

# Great Bedwyn Parish Council

## 2023/24 Budget Report

12 January 2023

### Introduction

The purpose of this document and the attached spreadsheet is to propose the 23/24 budget for adoption by the Great Bedwyn Parish Council ("GBPC") and also to present indicative budgets for 24/25 and 25/26.

All councillors were formally requested for their input into the 23/24 budget. This document and the attached spreadsheet have been prepared by Cllr Ian Barry and reviewed by the Finance GBPC Committee.

The council regulations state that, without Council approval, expenditure may only be incurred to the extent that budgetary provision has been made.

The aim of this budget is to detail the income and expenditure required for GBPC to meet the needs of its parish during the period between 1 April 2023 and 31 March 2024 – in summary to:

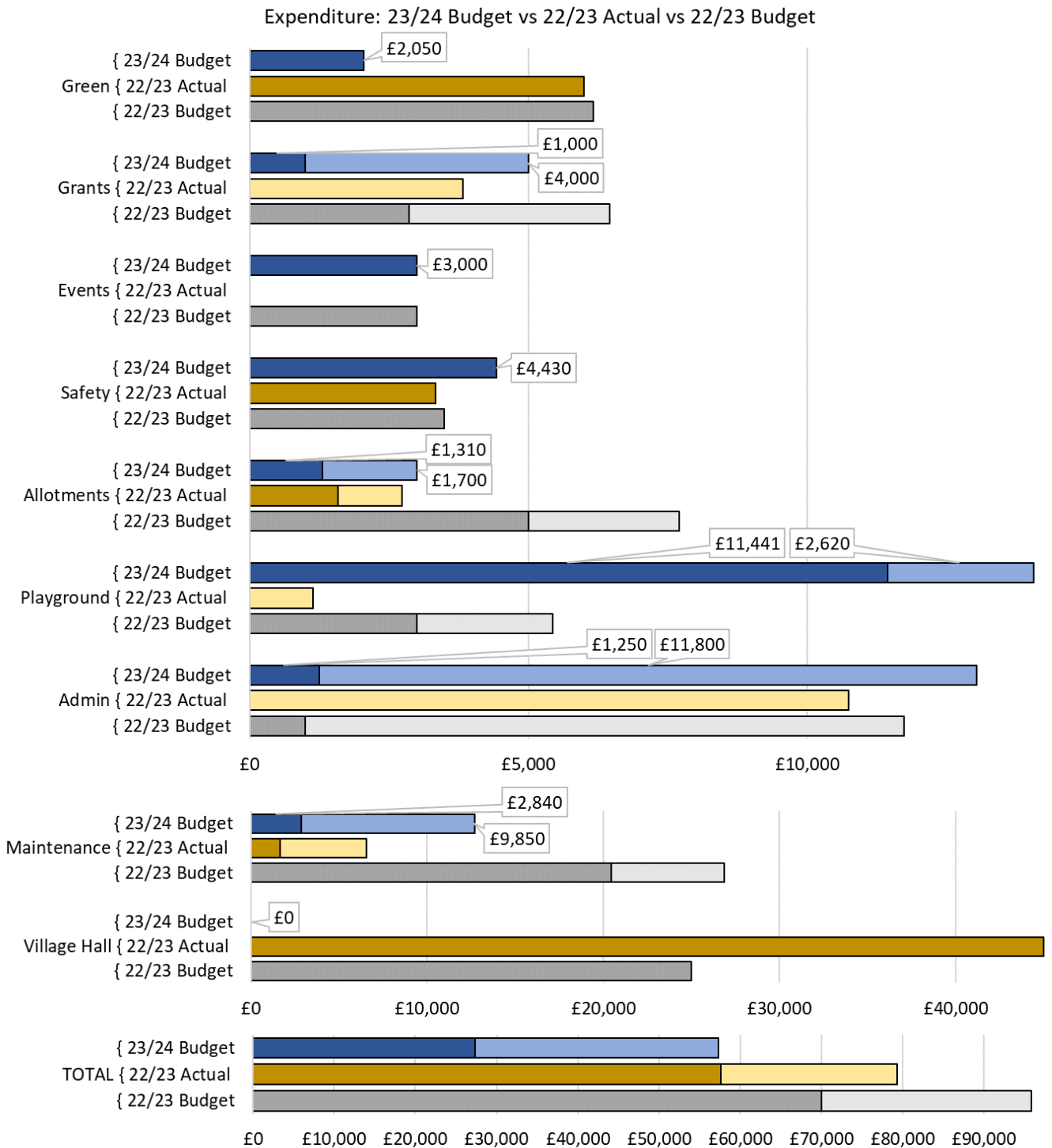
- meet the **day-to-day running of the PC**, ensuring it can operate in a professional and transparent manner;
- meet (the most deserving) **grant requests** in support of community groups;
- **maintain our parish** including repairs, grass and hedge cutting (separate to those activities under the responsibility of Wiltshire Council); maintain the **playground**; and manage/maintain the **allotments**;
- represent the community in all appropriate matters, including importantly in **planning**; and
- fund certain **special activities** as required by the parish, including **safety** initiatives, **events** and **green** initiatives.

