



RamseyParkeston
PARISH COUNCIL

Clerk:

Mrs Lin Keating
1 Adelaide Street
Parkeston, Harwich
Essex CO12 4PL
Tel: 01255 506212
Mobile 07790919094

Chairman:

Cllr George Elmer
52 Tyler Street
Parkeston
Harwich
Essex
CO12 4PH
Telephone: 01255 503159

Financial Report 2014/15

&

Proposed Budget 2015/16

Financial Year 2014/15

The outcome of this proposed budget shows a minimal increase of just 0.1% on the precept request of 2014/15, security of fixed contracts for landscaping and street light maintenance until 2018 has assisted in being able to increase projects without any real impact on the precept.

In addition to this proposal I have included a table of annual costs to assist in following this recommendation.

No charges have been 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 2015/16

Again 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 2015/16 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 remains unchanged.

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 remain 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.

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

1. **Office Equipment:** £500: a decrease of £200 with a new laptop purchased in the 2014/15 budget; a replacement printer is being considered this year.
2. **Staff salary:** £12,000: No Change as 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; notification from the National Joint Council for Local Government Services dated 14 November 2014; states that an agreement has been reached on pay scales 2014-16 with an increase for salary point Scale 1. Spinal Column Point 21 to £10.261 per hour as from 1st January 2015. Additional hours can be claimed for holiday pay, attending external meetings and training days together with additional work in relation to Parkeston Cemetery.

A contract of employment is in place between the RPPC and Clerk; a review of which is due to be undertaken taking into consideration the report of the working group on the Clerk's working houses issued by NALC recently, 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:** £200: an increase of £100 to encourage more Councillors to attend training and 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:** £500: a decrease of £150 as proven to cover 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: No Change, 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:** £500: an increase of £100: (currently 100% discount awarded until March 2015; thereafter charges have not been confirmed)
- 15. Cemetery Interments/Memorials Income:** £1,000: no increase is proposed for the forthcoming year to ensure our competitiveness remains high.
- 16. Cemetery Lodge Rent:** No change, currently set at £543 per calendar month [including water and sewerage charges] reviewed annually.
- 17. Landscape Contract work:** £10,096: No change: a fixed contract 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.
- 18. Donations:** £3,500: an increase of £500 to assist in raising the profile of the Parish Council, all applications are considered on merit; Hall rentals for RPPC meetings are considered as donations under S19.

The Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) has advised that the appropriate sum for the purpose of section 137(4)(a) – (Power of local authorities to incur expenditure for certain purpose not otherwise authorised) of the Local Government Act 1972 for parish and town councils in England for 2015-16 is £7.36 per parishioner.

19. Street lighting:

Supply: £1,100: a decrease of £100 as proven [Special Expense - Ramsey Ward]

Maintenance: £1,500: No change with a 5 year fixed term contract in place with a retainer of £558.00 per annum until 31st July 2018 to maintain the 33 light fittings in Ramsey Ward owned by the Council. [Special Expense – Ramsey Ward]

20. Restoration of memorial: £1,000.00: No Change.

21. Projects: £12,000; an increase of £7,000 with estimates sourced for the following proposals during the municipal year 2015/16:

- **Parkeston Village Sign - £1,000:** recently restored with a planter being designed and manufactured by the students of Colchester Institute as part of their Engineering programme with costs of materials to be covered and the re-siting of the sign needing minimal landscaping.
- **Ramsey Triangle: £6,000:** proposed village sign to be designed by the villagers and to be sited on the triangle together with planters once permission has been sourced from ECC Highways.
- **Parkeston Cemetery Chapel: £4,000:** essential maintenance required on the building to ensure safety to the public.
- **Small Projects: £1,000: 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 awarded 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 remain confident that the amount proposed is acceptable.

Estimated receipts for the Parish Council for financial year 2015/16 projected to be:

1. Cemetery Lodge Rents: £6516 No Change; paid by monthly standing order direct to Bank.
2. Interest: £50.00
3. Burials, memorials: £1,000: No Change
4. VAT Return: £2,500 No Change
5. Chapel Storage Rent: £104

This equates to a predicted income totalling £10,170

With the use of an internal balance of £5,000 this recommendation arrives at a precept request of £41,186; a true increase of 0.1% on the previous year, taking into consideration the overpayment of £4,966 by Tendring District Council on the 2014/15 precept request; this was due to the amount of the LCTSS¹ (Local Council Tax Support Scheme) Grant being added rather than deducted from the request from RPPC; and with the figures taken into consideration this amount was accepted.

The current published Tendring District Council Register of Electors donates 960 dwellings in the parish, thus an average annual contribution of £42.90 per dwelling [over all house bands] and equates to the Precept Request of £41,186.

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 remains 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 – £41,186 x 1.5 = £61,779

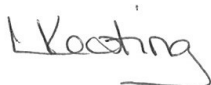
	Credit	Debit
Balance brought forward 01 April 14	£16,389	
Expenditure predicted to end March 15		£37,962
Income predicted to end March 15	£51,057	
Predicted Balance as at 1 st April 2015	£29,384	

Confirmed figures received from Tendring District Council show the amount of £4,469.00 has been granted to Ramsey & Parkeston Parish Council under the Local Council Tax Support Scheme (LCTSS); this will set the precept request to be submitted to Tendring District Council for £36,717.00 by 30th January 2014.

¹ The Welfare Reform Act 2012 abolished the national council tax benefits system (CTB) and replaced by the Local Council Tax Support Scheme (LCTSS) under the Local Government Finance Act. The Government has stated it has two underlying principles underpinning its approach to the localisation of Council Tax Benefits:

- Localised schemes should provide support for the most vulnerable, including vulnerable pensioners who must be protected under the new scheme.
- Localised schemes should assist with lifting the poorest people of working age, off benefits and supporting them into work. By localising Council Tax Benefits, the Government believes this will provide local authorities with a financial stake in ensuring the above two policy aims are successfully supported.

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: 15th January 2015

This recommendation has been considered by those present at the meeting of the Ramsey & Parkeston Parish Council held on 15th January 2015 with approval given for the precept request to be submitted as directed to Tendring District Council by 31st January 2015.

Proposed by:

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

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

Dated:.....

Witnessed by Councillor.....

Dated:.....