

Disley Parish Council Annual Report

Finance Report for 2016-17 by Cllr. Liz Chavasse-Hadfield,
Chairman of Disley Parish Council Finance Committee



The Finance Report for Disley Parish Council to the end of March 2017 is presented (based on accounts which are subject to audit). We believe the finances of the Parish Council continue to be in good order.

Income

Our total income from all sources was £172.2k of which 78% (£134.5k) was raised through the precept. Non-precept generated income was lower in 2016/17 than the previous year by £5.5k reflecting a continued decline in the availability of grants & funding from Cheshire East and other sources.

- £11k was raised from Community Centre Hire Charges, which is in line with last year. The Parish also reclaimed £5k of the community centre running costs back from CE council.
- £7k was raised from rentals of land, allotments and Disley Dam, which is broadly in line with last year.
- £0.8k investment account interest on Parish Council long term investment account.
- The community bus also raised nearly £2k in fares, hire and membership fees, which is used specifically to offset the £2.8k operating costs and maintain this popular service for as long as possible. All drivers are unpaid volunteers.
- The Parish benefitted from £9k of grants to support the ongoing development of the village Neighbourhood Plan.

Expenditure

Overall

Total expenditure in 2016/17 was £176k, which was £4k more than total income. The difference has been funded from the Parish general reserve fund.

Major Expenditure Items

- The single biggest cost facing the village comprises the employment costs & expenses relating to the five members of the Parish Council team. For 2016/17 employment costs were £86k and reflect how critical the Clerk, Assistant, Caretaker and Handymen are in maintaining the amenities and services that the Parish is responsible for. These include: (but are not limited to)
- Arnold Rhodes, Village Centre Ballcourt, Memorial & Newtown recreational park facilities.
- Support and management of three allotment sites.
- Ownership & running of the Community Centre and Community Minibus.
- Website, e-bulletins, posters & newsletters.
- Administration and support for twenty ongoing village improvement projects.
- Support for projects affecting the village but funded directly from Cheshire East Council e.g. Arnold Rhodes park development and SEMMMS mitigation.
- Supporting the Parish Council to act as Disley's voice on many issues, including Cheshire East local plan & defending the Green belt.
- Management of the Parish finances.
- General administration costs of Parish Council projects and activities were £15.6k.
- The total costs of the Community Centre (including Caretaker) were £21k. This cost was offset by £16k income from hire charges and a recharge to Cheshire East. The overall cost of the Community Centre to the village was therefore £5k. This is more than last year by about £4k and is mainly due to less of the maintenance costs being able to be recharged to CE council this year.
- £11.9k Parish Council contribution to the Police Community Support Officer (PCSO) service; this contribution remains the same as last year and will continue at the same level in 2017/18.

Major Expenditure Items (continued):

- £5.5k on the purchase of the village CCTV monitoring service from CE Council. The Parish Council actively monitors usage & effectiveness of this service to ensure it remains value for money.
- £15k on general maintenance of the village and amenities e.g. allotments and parks.
- Approximately £3k was spent on running the Parish Council office.
- £4.4k on summer and winter village centre flower tubs and hanging baskets to enhance the village centre environment.
- £4k to dress the village for Christmas and hold the annual Christmas Tree lighting event.
- £2k grants were awarded to local charities and good causes.

Councillor Expenses

Parish Councillors are elected on a voluntary basis and are unpaid. The elected Chairman of Disley Parish Council receives an annual allowance of £540. Since being elected in May 2015, the total amount of expenses incurred and claimed by councillors while conducting council business for Disley Parish, remains £51.20.

Looking forward to 2017/2018

Every year the Parish Council raises a precept to pay for the range of services it provides.

For 2017/18, we have made an increase to the Parish Precept, which will raise £150k compared to the £134.5k raised for 2016/17. This additional £15.7k represents an 8.7% increase equating to £73.75 per year for a Band D property – an increase of £5.90 per annum or 11.3p per week for a Band D property.

Why increase the Parish Precept?

The precept will raise an additional £15.7k this year. The Council has sought to make savings; however, in addition to unavoidable inflationary costs, the precept increase will be mainly used to cover increases in costs or reductions in income that are beyond the Parish Council's control.

These include:

- £2k to cover the withdrawal of a council tax support grant from CE council.
 - £4.4k increase in nationally agreed employment costs & activity driven expenses.
 - £6k of the increase will be used to pay for non-routine, health and safety and unavoidable maintenance activity e.g. streetlighting, tree and other unavoidable maintenance costs.
- We have also included small increases for the benefit of residents.
- £1.5k on planned village events
 - £1k to improve the Parish Council website
 - £0.5k additional Community Grants

The Parish Council is continually seeking opportunities to increase funding from non-precept based sources, improve services for a comparable cost or reduce operational expenses. The planned move of the Council's offices to the community centre is expected to both benefit residents and reduce council overheads.

Total Parish Council reserves were £125.4k at 31 March 2017. The general reserve was £28.6k (21% of Precept). The remaining reserves are ring-fenced for capital or specific projects.

In 2017/18, the Council is looking to increase this general reserve to £37.5k (25% of new Precept.)

The village will benefit in 2017/18 from significant investments in Arnold Rhodes and Newtown recreational areas and the SEMMMS mitigation projects. The funds associated with these projects are managed directly by Cheshire East Council.