



Benson Parish Council

Budget 2023/24

Benson Parish Council provides public services to the residents of Benson, RAF Benson and Preston Crowmarsh. We deal with local issues in the parish and to do this we raise our own form of council tax known as a precept. This forms part of your main council tax bill issued by SODC. Following the covid lockdowns and Parish Hall closed for refurbishment, the Council's income was much reduced and reserves were depleted but the 'bounce back' was reassuringly swift with occupancy of the Parish Hall in particular improving to above pre refurbishment levels. In setting the budgets for 2023/24 the Council felt able to take an optimistic approach and the result was just a very small increase in precept for local residents, in fact way under the current cost of living increase. This optimism extended to the Council's commitment to capital projects and the budget for 2023/24 shows a greater allocation of general reserves to these projects.

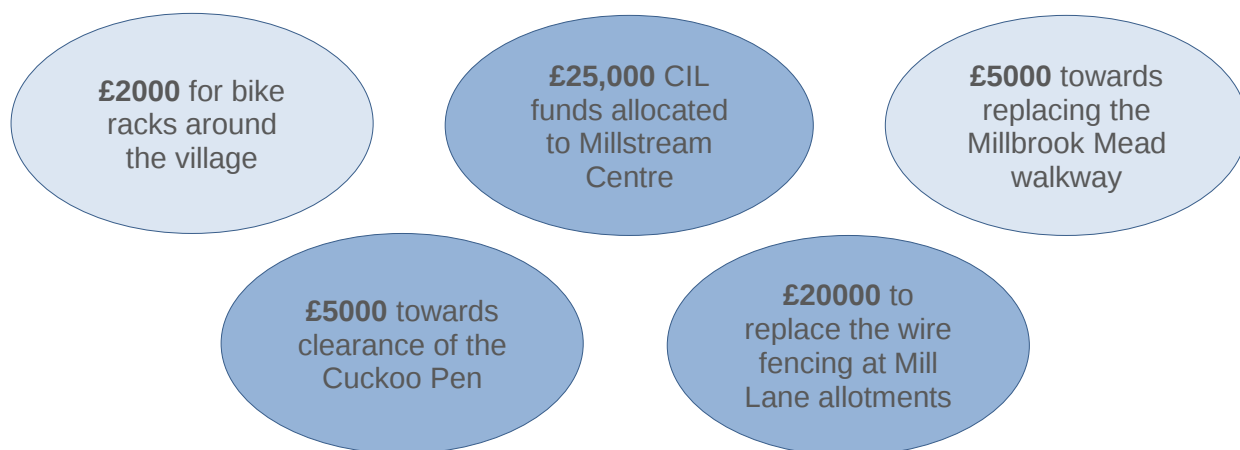
In 2022/23, challenges have included;

- Continued difficulties with the Community Hall acoustics and fire prevention measures meaning it cannot be fully used
- Works to the paddling pool to keep it running for another year
- A burst pipe in the Pavilion that led to it being unusable for some time
- An increase in vandalism of our play parks, public toilets and fly tipping
- An increase in utility costs

Benson Parish Council will continue to;

- Apply the Benson Neighbourhood Plan rigorously to new planning applications and development proposals
- Maintain the public assets such as the playgrounds, nature areas, buildings and allotments
- Represent Benson in liaison with the principle authorities on wider Oxfordshire and UK issues
- Accommodate the needs of the growing Benson population by upgrading infrastructure and providing new facilities

To meet residents' expectations, the Parish Council has allocated;



The net impact of all the above change is that for the financial year 2023-24, the precept increase for regular functions and services equates to an extra £3.72 per annum for the average Band D household.

BUDGET SUMMARY

In 2023-24, the average whole household (ie Band D) will contribute a sum of £2.67 per week (through the precept portion of Council Tax) towards the funding of all functions, services and some projects that Benson Parish Council provides for the community

EXPENDITURE

	22-23 Budgeted	23-24 Budgeted
Admin (including staff and office costs, insurance, vehicles, equipment)	193777	212700
Grants to external organisations	12000	12000
Halls (Parish Hall, Youth Hall, Pavilion and new community building)	89510	103830
Recreation & Lands (play areas, nature areas, village centre, public toilets, recreation grounds, paddling pool, allotments)	31100	36450
Contingencies (tree damage, vat reclaim and general contingency)	17750	17750
Capital Projects (funds added to existing project budgets)	50943	99643
Total	395080	482373

INCOME

Admin (photocopying, refreshments, equipment hire, bank interest)	950	950
Halls	82000	77000
Recreation & Lands	3699	3699
Total	86649	81649

Precept Raised	265331	283107
Subsidy from General Reserves	49250	89937
Precept per Band D Household / annum	135.13	138.85
Precept per Band D Household/ week	2.59	2.67

ACHIEVEMENTS

With the support of the local community, in 2022/23 the Parish Council has;

- Completed the Parish Hall refurbishment and reopened the hall to hirers
- Opened the Community Hall to hirers in a limited capacity.
- Equipped the main hall in the Parish Hall with new motorized blinds
- Replaced the lounge floor in the Parish Hall with hard flooring.
- Provided nearly 12000 dog waste bags free around the village in dispensers.
- Expanded the CCTV range to cover the new play park and the Community Hall
- Completed the revision of the Neighbourhood Plan
- Defended the Parish from speculative development.
- Completed community consultation on the best use of CIL funds
- Set up a working group to discuss use of the Public Art Fund
- Maintained 2 defibrillators in the village, re equipping them after use
- Strategic management plan progressed covering all Parish green spaces
- Enlisted a Fix My Street super user who liaises with OCC officers to ensure reported matters are dealt with
- Supported local charitable organisations with grants amounting to £8312
- Progressed the toucan crossing plans for the A4074
- Completed community engagement process and implemented 20mph speed limits around the village
- Purchased 2 Speed Indication devices for future installation in the village
- Donated personnel time to preparations for the remembrance parade and coronation events
- Continued discussion with the Benson Voluntary School Trust to secure the future of the Youth Hall
- Contributed towards the beautiful flower displays at the war memorial
- Provided storage space for the Benson History group archive
- Set up a working group to plan refurbishment of Rivermead leisure area and paddling pool
- Granted £25,000 of CIL funds to the Millstream Centre

Benson Parish Council is committed to continuing to deliver the projects, functions and services that residents and visitors to the village expect, at a price that the residents are prepared to pay, and we thank everyone for their ongoing support and input in that work.

Your Parish Council would like to hear your views and any comments you may have on the services that are provided or what you would like to see provided in the future

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