

Wickham Bishops Parish Council

Parish Councillors

I D Wardrop (Chairman)
M Mickelsen (Vice Chair)
H M Bass
P J Bates
P D Layley
S Morgan
C Nappo
J Williams



Winner Best Kept Village 2009, 2015
3rd Place Essex Village of the Year 2015

www.wickhambishopparishcouncil.org

Parish Clerk

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Minutes of Finance Committee Meeting held on Thursday 28th November 2024 at 2.00pm in the Village Hall Boardroom

Item	Subject
24F/001	Those Present and Apologies for Absence In the Chair: Cllr Mickelsen Present: Cllrs Wardrop, Williams and the Clerk. There were no members of the public present.
24F/002	Declaration of Interests and Compliance with the Ethical Framework There were none.
24F/003	Approval of Minutes of Finance Committee Meeting held on 27th October 2023 The Minutes were approved unanimously.
24F/004	Public Forum There were no members of the public in attendance.
24F/005	Process and Controls Review <u>To review the internal controls and 2023-24 audit report</u> Cllr Nappo would be asked to complete a scrutiny of the accounts before year end. The 2023-24 report from the internal auditor was noted as were the recommendations made, which included adding GDPR to our Risk Assessment and ensuring that an annual review of Internal Controls was carried out. <u>To recommend Heelis & Lodge as internal auditor for approval by Full Council</u> Resolved: The Committee recommended that Heelis & Lodge be used for the 2025 audit at a cost of £220. <u>To review the new Finance Regulations and agree recommendation for approval by Full Council</u> Resolved: The Committee recommended the new Financial Regulations be adopted by Full Council.
24F/006	Asset Register and Risk Management Policy Review <u>To review the Asset Register to financial year ending 31 March 2025</u> Resolved: The revised Asset Register document to be presented for approval at the December Parish Council Meeting. <u>To review the Risk Assessment & Management Policy for approval by Full Council</u> The document had been amended in line with the Internal Auditor's recommendations. Resolved: The Committee recommended the Policy for approval at the December PC Meeting.
24F/007	Current Year Budget Performance and Project Review <u>To review planned and actual spending in 2024-25 and projected end of year balance</u> Actuals and Estimated Year End figures to 31 st March 2025 prepared by the Clerk were noted. Estimated total expenditure was likely to be £31,317 which would mean a year-end carry forward figure in the region of £11,000.

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The following additional items for current year spending were noted:

Housing Needs Survey	£750.00
Grange Road Litter Bin	£430.91
Replacement Noticeboard o/s Olios	£1,000.00
Six Walks Footpath Booklet printing	£520.00

Budget item 17 Venue Hire: BHSA had increased the charge from £13.50 per hour to £22.50 per hour and a recent invoice received for £945 for the year 2024/25 was noted. (WBPC had budgeted £692). They advised that the hourly rate for 2025/26 would be increasing to £25 per hour. **Action:** The Chairman agreed to write to BHSA asking if they would consider holding the £22.50 for one more year.

Budget item 21 War Memorial: A request just received from Little Braxted PC asked for a contribution of £457.97 towards the cost of maintenance to the war memorial. (WBPC had budgeted £355, in line with the previous year's costs). **Action:** The Clerk to write to Little Braxted PC asking that we be consulted on the cost of future works to enable us to budget appropriately.

Budget item 22 Remembrance Event: A request just received from Little Braxted PC for a contribution of £727.32 was noted. The Clerk had queried this as earlier in the year it had been indicated that using a different contractor, a 3-way split of £120 was envisaged. It appeared there had been a misunderstanding as to whether the quote included the cost of the road closure and Little Braxted PC had been forced to revert to using the same contractor as the previous year.

Budget item 48 Air Raid Shelter: The air raid shelter door and lock required attention. **Action:** The Clerk to arrange repairs and/or replacement door and lock (if necessary) in the current financial year.

24F/008

Budget and Precept 2025-2026

Consider setting aside sums for future projects

Speed Indicator Devices, Rotation and/or Purchase: The quote of £750 to move two SIDs to alternative locations was thought to be excessive. The streetlighting contractor had been approached and had inspected the equipment, but did not wish to quote. The cost of purchasing a new SID would be in the region of £2250 - £3,090 + VAT. Highways had yet to respond to our request for information on the existing SIDs to enable the council to consider adoption, but it was felt that due to the age of the equipment, this might not be prudent. **Resolved:** After consideration, the Committee recommended leaving the existing SIDs in their current location. Speedwatch volunteers would be asked to operate in Kelvedon Road.