The budget has been prepared in line with the following principles which are unchanged from 17/18:

1. **Reserves must be maintained as appropriate and only where they can be justified towards specific future expenditure.** This means that excessive reserves must be reduced over time through support of regular expenditure.
2. **That regular expenditure and regular income must be balanced:** The council must ensure it does not commit to regular expenditure that cannot be afforded by its income. If regular income can be acceptably increased, then it should be to match justifiable regular expenditure. Equally, regular income should be reduced (ideally returned to the taxpayer via lower precept) where it is superfluous.
3. **That all income and expenditure be extensively reviewed.** Requested expenditure must be extensively reviewed for fit with the council's remit, demand from the community and value for money. Comparisons with past expenditure have been made and differences scrutinised. Alternatives to funding by GBPC must be considered for all major items. Income sources should be evaluated to ensure they are maximised.

## Overall Expenditure

Below is a combined view and commentary across proposed Regular, Reserves and CIL expenditure. The forthcoming year (blue) is compared with the current year actuals (gold) and the current year budget (grey).



23/24 Budget Expenditure: Regular £29,970 | Reserves/CIL £27,321  
 22/23 Actual Expenditure: Regular £21,769 | Reserves/CIL £57,569  
 22/23 Budget Expenditure: Regular £25,902 | Reserves/CIL £69,970

## Commentary:

- **Green:** In 23/24 there is forecast to be an opening balance of £2,050 from the Together for our Planet grant which will be put towards continued funding of the Great Green Bedwyn initiative. The council will also be exploring further work in this area however information on this was not available in time for preparation of this budget, so it is therefore assumed that further expenditure will need to be fully covered by further grants.
- **Grants:** Excluding any awards to the Village Hall (see below), in 22/23 the PC is expected to have awarded grants of £3,827 to recipients including Bedwyn Footpaths Group (£1,000), PCC Tree works (£2,210) and Bruce Boats (£250). This forthcoming year we budget £4,000 to support parish groups with an additional £1,000 in reserve if required.
- **Events:** In 23/24 we budget £3,000 on parish events, which is likely to cover the Coronation. The council has an events sub-committee for the first time with responsibility for this expenditure.
- **Safety:** This area has been separated from Parish Maintenance for the first time. It covers speeding, parking, flooding etc. A safety sub-committee has been formed with responsibility for this expenditure. This year it is expected that £4,958 will be spent on a Speed Indicator Device (and installation) and in 23/24 we budget £3,680 for a further device and £750 for white gates.
- **Allotments:** This year (22/23), allotments is expected to receive £1,870 income against a budget of £1,404. It is expected to spend £2,732 against a total budget of £7,710. Improvements included a new gate, new fencing and signs. In 23/24, on the principal that allotments regular expenditure should be covered by income, we budget £1,700 for regular maintenance and £1,310 for one-off maintenance which is expected to include a further new gate.
- **Playground:** This year (22/23), playground is expected to spend only £1,145, which is below the total budget of £5,443. In 23/24 there is significant additional maintenance required to maintain the safety of the playground, totalling £12,941. The regular 23/24 budget is set as £2,620 from regular expenditure and £11,441 from reserves expenditure. The future playground fund is also reduced from £7,500 to £4,000 to accommodate this. The council may agree to components of bring this maintenance forward into 22/23.
- **Staffing & Administration:** In 23/24 we budget £7,092 for staffing and £5,958 for administration. Within the administration budget, compared to this year, we now include a budget of £500 for communications, maintain the unspent one-off budget of £1,000 for communications improvement, recognise the unbudgeted costs for bank charges, PO Box and computer software, and move the £250 training budget from recurring to one-off as it has not been spent.
- **Maintenance:** As forecast in last year's budget we are including the regular costs of £4,800 for a handyman in the 23/24 budget for the first time. We also are budgeting for increased costs in grass cutting (£5,050). We are also budgeting a further £2,840 as one-off maintenance costs which are proposed to be put towards flood prevention and unforeseen parish maintenance costs.
- **Village Hall:** This year (22/23) GBPC awarded £45,000 from CIL towards village hall expansion. No specific further funds are budgeted towards the Village Hall in 23/24.
- **Total Regular Expenditure:** In 23/24, £29,970 regular expenditure is proposed, up 15.7% on 22/23 budget of £25,902 (and up 38% on 22/23 actual of £21,769). The increase is predominantly due to the additional regular handyman costs.

