

Budgets – At the end of the financial year ending 2023-24, the budgets against actuals indicated that they had held up very well over the financial year as follows:-

Parish Council

Budgeted Receipts	£17,900.00	Actual Receipts	£22,856.00
Budgeted Payments	£19,540.00	Actual Payments	£18,528.00

Extra monies came from repayment from Village Hall for works done previous year, CIL and refunds on electricity

Playing Field

Budgeted Receipts	£ 3,299.00	Actual Receipts	£ 3,966.00
Budgeted Payments	£ 2,651.00	Actual Payments	£ 5,665.00

Difference in expenditure consists of refurbishment of playground equipment

Allotments

Budgeted Receipts	£1,502.00	Actual Receipts	£1,653.00
Budgeted Payments	£1,500.00	Actual Payments	£1,076.00

Precept - As Parish Clerk and RFO, I recommended increasing the precept this year due to the discussions surrounding the drainage and resurfacing works on The Green and Village Car Park. Funds were applied for from the Pride in Place Grants for £10,000 which was half of the cost of the complete works, but unfortunately this was not successful, so the Parish Council are currently looking at ways to find an alternative solution to the resurfacing. Money will be used from earmarked reserves to get the drainage completed, plus any pot-hole filling or surface dressing whichever the Parish Council agrees on. This will cost around £12,000 dependent on what is decided. For this reason, it was agreed to increase the precept with a slight rise in cost to the resident in a Band D property from £58.22 to £61.14 - an increase of £2.92 per year or 24p per month on council tax. This will help to protect the Parish Council's financial situation going forward and to help build reserves after depletion from the drainage and car park work.

Funding - The Parish Council received monies from Norfolk County Council's Parish Partnerships fund for the financial year 2023-24. This is a 50/50 arrangement between NCC and Parish Councils across Norfolk, for costs on approved works around towns/villages. In the past Earsham PC has managed to purchase 3 speed machines using this fund and has been successful again this year in obtaining agreement to place an LED bollard at the junction with the A143 at the entrance of the village, this will be installed later this year.

Funds from the 'Go For It' grant for £300 have also been successful and this is earmarked for purchasing some plants for the Village Centre around the village hall area. Volunteers have already come forward to help with a planting scheme and maintenance.

Other improvements have been a new smart noticeboard large enough to take all the legally required Parish Council paperwork for audit purposes, agenda's, minutes, notices etc. plus a bench to celebrate the Coronation of King Charles III was also purchased. An anonymous donor gave the Parish Council £100 towards the cost of the bench, and a letter of thanks was sent through a third party.

Discussions are ongoing to get an Emergency Action Plan in place for the Village, and a small working group has been formed to look at this in more detail. Residents are very welcome to have some input and work with Councilors to help get this in place as soon as possible.

Playing Field – The annual health and safety checks were undertaken in March 2024 by a RoSPA inspector for the play equipment and it has highlighted some minor repairs which will need to be undertaken in the coming months. Some minor works have been more pressing due to vandalism on the rotunda and the cost of repair will use the last of the earmarked reserves. Last year the Parish Council spent £1710 from reserves getting the play equipment wood preserved.

Allotments – The allotments have seen a high turnover of tenants recently, but fortunately others have come forward to take over the empty plots. Bungay Allotment Association heard about the vacant plots and asked if Earsham could take some people from their long waiting list. As it currently stands, there are 5 plots still vacant. It is hoped that the underground leak found last year by one of the tenants and was repaired by him, will cut down the cost of the water bills.

An end of year balance of £48,132 (as of 31st March 2024) was the total across all bank accounts, Parish Council, Playing Field and Allotments. This is made up of earmarked funds for various budget lines totalling £25,240 (this total includes play equipment, clerk pension gratuity, signs, bins, car park resurfacing, fencing, Community Infrastructure Levy, and donation towards village hall refurbishment) which leaves a total of £22,892 in the General Fund of the Parish Council.

Lynda Ling
21st May 2024