H-bar markings, Great Totham Road: H-bar markings were available through the South Essex Parking Partnership (SEPP) at a cost of £100 + VAT each. The Committee considered whether providing H-bar markings across Great Totham Road driveways would improve the parking situation or merely push it further up the road. **Resolved:** The Committee did not wish to incur this expenditure, although it was noted that affected residents in Great Totham Road were free to arrange and pay for this themselves.

Footpath number discs: A quote of £180 + VAT for 50 discs was considered. **Resolved:** The Committee recommended purchase of the discs in the current financial year, although a check would need to be made of exactly how many were required for each footpath i.e. FP1, FP2, BR19.

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To develop the budget and precept proposals for approval by the Full Council

Resolved: The updated Precept and Budget Proposal document (attached) to be presented to the Full Parish Council on Tuesday 3rd December, with a recommendation that the **2025/26 Precept be set at £24,530**. MDC advised that the 2025/26 tax base for the parish was 1,022.1 (to be confirmed by them on 12th December) equating to a Band D property precept of £24.00.

The following amounts would be set aside using the Parish Council's reserves:

General Reserves		£9000
Earmarked Reserves	Election Expenses	£1000
	Planning Appeal representation	£1,000
	TOTAL	£11,000

24F/009 **Date of Next Meeting**
Tuesday 3rd December 2024 Full Parish Council Meeting, 7.00pm, (*earlier time*)
Tuesday 7th January 2025 Full Parish Council Meeting, 7.30pm, Village Hall Boardroom

24F/010 **Close of Meeting** There being no further business, the meeting closed at 3.20pm.

