

Reports in September 2020

7.1 Revised Budget 2020.21

Introduction

The COVID 19 crisis has had an impact on society in numerous ways. From a Council budget point view this has led to the need to review income and expenditure plus the opportunity to reallocate budgets in 2020/21 to ensure we are in a positive position financially.

Revised budget 2020.21

The draft revised budget is attached in **appendix A** of this report.

Apart from the adjustments because of COVID 19 we have included staff recharges – previously all in Administration - to illustrate the total cost of a service and made other adjustments.

An example of an adjustment is transferring savings in Parish Basic Allowance (Councillor expenses) to support the Hawkhurst community;

- support business by not charging them for watering the flower displays
- providing a budgeting for Hawkhurst Community Support Group costs.

In **appendix A**

- the income adjustments are in yellow,
- the expenditure adjustments are in amber
- the staff recharges are in green – with one off amendment in red in administration

Highlights

- Victoria Hall – revised rent – 1st payment received and revised rent reduced to £7,265.
- Hawkhurst Football Club – FAS recommend a credit from last year so adjusted income to £300 – this needs confirming this evening but have included
- Reduction in Copt Hall hire income £3,750
- Copt Hall £10,000 business rate relief shown as income
- Reduction in KGV sports hall £3,750
- Funding from C 19 Job Retention Scheme in Administration, estimated at £2,000
- Office rate relief £10,000 shown in Administration

- Saving from Parish Councillor Allowances reallocated to cover Business charges for watering flower displays plus supporting HCSG in COVID 19 support
- Increased Capital Items in Administration Code to cover IT equipment for remote working
- Enabling grant of £2,765 shown in COVID 19 support
- Grants for KGV - the £10,000 business rate relief and £1,000 grant from KPFA (just received) have not been allocated in budget 2020/21 but have been paid into reserves towards the cost of MUGA at KGV
- Expenditure – reduced expenditure for facilities by 25%
- Removed Youth budget as now covered by increased S137 Community Grants

One final point – in September 2020 we are opening up the facilities more to community groups, but we are restricting use to a maximum of two groups per day. To ensure we are “COVID Secure” we will be doing more cleaning – in effect twice per day rather than the budgeted once per day. In addition, we are purchasing extra cleaning equipment, PPE dispensers etc.

Our Internal Caretaker is doing the morning cleaning and our External Caretaker is doing the afternoon cleaning. How long this lasts will depend on COVID 19 and adjusting to the appropriate guidelines. FAS felt we should retain the agreed fees and absorb any extra cleaning costs.

Summary

The approach is a prudent one, in-line with the risk adverse policy of the Council. We have been proactive in obtaining grants to support the 2020/21 budget, this is currently at totalling £24,765 and we will continue to do so.

Without being able to draw down this support we would have been required to make significant cut backs.

Obviously this is still an estimate and maybe further compromised by COVID 19, a summary table is set out below

	Original	Revised
Income	£32,688	£ 41,160
Precept	£189,966	£ 189,966

Expenditure	£222,634	£ 219,589
Estimated transfer to reserves at end of year	£0	£ 11,537

Proposal

That the Council agree:

- the revised budget 2020/21 as set out in **Appendix 1** of this report.
- that the budget codes are adjusted accordingly
- That a six monthly actual v budget report is presented to the October 2020 SAP meeting then onto Council.

7.2 Formation of Community Interest Group – umbrella organisation for broadband in Hawkhurst.

We have been liaising with KCC regarding broadband – Fibre to the Home (FTTH) and the next step is for the Parish Council to form a Community Interest Group to act as an umbrella legal organisation to facilitate the various resident’s groups throughout Hawkhurst.

Once we know which areas are not included in the initial phase – most likely the rural areas of the Parish – then we are well placed to support residential groups submit their bids / vouchers and access quality broadband.

A brief summary leaflet is attached in **appendix 2**.

Propose

To set up a Community Interest Group for Hawkhurst to support resident’s groups to access broadband.

7.3 Tunbridge Wells Agreement

The Tunbridge Wells Agreement sets out a collaborative approach to decision-making between the Borough Council and the Parish and Town Councils.

Frustrations with the planning process have been raised at the Parish Chairmen's meetings, particularly when:

- TWBC planning officers make a decision that does not accord with the recommendation from the Parish Council
- planning officers agree major changes to a planning application without any notice or reference back to the parish
- take no enforcement action on what the Parish Council considers to be a serious breach.

In order to address these concerns, a number of amendments are suggested to the planning section of the TW Agreement - see draft in **Appendix 3**. A summary of some of the key proposals is outlined below:

It is proposed that TWBC will:

- notify Parish Councils when its views on an application do not align with those of the Parish Council. This will allow a period of three working days for the PC to respond to TWBC before a final decision is made and the applicant notified of the decision. This would apply to any applications that the PC had highlighted as being of particular importance.
- organise an annual planning workshop to ensure that Local Councils are kept updated on planning matters.
- If TWBC decides not to take enforcement action on a breach identified by the PC, they will discuss this with the PC before informing the site owner/develop/operator.

It is proposed that Parish Councils will:

- ensure that councillors are trained to ensure realistic and relevant recommendations
- discuss applications and submit comments within the 21-day consultation period
- identify applications that are considered to be of particular importance.

If the amendments are approved by the Local Councils, this will be considered by TWBC with the intention of implementing the proposed changes by the end of the year.

Proposal

That the Council approve the revisions to the Tunbridge Wells Agreement, appendix 3.