



PEASEDOWN ST JOHN PARISH COUNCIL

The Beacon Hall, French Close, Peasedown St John, BA2 8SN

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Statement of Proposed Financial Activities 2024-25



The Parish Council of Peasedown St John was formed in 1955 and represents the interests of the communities of Peasedown St John, Braysdown, Carlingcott & Woodborough. The current Council consists of seventeen Parish Councillors who are local residents and give their time voluntarily.

The Parish Council's main role is to ensure that the delivery of services to meet local needs is maintained and that the quality of life in the community and the environment of the Parish are improved. To operate effectively, the Parish Council requires an annual income and the majority of this is obtained through a levy on each household - this levy is known as the "Precept" and forms a small percentage of the Council Tax that each household pays.

The Parish Council ensures that its finances are well managed, by scrutinising the accounts at every meeting of the Finance & Amenities Committee and quarterly at Full Council meetings (all of which are open to the public). Detailed spending plans for the coming year must be provided

What has been achieved in 2023/24?

Some major achievements for 2023/24 have been:

- Coronation Celebration Event
- Planting of King's Oak at the Recreation Ground
- Continued maintenance of our open green spaces
- Allotments BBQ
- Remembrance events
- Repairs and resurfacing of play equipment areas at Beacon Field
- Appointment of a new Grounds and Maintenance Manager
- Refurbishment of the Carlingcott phone box (due March 2024)
- Replacement community picnic table on The Tump in Carlingcott
- Christmas Tea Party for older residents
- Replacement IT equipment for office staff

How is your money spent?

Peasedown St John Parish Council provides, manages and maintains a number of facilities and services in the village, including:

- Public open spaces (the Village Green, the Carlingcott Tump and Ecewiche Green)
- Beacon Field and Beacon Field play areas
- Ashgrove Cemetery
- The Recreation Field, including the football changing rooms, canteen, toilet and play areas
- BMX track and skate park
- Braysdown Lane Allotments
- Beacon Hall
- Street lighting (126 lights are owned and funded by the Parish Council)
- Maintenance of footpaths
- The Council Office
- Parish newsletters
- Maintenance of roundabouts and flower beds
- Floral displays in hanging baskets and planters
- Festive lights and decorations
- Funding for the School Crossing Patrol
- Parish Council website and Facebook page
- Winter support for all residents - supplying and refilling grit bins
- Litter picking around the village
- Staff and Councillor training
- Community grant scheme
- Civic events



Council Staff

The Parish Council employs a mixture of full-time and part-time staff.

Staff work closely with the Councillors to deliver:

- Day to day running of all the Parish Council facilities and services (see above list)
- Attending all Council meetings to provide administrative support and to ensure that all legislation and policies are complied with
- Up-dating financial records and preparation of financial reports
- Providing the first point of contact for enquiries from residents of the village
- Maintaining and filing all parish administrative records
- Beacon Hall bookings, invoicing, caretaking and cleaning
- Implementation of projects agreed by the Parish Council
- Co-ordinating with contractors to assist with delivering the Council's objectives

Councillors:

Our 17 Parish Councillors all work for free, in a variety of capacities, supporting the council staff.

What is different this year?

Following the departure of our long-serving Caretaker at the end of 2022, we were pleased to welcome our new Grounds & Maintenance Manager at the beginning of 2024. The Grounds & Maintenance Manager and outside services team will continue with the management of our existing facilities, as well as land previously managed by the housing developer (Persimmon), due to be transferred to the Parish Council during Spring 2024. The creation of this new position will mean that we will be able to carry out the vast majority of amenities works “in house” rather than using contractors. We will also be reviewing our office roles in the coming year and due to increasing work volumes a new part-time role, to undertake the Council’s finances, is planned to be appointed later in the year.

Councillors want to invest more in the future of the village, not only to catch up with inflationary pressures (inflation rose as high as 11% in late 2022 and has been 5.2% on average since 2019) but also to keep our assets properly maintained. The precept has been frozen for 4 years and we haven’t passed on any inflationary rises. Last year, we were able to avoid an increase in our precept, but we set the expectation that as our income was very close to our total expenditure, it was likely our precept would need to increase for 2024/25.