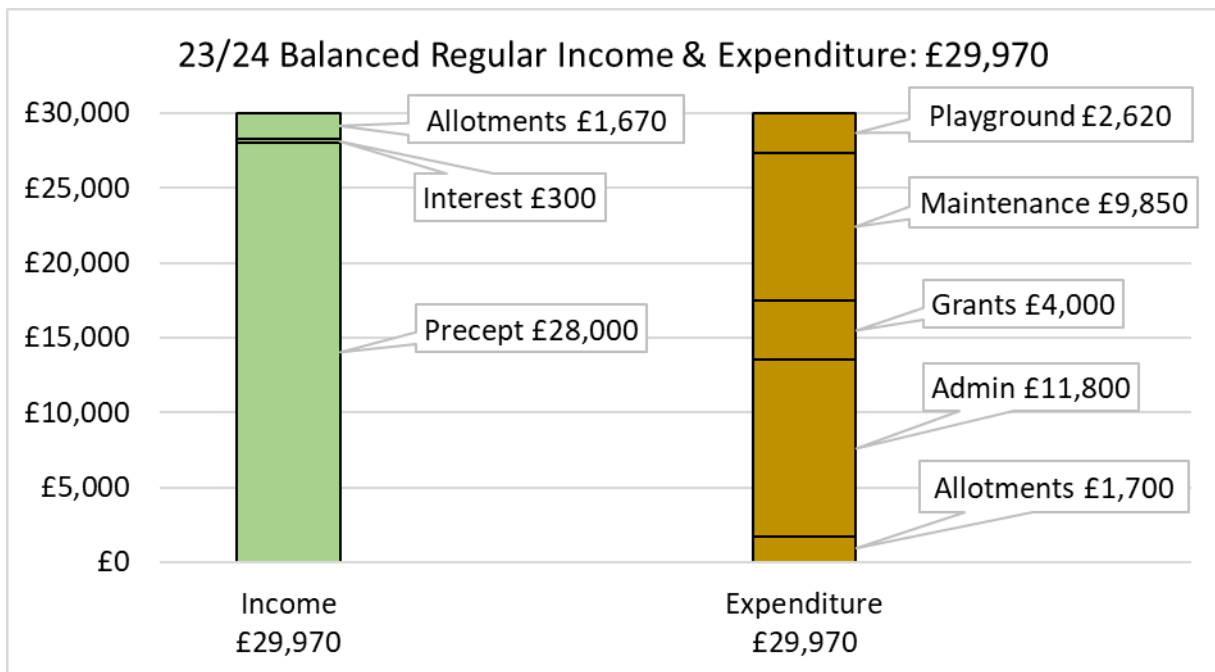
- **Total Reserve Expenditure:** In 23/24, £27,321 expenditure from reserves is proposed, down 61% on the 22/23 budget of £69,970 (and down 53% on the 22/23 actual of £57,569). The decrease is predominantly due to the one-off expenditure of CIL monies towards village hall expansion in 22/23.

Notes:

- 22/23 Actual figures are estimates as the year is still running.
- All figures exclude VAT.

## Budget Summary – Regular Income & Expenditure

In line with the budget principles, regular expenditure is balanced with income.



All figures exclude VAT.

## Precept

Regular expenditure must be matched by regular income unless there is an excess of reserves that can be used in place of regular income. In 23/24 there is an increase in regular expenditure requirement and there is no excess of reserves that can be used to offset regular expenditure increases. (It should be noted that CIL money cannot be put towards regular expenditure.) Therefore, it is proposed to increase the precept from £22,000 in 22/23 to £28,000 in 23/24. When factoring in the increase in the taxbase from 580.80 to 592.22, this results in an increase for a band D household of 78p per month (from £3.16 to £3.94 per month).

## Budget Summary - Reserves

Reserves are estimated to be £43,947 at the beginning of 23/24 of which £5,095 is Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and £2,050 is the 'Together For Our Planet' grant. A VAT refund of £1,886 is expected during the year. In line with the budget principles, this budget aims proposes a plan for all reserves as indicated in the graph below.

Please note the following definitions:

- "Unapproved" is proposed expenditure which requires council approval during the year.
- "Allocated" amounts are forecast not to be spent during the year.

