

Brassington Parish Council Financial Overview 2015/16

The Council is increasing the annual precept from £10,000 to £12,500 so Brassington Parish Council will receive an extra £2,500 next year, in real terms this means that a Council tax band 'D' property will pay an extra £9.87 per annum, which equates to 19p per week, higher banded properties will pay slightly more, lower banded properties slightly less. Single occupancy and people in receipt of some benefits will pay 25% less. After very careful consideration this was the decision the Council made and was certainly not taken lightly. The Council felt that in order to continue to support the community the precept needed to be increased in order to balance the books particularly in light of planned capital and maintenance costs within the Parish, support for the community plan groups etc.

A Parish Council has very clear legal and statutory obligations to meet; it is not a community group.

The following comments on the Parish Council finance may be of interest:

Current Financial Position - As at– 19 January 2016, The Council income for the current year is £11,482 including the precept and cemetery income. As of now the current expenditure is £13,800. Before the end of the year the Council will receive reimbursable income of £700 but this will still leave the Council with a deficit of at least £1,618. There have been a number of 'one-off' costs this year full details of all Parish Council expenditure will be published.

Cemetery – the Council is responsible for the maintenance and upkeep of the cemetery, the Council pays the rates to the District Council (£492 this year) some of the cemetery maintenance costs (approx. £700) are reimbursed by the District Council. The Parish Council receives income from burials etc, however it varies hugely from year to year and cannot be relied on to balance the books. Cemetery income will not be included in the Parish Council income forecasts going forward.

Audit – The Council accounts have to be audited annually, the cost has risen by £20 this year.

Insurance – In 2013/14 the cost of insurance was reduced from £605 to £333 due to a more competitive quote being received. The current insurance premium paid in January 2016 was £353.

Room Hire for Parish Council Meetings – the normal cost is £12 per meeting; however the Council had not been invoiced for this expense for year 2013/14; hence the cost this year is £300. Also the cost of room hire for the Community Plan of £225 from the previous year had to be covered.

Carsington Wind Farm – The Council received £4,100 this year, £3,800 was allocated to various village groups, £300 remains unallocated at present, but has not been included in the current financial position above. The Council cannot use this money for general running expenses.

Play Area – In April 2014 the previous Council Ring fenced £5,000 from the Parish Council reserve account for upgrading of the play area. A further £1,400 was allocated from Carsington Wind Farm Funds. The Play area is inspected annually and the Council has to respond to any items raised in the report. As a result of this year's report £1,304 was spent on essential maintenance. In addition £1,694 was spent on replacing a picnic table and new bark, both items were committed expenditure from the previous Parish Council Spending on the play area for the current year is running at £3,099.

Handyman – the handyman has a contract to mow areas of the parish, the Council are carefully trying to monitor this expense and are looking at ways this can be reduced, in 2014/15 the cost was £5,875 the cost to date is £5,430, the forecast to the end of the year is not more £5,600.

Clerk – the Clerk is the Council's only paid employee, the cost of the Clerk was £3,674 in 2014/15 the current cost to date is £3,470. The Clerk's salary is set and agreed by the Council on a NALC scale as detailed in the Clerk's contract.

Training – As an employer the Council is committed to ensure that the Clerk's training and knowledge is kept up to date. More than two-thirds of the Councillors were new to the role of Councillor in May 2015 this has meant that Councillors have needed to take vital training to ensure that they are fully aware of their responsibilities. As an employer the Council also has to comply with their legal responsibilities in providing a pension, this has necessitated the Clerk in attending further training. As the Clerk is also the Clerk of another Village we get the advantage that the majority of time any training is split so we only pay 50% of the total cost.