

Responsible Finance Officers report May 2012

In summary, the 2011/12 accounts of Wootton Parish Council are given below. Comments are as follows.

Income

Wootton Parish Council obtains its income from the precept, and charges for burial plots and hire of the recreation grounds. The precept is the part of the council tax collected, on behalf of the council. Wootton Parish Council budgets all its needs towards the end of the calendar year, and advises Bedford Borough Council of the figures required to meet its entire obligation. In 2011/12 this was £102,785. The parish council has requested the figure of £105,120 for the 2012/13 financial year.

The parish council also receives a grant (agency services) for cutting the highway verges in the parish on behalf of Bedford Borough Council. In 2011/12 this was £1,567 although the parish had extra cuts made to ensure the parish looked tidy.

A grant from the Bedford Borough Council S106 monies was received - £7,559 towards the provision of additional play equipment at the Wootton Memorial Hall play area.

The parish council also received £2,190 from advertisers in the Wootton Parish Newsletter. Total costs for 2011/12 were £3,105. This is delivered to all households in Wootton and is also available on the Wootton Parish Council website. It might be that costs can be reduced in this area, if the magazine were to be received electronically in the future.

There has been no income from hire of the recreation ground due to the vandalism of the MUGA (Multi Use Games Area). An insurance claim for this damage of £3,589 has now been received and to date £5,010 spent on replacement floodlights. Money has been earmarked for the upgrade of the MUGA in 2012/13. It is a shame that a minority in the village seek to vandalise areas that can give hours of pleasure to many residents, and reduce potential income that would be a direct benefit to the parish.

Expenditure

The parish council employs a full time clerk, a part time Responsible Finance Officer (RFO), a part time parks & complex caretaker and a contract bus shelter cleaner. Unfortunately our litter picker resigned during 2011/12 but a replacement has recently been appointed and they will also be undertaking handyman roles in and around the village. Spending on grass cutting for 2011/12 was £7,185 and cemetery ground maintenance was £12,350. There was a minimal spend on projects during 2011/12 and monies have been earmarked for future projects including the CCTV and MUGA upgrades, and it is hoped youth facilities, football pitch repairs, as well as the upgrading of lights in Tithe Barn Road.

Annual Audit

The RFO has contacted an external audit provider who will carry out our independent examination of the 2011/12 accounts as required for the Annual Return.

Purpose and Summary

The purpose of the above is to continue to improve the financial controls and accounting procedures of Wootton Parish Council, whilst being open and accountable to our parishioners. It is the council's intention to work towards becoming a quality status council. In summary I am happy to report that Wootton Parish Council is in a good financial position and will continue to work for the good of our parishioners.

Sue Playford
June 2012