



MARDEN PARISH COUNCIL
BUSINESS PLAN UPDATE AND
BUDGET & PRECEPT FOR 2022 – 23

Summary

This document sets out the achievements over the last twelve months against the Business Plan agreed in July 2019 and details the Budget and Precept proposed for 2022-23.

The Business Plan and Vision remain unchanged and form the basis for the analysis provided within this document. The Business Plan will be updated in 2022.

Although Covid-19 has had the anticipated impact on many of the parish activities, this has not diminished the continued efforts of the Parish Council in support of the community it represents. While most day-to-day activities have continued several key activities have been delayed.

The following provides a summary of the main achievements over the last twelve months against the Business Plan targets and looks at how the work in 2022-23 will be funded.

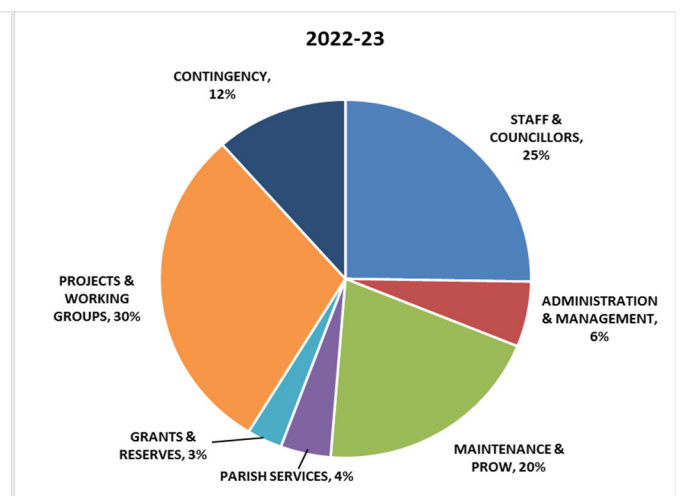
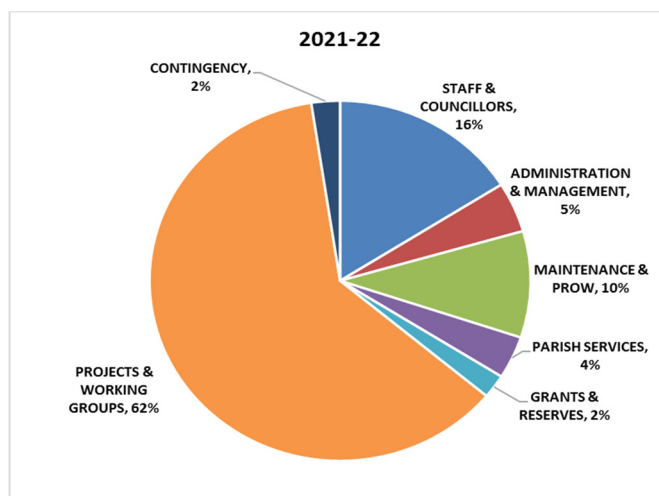
During the last year we saw a further two statutory lockdowns which restricted several activities and led to an under-run against the final budget. Activities underspent the agreed budget for 2020-21 and savings are also anticipated for 2021-22. Although the underspend is a significant sum of money it has been determined that it will be put aside in reserves to assist in the new community facilities development which will include both the building and the development of the village green.

The following outlines the main achievements against the six main areas of the Business Plan.

Planned Activity	Achievements in financial year 2021-22 to date
Communication & Management	We have now commissioned a new Parish Council website (average hits per month = 533) & a Facebook page (number of followers 146, up 8 in last 4 weeks, as at 6.10.21).
	We continue to engage with the larger business groups, the most successful area being the support to improve Public Rights Of Way.
Planning	20 planning applications have been reviewed since November 2020, 12 supported and 6 objected to, 2 commented on. Of the total, Herefordshire Council has approved 8, refused 7, with 5 awaiting a decision.
Finance	The Internal Audit provided a detailed and helpful review of the 2020-21 accounts. It is hoped that during 2021-22 financial year we will hold both an interim and final internal audit.
	Unsurprisingly, there was a surplus at the end of the 2020-21 financial year of £25k. Of this, Covid accounted for £11k, Project delays (phosphate related) a further £10k with the remaining £4K due to scope changes and general underruns. Almost all the surplus is regarded as a delay in expenditure rather than a saving.
Maintenance	Lengthsman activities reduced due to less grass cutting during the growing season to support nature and ecology.
	The Parish Footpath Officer, supported by landowners and Balfour Beatty, has continued to make significant improvements to both the parish footpath and bridleway networks. The Parish Council funded 3 new gates in 2020-21 and has funded a further 6 new gates in 2021-22.
	The work commissioned to survey and jet all drains from Small Ashes through to Old School House was completed successfully, with key work required at Old School House being added to Herefordshire Council's list of work to be completed when funds allow.
Roads & Traffic	Speedwatch is a community led group supported by the Parish Council and has been very successful during the last year. Out in all weathers when Covid restrictions allowed. Since November 2020, 16 1 hour sessions have taken place, 1,916 cars monitored with 143 exceeding 35 mph within the village 30 mph area.
	At the request of the Marden Horse Riding community the Parish Council proposed 9 potential sites to erect "Caution" signs. Balfour Beatty have now approved and installed the signs.
Major Projects	The Community Facilities Group has continued to progress the project and look at several options while planning approval is awaited. A new architect was appointed in March 2021 to take the project through to completion. The business case has been established and as soon as possible a community event will take place to put the overall project proposal to all parishioners and obtain approval for the required public works loan.
	An update to the Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) was undertaken during 2020 but stopped at Regulation 14 due to the ongoing phosphate issues associated with the River Lugg catchment area. On a positive note, Herefordshire Council has achieved a 5 year housing land supply which has led to the original 'Made' (adopted) NDP again carrying full weight in the planning process.
	The Marden Gardeners Association, supported by the Parish Council, has developed an extensive plan to improve the green spaces around the Parish. While this project is its early stages it is hoped that the improvements will soon be noticeable to the community.
Environment & Climate Change	The Environment & Sustainability Group has concentrated on providing environmental information to parishioners via News & Views. Later this year it is anticipated that face to face informative sessions will be run at the Community Centre. The Parish Council has joined the "Great Collaboration" web portal which parishioners will hear a lot more about, allowing everyone to get involved and help meet Herefordshire Council's climate change and environmental targets.