WICKHAM BISHOPS PARISH COUNCIL										
Precept and Budget Proposal 2025-26		Actuals 2021/22	Actuals 2022/23	Actuals 2023/24	Budget agreed 2024/25	2024/25 actuals at 28.11.24	2024/25 estimated year end	Suggest 2025/26	Allocate from Reserves	Notes
1.	Clerks Salary	£8,230.65	£9,864.71	£9,591.00	£10,267.00	£6,726.24	£10,510.43	£11,058.00		After recent pay increase, £15.58 ph x 13 hours pw = £202.54 x 52 weeks = £10,532. Allow 5% increase for 25/26 = £11,058
2.	LGPS					£5,000.00	£5,000.00	£0.00		
3.	HMRC NIC & Tax		£13.23	£22.68	£80.00	£69.72	£116.20	£900.00		Earnings above £5k liable to 15% Employers. £6k x 15% = £900
4.	Office Running Costs	£300.00	£300.00	£300.00	£300.00	£200.00	£300.00	£300.00		Stay at £25 per month = £300
5.	Outsourced Payroll	£280.00	£350.00	£315.00	£330.00	£192.50	£302.50	£330.00		£27.50 x 12 = £330. Waiting to hear from J&M as to poss increase for next year
6.	Clerk's Mileage and Travel	£25.20	£75.10	£70.00	£45.00	£40.50	£40.50	£45.00		Suggest remain the same
7.	Mobile Phone Costs	£70.00	£80.00	£70.00	£75.00	£30.00	£50.00	£70.00		Suggest slight reduction. Where possible Clerk uses other means of communication
8.	Computer Expenses (incl Scribe Accounts package plus any unforeseen computer related expenses)	£47.96	£796.04	£420.00	£457.00	£60.00	£417.12	£493.00		£357 (3rd year of 3-year Scribe contract) + £100 incidentals. Scribe have yet to set their 2026 prices - suggest 10% increase to £393
9.	Unity Bank Charges	£72.00	£72.00	£72.00	£72.00	£41.40	£72.00	£72.00		£6 per month x 12 = £72
10.	Expenses	£26.09	£94.16	£100.00	£125.00	£0.00	£0.00	£100.00		Incidental expenses, suggest slight reduction
11.	Membership Subscriptions (SLCC, EALC, NALC, ICO)	£745.26	£740.67	£850.00	£850.00	£759.91	£759.91	£892.00		Possible increase of say 5%
12.	Training	£1,170.00	£103.50	£500.00	£200.00	£125.00	£125.00	£200.00		For possible new councillor training
13.	Chairman's Allowance		£248.98	£285.00	£285.00		£285.00	£285.00		For possible Thank You event for volunteers
14.	Election Expenses								£1,000.00	As recommended by Auditor
15.	Printing & Postage	£671.49	£492.75	£600.00	£500.00	£380.58	£940.54	£500.00		Includes £520 for Footpath Map printing. Consider reducing number of printed Annual Reports
16.	Neighbourhood Watch			£0.00	£0.00					Remove for 2023/24
17.	Venue Hire	£288.00	£88.00	£475.00	£692.00		£945.00	£1,050.00		BHSA charge is £945 for 24/25 despite forecasting £692. From £13.50 ph to £22.50 ph. 25/26 will be £25 ph. Church Hall hire is £22.50 ph.
18.	Streetlight Electricity	£150.07	£180.61	£400.00	£254.00	£215.46	£285.46	£300.00		£65 per quarter 2024/25. Suggest £300 for 25/26
19.	Streetlight Maintenance		£120.00	£210.00	£210.00	£224.00	£224.00	£225.00		Year 4 of a 5-year contract at £120 p.a. + extra for unknown
20.	Village Signs / Noticeboard			£50.00	£50.00		£0.00	£50.00		Small sum for possible repairs or replacement perspex
21.	War Memorial	£339.26	£347.11	£339.00	£355.00		£457.97	£458.00		2024 costs just received. WBPC contribution £458
22.	Remembrance Event	£585.33	£978.48	£250.00	£900.00	£36.67	£763.99	£764.00		2024 Remembrance Day costs - £757 for WBPC + £36.67 poppy wreath
23.	Speedwatch & Trucam	£1,134.72	£1,619.25	£2,105.00	£2,264.00	£1,693.88	£2,266.88	£2,480.00		4.5 hours per month = 54 hours @ £45 per hour = £2,430 + £50 for speedwatch = £2480
24.	Email & Website Subscription	£452.79	£452.79	£592.00	£621.00	£495.99	£495.99	£600.00		
25.	Audit	£125.00	£125.00	£125.00	£560.00	£170.00	£170.00	£550.00		Internal Audit £210 + External Audit £340 (if expenditure above £25k)
26.	Insurance	£420.93	£378.09	£430.00	£473.00	£396.00	£396.00	£430.00		Zurich says so long as precept is under £30k and asset cover under £50k for 'All Risks', premium shouldn't go up very much at all.
27.	Grasscutting	£503.72	£466.60	£765.00	£665.00	£752.08	£752.08	£765.00		£85 x 7 cuts = £595 + occasional branch trimming.
28.	Bench Maintenance			£200.00	£450.00		£0.00	£450.00		
29.	Contingency			£100.00	£125.00		£0.00	£100.00		
30.	Amenity Fund for voluntary groups			£250.00	£300.00	£500.00	£500.00	£300.00		Grants to local groups
33.	Neighbourhood Plan	£140.75		£0.00	£0.00					Should we budget for future NP or put something in Reserves?
34.	Planning Appeal Representation					£2,750.00	£2,750.00		£1,000.00	Set aside additional funds ?
35.	Platinum Footpath		£850.00	£2,000.00	£450.00	£30.00	£30.00	£200.00		Possible strimming/maintenance
37.	Additional Benches			£0.00	£0.00			£0.00		
38.	Illustrated Village Map					£0.00	£1,000.00		£0.00	£1000 is estimated WBPC share of replacement noticeboard outside Olio's - we didn't budget for this so I've put it under Village Map heading.
41.	General Reserves								£9,000.00	
43.	Equals Bank charges		£10.00		£0.00					No charges expected after initial set up cost.
47.	Queens' Platinum Jubilee/ King Charles III Coronation		£500.00	£1,000.00	£0.00					
48.	Air Raid Shelter			£50.00	£75.00		£0.00	£263.00		Set aside for possible works to door/lock.
49.	Biodiversity projects/climate change				£500.00		£180.00	£300.00		£180 for possible footpath number discs
	<i>Grange Road litter bin (not budgetted for)</i>						£430.91			
	<i>Housing Needs Survey (not budgetted for)</i>						£750.00			
	TOTAL				£22,530.00	£20,889.93	£31,317.48	£24,530.00	£11,000.00	