

Wistow cum Newton Harcourt Parish Meeting Treasurers Report December 2020

Precept for Financial Year 2021/2022

Over recent years the Precept has been approximately £3,000 per annum which included a £2,000 payment to the Reading Room to help with maintenance and day to day costs.

At the October 2019 Parish Meeting (PM) it was agreed that the Precept should rise by £2,000 to £5,112 for the 2020/21 financial year. The increase was to help with funding of replacement Vehicle Activation Signs (VAS) in Newton Harcourt. We subsequently found out that a PM is not allowed to use the Precept for VAS.

At the August 2020 Parish Meeting to approve the accounts for 2019/2020 the Treasurer was asked to seek formal clarification from the Leicestershire and Rutland Association for Local Councils (LRALC) regarding whether the PM was allowed to provide funding for the Reading Room (RR) as it is not owned by the PM.

The response we have had states that we should not be using the Precept for assets the PM does not own. On the basis the RR is on a long term lease from the Wistow Estate I have double checked whether it would qualify as an asset and been advised it does not.

We are now seeking a dialogue with LRALC to discuss this position in more detail to pin down precisely the options open to the PM in raising and spending the Precept.

Clearly, this advice affects how much Precept we should raise each year as currently there seems to be very little we are allowed to spend it on.

PM Annual Costs

Generally speaking the PM has the following costs each year:

LRALC Subscription	£18
PM Insurance eg Public Liability	£181.07
Gypsy Wood Insurance	£269.30
Website hosting, support & emails	£414

We normally have some small petty cash expenses such as photocopying and printing which come to less than £100 per annum.

This brings us to a total annual expenditure of just under a £1000.

Current Balance

Given the increased Precept for 2019/20 which we have been unable to spend and the fact that in 2018/19 the RR did not request the usual £2000, the current balance is £9,997.74

Recommended Precept for 2021/2022

On this basis I would recommend that we set the Precept for 2021/2022 at £1000 to cover our annual costs and review this in future years based any further advice received.

Bank Account Issues

We found out at the beginning of this year that the bank had not changed any signatories on the account since Julie took over as Chair. This means that only David Baker's signature is recognised by the bank. I have been pursuing this with Lloyds and due to a total lack of response I had to make a formal complaint to them a couple of months ago and which I have now also referred to the Financial Ombudman as they have still not responded.

Parish Meeting Functions and Powers

I thought people may be interested to see the list of Functions and Powers listed in various Statutes concerning PMs.

Taken from a Legal Topic Note produced by the National Association of Local Councils.

Allotments

A PM may hold and administer allotments

Bus Shelters

A PM may provide and maintain a bus shelter

Burials

A PM is a burial authority. It may provide burial grounds and may contribute towards the cost of burial facilities provided by others.

Cemeteries and crematoria

A PM has the power to adopt byelaws made by a District Council

Charities

A PM has the same powers as a Parish Council to appoint trustees to parochial charities.

Churchyards

The liability to maintain a closed CofE churchyard may be transferred to a PM.

Commons

A PM may be registered as the owner of common land.

Land

A PM has no general power of acquisition but may acquire land to exercise its allotments or burial powers.

A PM may dispose of land under certain conditions.

Licensing

A PM may be an 'interested party' and may be consulted in respect of applications for licensed premises.

Lighting

A PM may light roads and other public places.

Rights of Way

A PM is entitled to be notified of a public path creation order, diversion order or a definitive map modification order.

Village Greens

A PM may prosecute a person who damages or encroaches upon a village green.

War Memorials

A PM may maintain, repair or protect any war memorial in the Parish.

Graham Handsley

Treasurer

December 2020