



RamseyParkeston
PARISH COUNCIL

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Financial Report 2013/14

&

Proposed Budget 2014/15

Financial Year 2013/14

The outcome of this proposed budget shows a minimal decrease of just .6% on the precept request of 2013/14, although an increase has been accrued with two new contracts in place for a further 5 years fixed term, this will, however, allow the future to be stable in both areas of street lighting maintenance and the landscaping contracts.

In reading this recommendation in conjunction with the enclosed breakdown of income and expenditure I trust it will clearly reflect the recommended changes proposed.

In the following areas there has been no expenditure against the budget to-date:

- Restoration of Memorials: now the future of St Paul's Church has been confirmed the proposal to carry out maintenance on the lichgate at St Paul's Church and/or to re-site the memorial can now be considered for completion during this year.

No charges incurred from the bank this year; signatories are currently being updated with the bank to bring all current Councillors as approved signatories with 3 signatures required on any cheque issued with the cheque stub to be initialled by those signing. The Clerk is not a signatory on the bank account. The option to move to electronic banking is not favoured; the council's bank has not indicated any changes to date in their services that could potentially force changes in the council's banking procedures.

Financial year 2014/15

Firstly I clarify the position of members making decisions on setting the council tax for the Ramsey & Parkeston Parish Council following the introduction of DPIs (disclosable pecuniary interests) shed in April 2012 by the Department for Communities and Local Government; I refer to the guide to councillors publication, titled *Openness and transparency on personal interests*, published September 2013 by the Department for Communities and Local Government, and as circulated to all members, and quote:

'you will not need a dispensation to take part in the business of setting the council tax or precept or local arrangements for council tax support, which is in any event a decision affecting the generality of the public in the area of your council, rather than you as an individual.'

In preparing this recommendation to the Council for the financial year 2014/15 I have taken into account the advice and current legislation; the Parish and Town Council Precepts (Referendums) Bill 2012-13 that failed to complete its passage through Parliament before the end of the session.

Summary of the Parish and Town Council Precepts (Referendums) Bill 2012-13 is a bill to give effect to Schedule 5 of the Localism Act 2011; to amend section 52ZC of the Government Finance Act (1992) (inserted by that schedule) to require parish and town councils to conduct local referendums in the event that they choose to increase their precept by 2 % or more in the following financial year; and for connected purposes: to keep up to date with the progress of the Bill going through Parliament I have signed up for email alerts, to report to the Council at any such time further news is received.

The income from the Cemetery Lodge continues to be secured by monthly rental payments being made by standing order direct into the Council's bank account.

The rolling programme to replace street light fittings in Ramsey has been concluded giving the 29 lamps a new life span with less maintenance, therefore cost, deemed necessary.

I submit the following recommendations to the members of the Council:

1. **Office Equipment:** £700: an increase of £400 to cover the cost of a much needed replacement laptop; the most essential tool for the Council's work.
2. **Staff salary:** £12,000: set according to the national agreement and in line with the Clerk's contract; NJC salary point Scale1, Spinal Column Point 21 (£10.04 per hour x 18 hours per week) being the hourly rate for part-time clerks applicable from 1st April 2013; an increase of 1% follows a 2 year pay freeze. A contract of employment is in place between the RPPC and Clerk; a review of which is due to be undertaken, thereafter should be undertaken annually together with the annual review of the Council's policies and procedures.
3. **Office rental:** £500: No Change
4. **Hall rentals:** No Change; paid as donations at £20 per meeting under S19
5. **Travelling:** £100: No Change; all Councillors are reminded of their right to claim travel expenses and are encouraged to do so.

Travel allowances are set by the National Joint Council for Local Government Services to reflect the petrol element and engine sizes with amendments circulated to members when received.
6. **Telephone Rental:** £550: No Change: includes the supply a land line rental for the Chairman to a maximum of £70.00 per quarter this enables the Chairman to conduct council business and to limit the cost to parishioners in contacting the Chairman.
7. **Stationery:** £800: No Change
8. **Audit fees:** £650: No Change: covers both internal and external audits: external audit fees are set by the Audit Commission as published by the National Financial Advisor, SLCC.
9. **Annual Memberships:** £850: No Change
10. **Training Costs:** £1000 increase of £400, new members training that at the same time gives established Members a refresher of their knowledge: all Councillors are encouraged to bring forward ideas for training that can now be easily arranged in house as delivered by the EALC.

