

## Ash Parish Council Finance Report 27<sup>th</sup> April 2015

The audited statement of the accounts for 31<sup>st</sup> March 2014 is displayed along with the Auditor's Certificate.

The un-audited summary of the accounts for the financial year ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2015 is displayed and on the Parish council website.

Receipts were £77,122, with a balance of £82,676 carried over, producing a total of £159,798. Keeping the council tax contribution per Band D property the same as the previous year delivered a precept of £64,639 and central government gave a revenue support grant of £3,694. This grant was half the previous year's level.

Payments for the year were £61,670. The purchase of new accounting software and additional security software for the council's computer totalled £986, training support for a new clerk was £1,145 and equipping a new office, purchasing resource books increased some administration costs. Repairs and maintenance costs of £1,832 included a virtual rebuild to parts of the aerial slide in the Recreation Ground and patching of some play area safety surfaces. £2,426 was spent on tree maintenance. Refurbishing both Ash and Westmarsh War Memorials cost £1,891, and the internal painting of the toilet block at the Rec Ground came in at £1,560. Costs that reduced included Ash's contribution to DDC for The Street Public Conveniences, being almost £2000 down on last year's spend to £8,268. Costs for play equipment were lower than in the last year, and work on the Neighbourhood Development Plan, still in its early stages, used £913. The year ended with a balance of £98,128 to carry forward.

The current budget is now available on the Ash PC website. Projected expenditure for the year started this April will be just over £72,550. Grants of £5,000 have been allocated including £800 for PACE to continue providing activities for young people. An allowance of £5,800 has been retained to progress the Neighbourhood Development Plan. Rising costs are expected for professional services, subscriptions, utilities. £8,500 has been budgeted for upkeep of the Public Conveniences, £1,000 provision has been made for a replacement barrier at the Queens Road entrance to the Rec Ground. Salaries and pension costs rise slightly with the 2.2% wages settlement for local government employees. Events specific to 2015 meant £3,415 was budgeted for election costs and related activities such as councillor training, along with £600 for Beating The Bounds later in the year.

The projected expenditure produced a deficit budget. The parish council decided to support this with a 2% increase to the precept, the first time the precept has been increased in several years. It added £1.25 to a Band D property's council tax charge.

£37,137 of Reserves is ring fenced to cover items including road safety, security (it is not clear whether changes to the Warden services may yet eventuate), completing payment on the outdoor gym, contingencies, safety resurfacing and tree surgery. General reserves are just under £61,000. The reserves are being kept high in the face of uncertainties over future income and costs. The external auditor accepts as prudent having up to twice the level of the precept in reserves.

The Parish Council recently opened bank accounts with Unity Trust Bank with the intention of utilising this Bank for its day to day operations, switching to online payments, and for holding a portion of the Reserves. The Nat West account will be retained to spread the Reserves between the two banks, thereby limiting the council's exposure in the event of a bank becoming insolvent.