingham Joint Burial offset 3 hours per week of the Clerk's salary and the Wylam Parish Council % contribution of approximately £4500 will as in previous years be covered by surplus.

#### Recommendation

Members are requested to consider the Draft Budget for 2023-24 and approve the Precept for 2024-25.

**Notes to Forecast Outturn 2023/24**

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| 1  | Reduction in OJBC salary recharge income, lower salary point to previous Clerk.   |
| 2  | Salary cost over final budget to increase in Clerk hours during Q3 and backdated pay award of 3.88% for the Clerk and Handyman. |
| 3  | Expenses increase due to the final expenses claim by the previous Clerk in the 2023 financial year.                             |
| 4  | Lower than expected in stationery. Items bought directly by Clerk from new supplier.  |
| 5  | Last of three year deal with insurance company.   |
| 6  | New Auditor appointed for 2023/24, resulting in increase in costs.  |
| 7  | New website set up fee.   |
| 8  | Lower than expected IT costs.   |
| 9  | Wylam Parish Council planning day estimated cost.   |
| 10 | Claimed on Clerk expenses use approximately 5 stamps per year.  |
| 11 | Clerk mileage claimed on expenses.  |
| 12 | Anniversary globe.  |
| 13 | Underspend due to low level of repairs and maintenance.   |
| 14 | Increase in Northumberland County Council maintenance costs   |
| 15 | Work to Tyne Valley Trees and Oaks  |
| 16 | No litter pick funding paid and no hire of skip in 2023/24  |
| 17 | Institute tree work required before service of lights.  |
| 18 | Hagg Bank playground review to take place.  |
| 19 | No spend in project area, change from Village to Neighbourhood Plan.  |
| 20 | Two large grants given Clock and School.  |

**Notes to Draft Budget 24/25**

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| 1  | Assumes 3.88% increase for Clerk.  |
| 2  | Assumes 3.88% increase for Clerk and Handyman and increase in hours from 18 to 24 (21 paid by Parish Council and 3 by OJBC) for the Clerk. |
| 3  | New supplier, lower cost   |
| 4  | Last of three year deal.   |
| 5  | New auditor charges.   |
| 6  | Annual charge and possible increased storage capacity.   |
| 7  | New equipment in place, back up for smaller items.   |
| 8  | NCC has advised of new pricing structure, charge per staff member.   |
| 9  | Advertising done effectively via social media and noticeboards.  |
| 10 | Currently no souvenirs to sell.  |
| 11 | Grant funding from Northumbrian Water for bus stop repair and decoration.  |
| 12 | Refurbishment of benches, bins, notice boards. Asset register review will identify other items.  |
| 13 | Routine maintenance work and additional for fallen trees.  |
| 14 | Christmas lights to be removed, serviced and replaced once Wylam Institute have completed tree work.                                       |

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| <b>15</b> | General maintenance of Hagg Bank. Quotes to be obtained for refurbishment, covered by Hagg Bank EMR. |
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