11. **Insurance:** £1,000: No Change
12. **Chairs Allowance:** £600: No Change
13. **Cemetery Water and Sewerage:** £600: No Change. The majority percentage of the charge continues to be covered by the cemetery lodge rent.
14. **Cemetery Business Rates:** £400: No Change (currently 100% discount awarded until March 2014; thereafter charges have not been confirmed)
15. **Cemetery Interments/Memorials Income:** £1,000: no increase is proposed for the forecoming year to ensure our competitiveness remains high.
16. **Cemetery Lodge Rent:** Increase of 5% to £598 per calendar month [including water and sewerage charges] to be implemented as from 1st April 2014; with a letter of agreement to be obtained from the current tenants; thereafter annually reviewed.
17. **Landscape Contract work:** £10,035: A tender process following the current contract expiring undertaken with the outcome of Landscape Services being awarded the contract for a fixed term of 5 years to 31st April 2018. The contract equates to a value of £8035; an additional £2,000 being set aside for additional unforeseen works; current concerns of an area of subsidence are being investigated.
18. **Donations:** £3,000: £500 decrease: all applications to be considered on merit; Hall rentals for RPPC meetings are considered as donations under S19.
19. **Street lighting:**
 - Supply:** £1,200: increase of £200 as proven [Special Expense - Ramsey Ward]
 - Maintenance:** £1,500: a decrease of £1,000 with a revised contract is now in place for a 5 year fixed term of a retainer of £558.00 per annum until 31st July 2018 to maintain the 29 light fittings in RPPC owned by the Council.; the programme to replace all fittings has now been completed giving a reduction in maintenance costs. [Special Expense – Ramsey Ward]
20. **Restoration of memorial:** £1,000.00: No Change; proposed project for St Paul's lichgate can now be given serious consideration since the future of the church has been confirmed and now closed.
21. **Projects:** £5,000; for small projects to address maintenance and enhance services for both wards [maximum number of small projects set at £100 per project; those of a higher value can be considered and award on merit by the Council.]

22. Reserves: £5,000: a contingency to cushion the impact of unexpected events or emergencies and a means of building up funds to meet unknown or predicted liabilities. The advice to the size of the reserve and that given to external auditors is that the general revenues reserves lie within the range of three to twelve months gross expenditure; that of the RPPC equates approximately to the value of £10,000 therefore I am confident that the amount proposed is acceptable.

Estimated receipts for the Parish Council for financial year 2014/15 projected to be:

1. Cemetery Rents: £7183.00 incorporating a 5% increase to cover water and sewage to the property.
2. Interest: £30.00
3. Burials, memorials: £1,000.00: No Change
4. VAT Return: £2,500 No Change
5. Chapel Storage Rent: £208: No Change

This equates to a predicted income totalling £10,914

Without the use of an internal balance this recommendation arrives at a precept request of £36,621 – a decrease of 0.6% on the previous year.

The current published Tendring District Council Register of Electors donates 1738, thus an average contribution of £21.07 [over all house bands] and equates to the Precept Request of £36,621.

Special Expenses:

Ramsey Ward:

- Landscape Services Contract [Ramsey War Memorial Hall Playing Field and Orchard Close]
- Street Lights: supply and maintenance

Parkeston Ward:

- Landscape Services Contract [Welfare Park and Parkeston House front boundary]

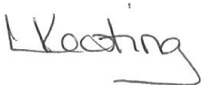
The recommendation for all income from the cemetery to be set aside for reinvestment within the cemetery for repairs and maintenance to the grounds and buildings as required.

The limit of the RPPC bank balance is directed by the Audit Commission to be no more than 1.5 times the amount of the precept request – £36,621 x 1.5 = £54,931.

	Credit	Debit
Balance brought forward 01 April 13	£17,455	
Expenditure to end March 14		£47,856
Income to end March 14	£10,579	
Predicted Balance as at 1 st April 2014	£17,455	

The understanding from Tendring District Council that the changes in the Local Government Finance Bill to reduce the tax base construction on local parish and town council precept charges as set from April 2013 remain in place. The proposals are that in a community, those on pensions and benefits receive council tax benefit giving a consequence that these new measures will mean less income per household going to the local council. However principal authorities will receive a subsidy from the Government to make up the shortfall to distribute through their parish and town councils as delivered by Tendring District Council with no shortfall last year.

I therefore recommend this budget to the Ramsey and Parkeston Parish Council to continue delivering best value to the parishioners of the Council.



Lin Keating

Responsible Financial Officer

Dated: 30th October 2013

This recommendation has been considered by those present at the Budget meeting of the Ramsey & Parkeston Parish Council held on _____; proposed by Cllr _____, seconded by Cllr _____ with all in favour, full approval was given for the precept request to be submitted as directed to Tendring District Council by 30th December 2013.

Proposed by:

Councillor..... seconded by Councillor.....

Signed by the Chairman..... [Councillor W G Elmer]

Dated:.....

Witnessed by Councillor.....

Dated:.....