

Blofield Parish Council

Finance Budget Setting Report – December 2024 – FINAL

- a) Reserves Balance sheet and
- b) Budget Setting document

1. RESERVES POSITIONS at November 2024:

Churchyard reserves - The council has ample reserves for the churchyard currently at £22,328.55. Part of the churchyard wall has been repaired at a cost of approximately £12,000 (of which £6,000 was received from a grant). Plans are in place to carry out another two weeks of repairs on the churchyard wall in September 2025 at a further cost of £12,500. Match funding is being sought for this work too but this may not be possible. Some church gravestones still require repair and some works following a tree survey are required.

Courthouse reserves – £19,234.02 of reserves are held for the courthouse currently. Significant damp is being investigated in the solicitors' room and work on this is likely to be in the region of £10,000-£15,000. This is currently being investigated and quotations obtained.

Marty's Marsh Reserves – Are currently held at £22,686.06. Now the footpaths have been created, culvert repaired and bridge installed less reserves are required. The funding for the whole footpath project has been secured from Green Infrastructure funds and funding from County Councillor Andrew Proctor. [The council agreed to transfer £5,000 of this reserve to the Play Reserve, beginning a reserve for replacement / issues with the play equipment long term.](#)

Future Capital projects reserves - The council are progressing with the land transfer of the 'old school site' as the school will be relocated in April 2025. The new play area (funded with a National Highways designated funds grant) has been installed on the 'old school site' and is being enjoyed by the school children.

The council is now progressing the next phase of this project, creating a community hub. This will require significant funds as this project is developed, before any building is commenced. This includes architect/surveyor costs. In addition, £10,000 for the moving of the utilities and £10,000 fencing between sites; these costs will be split with NCC. Legal conveyancing costs of circa £2,000 are expected.

Playground Equipment Reserve – this has a deficit of £503.27 due to a small overspend on the community hub playground project. [The council agreed to transfer of £503.27 from the contingency budget to cover the cost of the overspend for additional bridge netting required.](#)

Grant Reserve – this still holds a grant (£532.99) received from BDC our district councillor Paul Newstead for a bench on the 'old school site' or Blofield Corner Road when it is transferred to the parish council.

2. GROUNDS MAINTENANCE & COMMUNITY FACILITY GRANT

The council provides a *contribution* to grounds maintenance for both the MHH site and Heathlands site, this is not a fixed sum and may vary from year to year subject to precept availability. This is assistance to the facilities in lieu of the council not owning any community land. The council land ownership has changed over recent years and likely to change in the future too as the council now owns Marty's Marsh and Wyngates Areas 1&2 and will be coming into receipt of Wyngates Area 3 and most significantly, the outdoor north section of the old school site. The council continues to strive to do all it can to support and help the community facilities within the parish.

The working group discussed these contributions and requested detail of the halls recent expenditure and expected budget for grounds maintenance. Costs continue to rise for all parties however the council continues to strive to avoid large increases in the parish precept. The council agreed to keep the total budget at £6100.

The council has established a community facilities grant for 2025/26 with some CIL funds. This Grant Policy is subject to Parish Council funds, and there can be no legitimate expectation that it will always be available in the future; Parish Council funds come from precept taxes from the parishioners of Blofield and it may not always be possible to provide grant opportunities. This will be reviewed annually as part of budget setting. For 2025/26 a small reserve has been allocated of £1,000 to the community facility grant reserve.

3. ALLOTMENTS ANNUAL RENT

Maintain the allotments annual rental at £50 for the cost of a full plot per annum. The council holds a healthy reserve for the allotments. The council continues to look for alternative allotment land as the lease on the land runs out in 2032 and may not be renewed.

4. PRECEPT

The working party propose setting the precept for 2025/26 at £112,200 an increase of £7,200. However, as the number of band D properties has increased in the parish from 1648 to 1671 the resulting estimated total cost is £67.15 per year or £5.60 per month, an increase of approximately £0.29 per month for each band D house in the Parish. This is an increase of approximately 5.4% to each household.

Table of approximate figures of precept changes.....

Year	House numbers	House numbers	Precept	Cost per house	Cost per month	% Increase on previous year
2021/22			£94,000	£63.71	£5.31	2.7%
2022/23	1514	1571	£97,500	£62.06	£5.17	
2023/24	1571	1607	£99,700	£62.04	£5.17	0
2024/25	1607	1648	£105,000	£63.71	£5.31	2.7%
2025/26	1648	1671	£112,200	£67.15	£5.60	5.4%

Sarah Osbaldeston

Parish Clerk
11 December 2024