

### **Finance: Preparing a Budget for 2016-17**

The Council's usual practice has been that a draft budget has been prepared by the Chairman, the Vice-Chairman and the Clerk. In the absence of a Chairman or Vice-Chairman, the Council is invited to consider how the draft budget should be prepared for 2017-18.

The Council needs to address the auditors' recent criticisms and learn from the failure to include provision for the churchyard path in the 2016-17 budget in spite of making a commitment at its April 2015 meeting.

Before a sound draft budget can be properly agreed, the Council should probably therefore:

- Review the Council's Risk Assessment to ensure it has identified any risks that require additional expenditure in 2017-18 for their elimination or mitigation
- List any projects it wishes to undertake in 2017-18 that might give rise to significant expenditure
- Review burial ground fees, as these are a significant source of income
- Review the salary and conditions of service of the Clerk (see existing Standing Order 14)
- Receive and approve an up-to-date bank reconciliation (attached) and revised 2016-17 budget (attached).

It would also be appropriate to review the Financial Regulations as part of this process,

I believe the Council should also decide:

- To make its maintenance contract subject to competition for the first time since 2012
- When it next wishes to look for competitive quotes for its insurance and internal audit – I am unable to establish easily when and how the current providers were selected.

I believe these steps should probably satisfy our 2016-17 auditors that the Council is properly managing the Council's finances.

I recommend that at least two councillors be chosen to form a sub-committee to make initial recommendations to the Council's December 2016 meeting, enabling final decisions to be taken at the January 2017

meeting which is the last one at which the 2017-18 precept can be agreed before VoWHDC's probable deadline.

Geoffrey Ferres  
Parish Clerk  
Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2016