BUDGET & PRECEPT FOR 2022-2023 THE DRAFT BUDGET EXCLUDES ALL PROJECT COSTS OTHER THAN CLERK'S SALARY AND EXPENSES AND THE SUM FOR THE LOAN REPAYMENT/ONGOING PROJECT COSTS (such as planning and studies for an amended application if required). The sum of £13,500 that is already within the precept and budget for this will be transferred to reserves if not used during 2022-23.

SUMMARY		2021-22 Budget	2022-23 Draft Budget	% Change from 2021-22	Estimated actual spend 2021-22
Payments	Detail				
STAFF & CLLRS	Clerk's salary & expenses and councillor training	£13,220	£14,420	+9%	£12,350
ADMINISTRATION & MANAGEMENT	Insurance, subscriptions, room hire, website, stationery, postage, audit fee and elections	£3,710	£3,365	-10%	£4,144
MAINTENANCE & PROW	Lengthsman, PROW, volunteer & parish enhancement	£7,880	£11,500	+46%	£12,823
PARISH SERVICES	News & Views, parish communication, parish freighter	£3,150	£2,500	-20%	£2,300
GRANTS	Small grants, MVT & MRGT support, support for maintenance of Old Churchyard	£1,750	£1,750	0%	£1,750
PROJECTS & WORKING GROUPS	Environment & Sustainability Group	£1,000	£1,500	+50%	£500
	Community Facilities Group and Project	£48,200	£13,500	-72%	£8,000
	Fundraising Group	£500	£1,500	+200%	£584
	Neighbourhood Development Plan	£1,000	£500	-50%	£0
CONTINGENCY	Contingency	£2,000	£6,575	+329%	£0
OTHER	VAT				£4,735
	TOTAL PAYMENTS (Expenditure)	£82,410	£57,110	-31%	£47,468
Funded By					
	Precept	£51,500	£51,500	0%	£51,500
	Solar Farm	£2,910	£2,910	0%	£2,910
	News & Views advertising	£1,000	£1,000	0%	£1,000
	Other – donations to CF, VAT reclaim, etc.		£1,700	+100%	£9,044
	From Reserves	£27,000			
	TOTAL FUNDS (Income)	£82,410	£57,110	-31%	£64,454
Band 'D' property per week		£1.83 per week or less			



Key Budget Assumptions 2022-23

Staff and Councillor Costs

- Clerk's salary: allowance for 3% increase, the actual increase will only be available when the local government staff agreement has been finalised. Routine hours remain the same but an increase in planned hours has been made to cover the development of the new community facility and bring the review of national planning policy to conclusion. Expenses reduced: aim to continue using Zoom for most Working Group meetings.
- Councillor training: continue ongoing training as appropriate.

Administration & Management

- Room Hire: lower as expect to continue using Zoom when appropriate.
- It is planned to hold both an interim and final Internal Audit in each financial year.

Parish Maintenance

- As part of our commitment to achieving net zero carbon target and supporting nature, we have reviewed the Lengthsman's activities and reduced the grass cutting; however costs for Lengthsman and Footpath work have increased. Weeds will be cleared from gutters once per year.
- Footpath and Bridleways (Public Rights of Way – PROW). The Parish Council will continue to support improvements to footpaths and bridleways based on advice from the Parish Footpath Officer. The budget includes funding for another three gates to upgrade and enhance the PROW network.

Parish Services

- Reduction in cost due to Herefordshire Council terminating the Parish Freighter service. The Parish Council will look for an environmentally favourable alternative.

Projects & Working Groups

- It is assumed that the proposed new community building and village green will receive community support and planning approval and construction will commence. The budget cost relates to the repayments on a Public Works Loan.
- The Fundraising Group will continue to look for events that will bring the community together while raising funds for the new community facilities.
- Environment & Sustainability Group will look to provide more direct support to parishioners.
- The NDP group will look to review and comment on the proposed changes to the National Planning Process.

Other

- Contingency has been increased from last year to allow for significant variables and to allow virement (movement of funds from Contingency to other budget lines) eg. if more gates are required for footpath improvement.