

WHPC Financial Report – Full Year 2023-2024 Approved at WHPC Meeting 7th May 2024 24/159

1. **Overview**

The Parish Council remains in a sound financial position.

WHPC prepared a detailed budget of £63,096.20 for 2023-24. However, the Council resolved to set the Precept at £56,875, unchanged from previous years, and to fund any overspend against from reserves. This “top-up” funding was not required during 2023-24.

During the year, income was greater than expected whilst payments were below budget resulting in a net increase to Reserves of £23,510.82 at the end of the year:

		£
On 1 st April 2023 WHPC held funds of:	Opening	110,338.47
	Balance	
	2023-24 Income	76,029.56
	2023-24 Payments	52,518.74
	Payment relating to 2022-2023	244.00 (late presented cheque)
	Closing Balance	133,605.29
	An Increase of	23,510.82

The following sections set out the variances in more detail.

The Council mindful that it is required to maintain adequate financial reserves to meet the needs of the organisation but has no legal powers to hold reserves other than those for reasonable working capital needs or for specifically earmarked purposes.

2. **Opening Balance**

WHPC began the year with **£110,338.47** in reserves. As £244.00 was attributable to an unrepresented cheque, the Opening Balance can be re-stated as **£110,094.47**. WHPC continues to manage funds across current and interest-bearing accounts to ensure the Financial Services Compensation Scheme cap is not exceeded. (ref WHPC Investment Policy).

3. **Income**

During 2023-24 WHPC received the Precept **£56,875.00** plus **£19,154.56** additional income. The major element of which was £13,368.12 Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) monies received via EDDC. This included overdue 2022-23 monies. The general rise in interest rates is reflected in the interest payments received (up from £578.62 last year).

	2023-24 Income	Expected £	Actual £
	Precept	56,875.00	56,875.00
Additional Income			
DCC Public Rights of Way - Grant footpath maintenance			410.00
Community Infrastructure Levy Monies			13,368.12
Interest Received			2,780.90
VAT Reclaim			2,595.54
Total Annual Income			£76,029.56

4. Payments

WHPC set a detailed budget of £63,096.20 for 2023-24. However, the Council resolved to set the Precept at £56,875, unchanged from previous years, and to fund any overspend against from reserves. This “top-up” funding was not required during 2023-24.

When setting the budget the Parish Council anticipated that a new Council to be elected in May-23 would take some time to become fully operational. This was appropriate as only 3 of the 7 Councillor seats were filled at the election and the Council did not achieve full membership throughout 2023-24. Indeed, WHPC was inquorate for a short period. Consequently, as anticipated, project expenditure was very low during the year.

During 2023-24, WHPC expenditure **£52,518.74** was lower than expected: £10,577.46 below budget and £4,356.26 below Precept. The table below summarises the key reasons for the underspend.

Expenditure 2023-24	Budget £	Actual £	Under/over spend	Notes
Staff Costs incl employer costs	31,284.20	30,291.27	992.93	Monthly staff costs reduced from August 2023 due to fewer contracted working hours. However, savings were partly offset by higher than expected National pay award backdated to Apr-2023.
Operational	12,515.00	8,476.68	4,038.32	Members Allowance budget £1,830 was set to allow 7 newly elected Cllrs to claim the annual allowance. The allowance was not claimed by the three eligible Cllrs. The Chairman's allowance £436 was not claimed. Fewer newsletters were published £835. Audit Fees: See Note A below
Playpark	2,326.00	1,945.00	381.00	Lengthsman schedule delayed due to bad weather
Public Spaces	6,256.00	4,523.87	1,732.13	As above
Grant Awards	3,000.00	3,080.00	(80.00)	This includes £450 (RBL Coronation Street Party) to be funded from Reserves.
Provisions	3,215.00	0.00	3,215.00	Provisions towards possible future costs: an election arising from a Casual Vacancy, Bus Shelter repairs
Projects	2000.00	1,193.34	806.66	This includes £1,000 Road Safety Audit fees which will be funded from reserves held for Village Hall Path project
Contingency	2,500.00	580.00	1,920.00	Unbudgeted Solicitor fees (see note B below)
VAT		2,428.58		
	63,096.20	52,518.74		

Reserves will be allocated for two outstanding items of expenditure relating to 2023-2024:

Notes

- A. External Audit additional fees: In July 2023 an Objector submitted a challenge to the Council's 2022-23 Annual Return. The Auditor's work arising from the challenge will be charged to the Council and, as yet, the scale of fees are unknown. The Parish Council will set a Reserve to fund these costs which are outside the control of the Council.
- B. Solicitor Fees: The Council meeting on 16th January 2024 (item 24/033) resolved to engage a solicitor specialising in the Local Authority sector to advise on the options available to it in relation to correspondence received and its impact on the Council and Employee. A budget of £2,000.00 was set. Fees of £580 were funded from contingency in 2023-24 and a Reserve of £1,420 will be set to fund the balance, £1,420, incurred after the year end 31st March 2024.

5. Closing Balance

Funds held at 31st March 2024 were £133,605.29, a year-on-year increase of £23,510.82. The WHPC meeting of 7th May 2024 will

- a. Confirm the allocation of funds into general and earmarked reserves.
- b. Receive the Annual CIL/S106 Statement

Finance Working Group

7th May 2024