



EVESHAM TOWN COUNCIL



Item 9

TOWN COUNCIL meeting MONDAY 8TH JANUARY 2024 at 6.30 p.m. in the Council Chamber at the Town Hall

Budget and Precept

Councillors are reminded that they can speak but may not vote if they are in arrears for more than two months with their council tax payments. They must declare that Section 106 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 applies to them. Failure to do so may render a councillor liable to prosecution by the Director of Public Prosecutions.

The draft detailed budget for 2024/25 is supplied. The document heading is “Annual Budget – By Centre”. Figures can be found under the ‘Next Year Agreed’ column. The report also shows last year’s budget and actual figures (1st and 2nd columns) and the current year’s budget and spend-to-date figures (3rd and 6th columns in the Current Year section).

The Finance and General Purposes Committee has made recommendations following its meeting of the 4th December, and these are:

1. That the budget be set requiring a precept of £849,208. This would draw £806,490 from taxation resulting in an annual charge to a Band D property of £86.20, a monthly increase of £0.89 per month or approximately 20p per week.
2. That the budget be set requiring £849,208 and in addition that the council consider an additional grant up to £30,000 to Wallace House (in addition to the existing £20,000 allocation). This option would result in an increase in taxation for a Band D property of £1.15 per month or approximately 27p per week.

The draft detailed budget for 2024/25 (“Annual Budget – By Centre”) reflects Recommendation 1 but does not at this stage include any additional payments to Wallace House (see note below) other than a continuation of the £20,000 awarded last year.

Wallace House request

Last year, the regular grant was paid to Wallace House of £20,000 plus an additional grant of £20,000, budgeted from reserves.

For 2024/25, the trustees of Wallace House have requested an additional grant of £30,000 for 2024/25 to carry out urgent repairs to one of the trust’s properties, 40 High Street which has been dilapidating for many years, for the majority of the time under the council’s stewardship as sole



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corporate trustee. A separate document is attached from the trustees (please note that the document pre-dates the Finance committee meeting).

Taxbase

The taxbase is a multiplier issued by the District Council and is based on the number of contributing households. The taxbase will change if, for example, new houses are built in the parish providing more taxpayers. Alternatively, if there is an increase in empty houses or more householders claiming council tax support, the taxbase will swing the other way. Both of these will affect the Band D council tax (and all other Bands) levied on householders as the council's precept is shared between more or fewer households.

The taxbase for 2024/25 has been issued and has a small reducing effect on council tax.

Income

The income is anticipated to be broadly similar to the previous year. Grants have been excluded as any awarded grants can be expected to show a matching spend.

Expenditure

Some of the budget figures have been amended based on last year's actual spend or indications from the current year's spend. There are many things that are repeatable and fixed, such as the costs of rent and contracts. Other budget headings have been increased because there is a need or desire to carry out certain projects during the financial year.

Some notes on individual budget headings are given below.

4300 / 300 Events: Increased by £3600 to pay for Bands in the Park. The Bands in the Park programme was funded by the Place Board in 2023/24 and was very successful. In prior years it was funded by a local individual, Derek Wells, who fundraised to pay for it. Sadly he has since passed away and the council is asked if it wishes to take on the ongoing costs, which are £3,600 for 12 performances.

4000 Staff Costs: The 2024/25 budget includes recent pay rise of £1,925 per employee for +3%.

4200 Maintenance, Town Hall: This budget has been set to include 50% funding of replacement of the most dangerous windows (the town council will have to pay for the internal part of the window frames); balustrades for hall windows and some internal decoration.

4305 Grants Made: As the previous year.

4420 Elections: Elections have been called for the last three casual vacancies. Two of three are contested resulting in election costs. For a council with 24 members, it would be prudent for the council to be cautious. A budget of £24,000 is proposed, as postage charges continue to rise.



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This seems a lot but costs would not be shared with WDC as they are in an election year, so would be double that of a standard election per ward. It should be regarded as a minimum requirement.

4621 Trees: Councillors will be aware that a programme of tree inspections commenced last year. The costs were lower than anticipated so the budget for inspections and works is proposed as £5000 for 2024/25.

4810 Buildings Maintenance, Cemetery: Repairs are needed to the roof of one of the cemetery outbuildings. Another needs a replacement door and repairs. Repairs are required to the cemetery chapels. A £6,000 budget has been advised.

4800/400 Grounds Maintenance: The council has started a programme of maintenance on its tarmac paths. This budget is set to allow continuation of this work over the next 5 - 10 years to get the paths up to standard.

4625/400 War Memorial: The Finance Committee wished for an additional £1,500 for repairs to the War Memorial, bringing the total budget for 2024/25 to £4,000.

Items not included in this budget but which the council may wish to discuss:

- Uplift in the Town Plan budget
- Works to Bengeworth Cemetery buildings as detailed in the Civic Society's report of July 2019.

The Council is required to set the budget and precept for 2023/24.

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