



Sprotbrough and Cusworth Parish Council

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Sprotbrough and Cusworth Parish Council **Notes – 2021/22 Draft Budget**

1. General

- 1.1 The parish has a population of 12,134 living in 5,096 households with 9,500 electors. Over the last 12 years plus, the Parish Council have continued to sustain improvement and expansion of the services and facilities it provides.
- 1.2 The public sector continues to experience unprecedented times in terms of the financial constraints it currently faces; this pattern is set to continue for the foreseeable future. Government legislation is continually under review and the traditional freedom previously enjoyed by Local Councils to set an appropriate precept may be constrained in the future.
- 1.3 The new play area at Anchorage Lane has been completed and payments have started to repay the PWLB loan. In line with audit and governance regulations I would recommend that reserves are maintained at a level of at least one-year's precept amount to ensure that the PC can continue to function and meet its contractual obligations should any difficult financial issues arise in the future.

Schedule of repayment:

3rd June 2020 - £15,258.92

3rd Dec 2020 - £15,076.87

3rd June 2021 - £14,894.84

3rd Dec 2021 – £14,712.80

3rd June 2022 - £14,530.74

3rd Dec 2022 - £14,348.71

- 1.4 A rolling programme for on-going maintenance of buildings and contents has been established and should be maintained. A new boiler is required for Anchorage Pavilion which needs to be addressed immediately from the 2020/21 budget, as we have allocated money for maintenance this can be paid for without impacting on our reserves. This year's budget has been altered slightly to separate costs for each site (see 2.6)
- 1.5 The working party to discuss the possibility of building a new Community Centre to replace the Goldsmith Centre has been put on hold, due to the Covid-19 situation.

2. Salaries, Wages and Associated Oncosts

- 2.1 The PC employs 3 part-time officers to cover the administration work of the Council and 5 part-time staff to cover three of the PC's four sites.
- 2.2 The pay award for 2021/22 has been increased and was 2% as in previous years.
- 2.3 Cover for annual leave/sickness is in-house and additional budget provision has been made for long-term sickness cover.
- 2.4 South Yorkshire Pensions Authority (SYPA) – the PC currently have two employees who are scheme members, but all staff contracts carry the entitlement for membership, subject to SYPA age restrictions. The employer's contribution rate for 2021/22 is 27.2%.
- 2.5 In 2016/17 the Pension Regulator introduced Automatic Enrolment for employees into a work-based pension scheme for those under state retirement age and earning above a certain threshold. Currently if the staffing profile remains the same, there are no financial implications for the PC in 2022/23. This position will be kept under review. Also see 2.4.
- 2.6 The budget has been split for wages from 2021/22 to show the costs allocated to each site.

3. Utility Costs/Rates

- 3.1 Energy contracts for all premises were with Robin Hood Energy, this company has been sold to British Gas. When the contracts are up for renewal the Finance Officer will review and advise on best deals available.
- 3.2 We are expecting all three Parish buildings to be assessed as business rates are due to be enforced from April 2021. Currently buildings are rated at £7,300 but this could change.
- 3.3 A review of the existing arrangements for internet/ phone for the office and building has recently been undertaken and the cost reduced by a third. The payphone at the centre has been removed due to it not being used which has saved £341.00 per year.

4. Office Administration

- 4.1 The photocopier has been updated to be more cost effective on a lease hire agreement and includes the cost of toner and breakdown cover.
- 4.2 Stationery is mostly ordered via Viking Direct, generally at much reduced costs than YPO; most communication is by email, therefore reducing telephone and postal charges. A petty cash imprest is operated and second-class postage is mostly used.
- 4.3 The Clerk has completed an IT overhaul, including a new website. A logo has been commissioned and is now being used on all office stationery, email signatures etc. New email addresses will be issued in the coming months as

part of this. The new website addresses all the statutory requirements and is much improved and more user-friendly than the old site. There are links to forms for S137 applications, which make it easier for Community Groups to apply. All statutory financial information is available on the website on a dedicated page.