In fact, the planned expenditure for 2024/25 is more than the planned income, and so we have had to increase the precept. This is not a decision we have taken lightly, and many hours have been spent scrutinising the figures. We have managed to cut back on some areas, but not sufficiently for those cost savings to cover the shortfall. We also wish to continue to make improvements to the village facilities and services for residents. As a consequence, we have raised the precept to £337,995 which equates to an annual increase for a Band D property from £116.74 to £156.63, a monthly increase of £3.32. We believe this is still good value for money, considering all the services we provide.



Forthcoming Projects and Ear-marked Reserves

In addition to its normal activities and routine expenditure, the Parish Council also needs to raise finance for the long-term development and enhancement of the facilities in the village. This is done by allocating funds from the precept, which can be used during the same year, or built up over a number of years (Ear-marked Reserves). Although several larger projects have been actioned over the last year, some are still in progress.

Some of the projects to be completed over the coming year are:

- Extension of the accessible allotment plots and improvements to the security of the site
- Beacon Hall - install audio-visual equipment for streaming meetings and events
- Persimmon Homes land transfer
- Asset signage and historical information signage project
- Ashgrove Cemetery pathways

Further suggested projects that councillors will review to determine their viability, include (but are not limited to):

- Mature tree planting at Beacon Field to provide shade
- Wildlife pond at Ecewiche Green
- Solar panels and insulation at Beacon Hall
- Further improvements at Ashgrove Cemetery including working towards Green Flag status
- Establishment of a strategy for the Parish Council
- Planning for future maintenance of our infrastructure and open spaces
- Upgrade of our website

Where does the money come from?

Budget 2023/24

Income	£
Precept*	251,452
Interest	100
Donations	1,000
Environment	605
Allotments (rents)	1,269
Cemetery (burial & memorial fees)	5,830
Beacon Hall (hire fees)	18,000
Total	278,256
Expenditure	£
Staff Costs**	145,857
General admin	24,600
Community Grants/Village Events	10,593
Newsletters/Website	3,000
Amenities	10,200
Parish Council Vehicle	6,559
Lighting	6,500
Environment	7,000
Cemetery	7,450
Recreation Ground	13,500
Beacon Hall & Field	26,440
Infrequent Operational Expenditure	15,000
Contracted Amenities Works**	1,500
Total	278,199

Income less expenditure *** 57

*For explanation of the precept, see front page.

**New Grounds & Maintenance Manager appointed so there is no longer a requirement for a Contracted Amenities Works budget.

***This balance is used for projects and Ear-Marked Reserves. For a full explanation see left.

For further details of the Parish Council's plans and activities and actual spend against budget reports, please refer to its website and look out for the regular newsletters.

Budget 2024/25

Income	£
Precept*	337,995
Interest	1,500
Donations	1,000
Environment	615
Allotments (rents)	1,296
Cemetery (burial & memorial fees)	5,830
Beacon Hall (hire fees)	18,000
Total	366,236
Expenditure	£
Staff Costs**	173,917
General admin	26,270
Community Grants/Village Events	12,100
Newsletters/Website	3,500
Amenities	12,900
Parish Council Vehicle	6,979
Lighting	5,500
Environment	7,500
Cemetery	7,850
Recreation Ground	14,610
Beacon Hall & Field	25,110
Infrequent Operational Expenditure	15,000
Contracted Amenities Works**	-
Total	311,236

Income less expenditure *** 55,000



Contingency Reserves

In addition to the above listed figures the Parish Council is obliged to maintain funds in reserve for emergency/contingency purposes. The Parish Council's contingency reserves have been increased to £85,000 to maintain levels in line with the Auditor's recommendations of the amount of money required to operate the Council, in the event of an emergency situation, for a period of three months. This level will continue to be monitored.