

Stinsford Parish Council – 14 January 2019

Budget 2019/20 - Report by Responsible Financial Officer

Reason for report

In order to comply with statutory deadlines for the setting of budgets and precepts (ie the amount of Council Tax to be levied by the Parish Council), it is necessary for the Council to agree these at the January meeting and submit the details to West Dorset District Council before the deadline of 31 January 2019. These will be included in the budget-setting process for the new Dorset Council, which will be the collection authority from 1 April 2019.

Context

For 2017/18, the Parish Council agreed a precept of £5,000. The expenditure approved by the Parish Council for the full financial year 2017/18 totalled £4,115.03.

The Parish Council again agreed a precept of £5,000 for the current financial year, 2018/19. To date, the Parish Council has approved expenditure in 2018/19 of £4,178.12 (the accounts to date are attached for information). Approval of further expenditure of £1,075.07 is sought at this meeting. Assuming that this is agreed, the total amount approved to date in the current financial year will be £5,253.19. This includes expenditure totalling £1,668.60 from the Groundwork UK grant for the development of a Neighbourhood Plan for the parish.

Assuming that this expenditure is approved, the Parish Council currently has reserves of £16,920.60 (excluding the Groundwork UK grant). Of this, £12,960.27 is ring-fenced. The level of reserves held by the Parish Council in comparison to its current precept has been queried by the External Auditor during recent annual audits. However, an explanation was provided about the amounts ring-fenced for specific activity and no recommendations were made in the Auditor's reports.

Recommendation

I have prepared budget estimates (attached). These total £5,360. Whilst the Parish Council holds a reasonable amount in reserves, it is acknowledged that there will be further expenditure in 2019/20 associated with the development of the Neighbourhood Plan, as well as maintenance of the Lower Bockhampton play area and the refurbishment of the white fingerposts at Higher Bockhampton and Bockhampton Cross. I therefore propose that the precept be increased to £5,500 for 2019/20 to meet the Parish Council's costs.

West Dorset District Council has confirmed the tax base to be used for Stinsford is 148.00. A precept of £5,500 would therefore equate to a Council Tax charge of £37.16 for a Band D property for 2019/20. In the current year this is £35.66.

I therefore recommend that the Parish Council consider:

- (i) the attached draft budget estimates for 2019/20; and**
- (ii) whether to issue a precept of £5,500 for 2019/20.**

Kirsty Riglar
Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer
January 2019