

FINAL BUDGET 2022-23

This is the final budget for Lewknor Parish Council (LPC) for 2022-23 which was formally approved at a full council meeting on 13th December 2021.

As always, LPC has considered the funds it needs to continue to run the parish in the best possible way. Following discussions at LPC's October meeting, the budget has been kept very similar to last year. However, there have been several large, unexpected expenses which have an impact on LPC's finances going forward:

Firstly, the LPRG&H committee has needed to repair the hall floor which has taken them over the amount budgeted by LPC; because of this - and the Chair's request that LPC try to find some more money for LPRG&H, LPC has adopted Cllr Poole's suggestion that LPC give £1,000 of CIL money retrospectively towards this bill. This has been checked and approved by the SODC CIL officer. (This £1,000 of CIL money will actually appear as £800 because CIL figures must be net of VAT).

Secondly, the cost of emptying the parish's dog bins has shot up following the ending of SODC's subsidised service and our first private contractor going out of business.

Thirdly, LPC's maintenance costs in 2021-22 have been much higher than forecast because of the need to make safe the ageing noticeboards. (To keep the cost down, LPC bought just one new one and refurbished the other two; LPC got two grants to cover 65% of the costs).

As LPC's precept is comparatively small, all this expenditure has had a huge impact on the overall figures - and therefore next year's precept.

For many years, LPC has not asked for the full amount of its projected spend and has used reserves for any overspend in order to keep the precept as low as possible as it is taxpayers' money. However, these reserves have been reducing every year - and in this current year have dropped dramatically (due to the reasons set out here).

It is important that LPC sets its precept at a realistic level to be able to carry out all its duties while keeping any rise to a minimum. Therefore, to keep the rise as low as possible, councillors have agreed to cut LPC's contingency for the coming year to just £2,000 and set a precept of £18,000. This just covers LPC's projected spend for 2022-23 of £17,967 which means LPC must be rigorous in keeping to its budget wherever possible.

It should be noted that over the years, LPC's precept has been much lower than other local parish councils of a similar size.

Also, the very large amounts of CIL money spent means that LPC has paid out a much larger than usual amount on VAT which comes out of the LPC money not the CIL budget; however, this will be reclaimed, as usual, immediately after the end of the financial year.

Note: All calculations exclude the remaining CIL money which is ring-fenced for special projects and cannot be used for day-to-day expenditure.

SODC's provisional tax base for Lewknor parish in 2022-23 is 325.8 (up from 310.5 in 2021-22). This means that based on the proposed precept, within the total council tax bill each Band D household in Lewknor parish will pay £55.24 for the year towards running the parish (up by £13.38 from last year).

Note 1: LPRG&H Last year, LPC agreed to give the committee £1,500 extra to cover some of the shortfall due to the pandemic and lockdown. LPC reverts to the usual amount next year given the financial constraints LPC is facing. (But LPRG&H has gained £1,000 extra from CIL money).

Note 2: Publicity This item is to cover the cost of printing the parish newsletter, Grapevine and it was agreed at LPC's November meeting that this should be cut by £200.

Note 3: Dog bins This has to increase significantly because LPC has again had to change contractor and the costs are much higher. Our previous contractor ceased trading and a new contractor had to be found (who has proved reliable, so far).

Note 4: Neighbourhood Plan This money is taken out of the general calculations as the money is ring-fence for the NP.

Note 5: Queen's Platinum Jubilee As has been discussed by councillors, LPC would like to mark the Queen's 70 years as monarch by planting a tree (funds taken from the tree planting budget) and installing a plaque to commemorate the occasion; this amount is to cover that cost.

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Lewknor Parish Council

January 2022