5. Buildings/Insurance/Legal

- 5.1 Other than a new boiler at Anchorage there are no other outstanding major repairs required to buildings, however the replacement of the Goldsmith Centre roof is listed as a contingency item.
- 5.2 Following the annual boiler service at Newlands Pavilion it was advised that the showers are capped off until such time they are required by the hirer. The existing hirer does not use the showers. Work required to Newlands Pavilion showers should be kept under review as required. A deep clean of the Pavilion is also required and the cost already agreed by the PC.
- 5.3 As set out in 1.5 above a new boiler is required at the Norman Dent Pavilion which is a priority. The cost is within the identified budget without having to go into the reserves. The pavilion has recently had an overhaul and minor repair and maintenance is ongoing at both pavilions as required on an ad-hoc basis.
- 5.4 A five-year agreement on insurance premiums is in place and runs until 2023/24; in 2021/22 this will be indexed linked on buildings, contents and all-risks.
- 5.5 Land/property owned by the Parish Council has been valued by Barnsdales:
Goldsmith Centre – Building £50,000 – Land £22,000
Anchorage Lane – Building £37,500 – Land £65,000
Newlands – Building £20,000 - Land £165,000
- 5.6 The Land will need to be registered with the Land Registry which will incur a cost.

6. Play Areas/Recreation Sites

- 6.1 The new play area development at Anchorage Lane is being funded by a s106 Grant from the Bentley Ward of £10,000, a loan of £85,000 from the Public Works Loan Board and the remaining £85,000 will come from the Parish Council reserves. The repayment of the loan is set out in para 1.4 above.
- 6.2 A rolling programme of tree/hedgerow maintenance on all sites will need to continue and is included in the Parish Grounds budget heading.
- 6.4 General maintenance is on-going at all sites and repairs resulting from vandalism is expected to continue through 2021/22.
- 6.4 No additional maintenance work is anticipated to the football pitches in 2021/22.

6.5 Additional costs for annual inspections of all our sites (play areas, outdoor gym, skate park, playing pitches) is included in the budget (£1000). Annual inspections of the trees on our sites has also been incorporated into the budget moving forward (£2500). These are statutory requirements which are required to be undertaken annually.

7. Elections

7.1 Provision has been made under contingencies for elections in 2021/22.

8. Income

8.1 Bank Interest will be received on the new bank accounts which were opened in 2020. Interest Rates have plummeted and interest gained will be no more than £500 this coming year.

8.2 Goldsmith Centre Hire – due to COVID-19 the Centre has been closed for many months of this year. When the Centre is open the occupancy, levels are high and has gained new clients, Slimming World, a Fencing group and NHS have used the Centre for inoculations. Unfortunately, Age UK has not returned, and small community groups have not been able to re-start due to restrictions. The Goldsmith Centre benefitted from a £10,000 grant in April and is due a smaller amount in December. This money will not quite cover our rental losses but has been a great help. Once the Pandemic is over, we will hopefully regain the groups that were forced to close. We have opened the centre for households/ support bubbles during its lower occupancy at a reduced rate of £5 per hour.

8.3 Playing Fields – in line with other Local Councils and to encourage young people to continue to participate in football, hire charges for junior teams when using a junior pitch were removed in 2017/18. It is recommended that senior pitch hire charges remain at 2018/19 levels in order to support local teams who struggle financially as securing external sponsorship is more difficult than in the past. It is further recommended that priority use continues for Parish-based clubs.

9. VAT

9.1 All applicable VAT charged to the PC is now reclaimed on a quarterly basis.

10. PRECEPT/RESERVES

10.1 In 2020 2021 the Parish Council agreed to look at ways to improve the Goldsmith Centre facilities, in preparation of this project the Precept was increased by 5% to increase reserves. Looking forward to 2021 2022 and due to the Covid-19 Pandemic it would be inappropriate to increase the Precept therefore no increase is advised for this coming year.

Z Attridge-Chambers, Responsible Finance Officer
13th January 2021