



MARDEN PARISH COUNCIL **BUDGET & PRECEPT FOR 2023 – 24**

Summary

This document sets out the achievements over the last twelve months against the **Business Plan agreed in July 2022** and details the Budget and Precept proposed for 2023 -24.

The current Business Plan and Vision form the basis for the analysis provided within this document.

With the Covid-19 impact receding Parish Council activity has returned to near normality. Most working group meetings are back to being run face to face. Community activities have been run, most notably over the Jubilee Weekend, with a very successful race night on the Saturday followed by the very successful “Jubilee Big Lunch” on the Sunday.

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 2023-24 will be funded.

Several activities are predicted to underspend the agreed budget for 2022-23 This largely relates to the Community Facilities Project being put on hold until the planning application has been approved and an acceptable funding plan put in place following the poll of parishioner views undertaken in February 2022. The underspend will be put aside in reserves to assist in the new community facilities development once the planning application has been approved.

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

Planned Activity	Achievements in financial year 2022-23 to date
Communication & Management	2022 has seen the successful build and start-up of a new Community Website under the banner of "Marden Links" The new Clerk started in April 2022 with a three month handover
Planning	?? planning applications have been reviewed in the year, ?? supported and ?? objected. Of the total Herefordshire Council has approved xx with ?? awaiting decision
Finance	The Internal audit provided a detailed and helpful review of the 2021-22 accounts. It is hoped that during 2022-23 financial year we will hold both an interim and final internal audit. While the Community Facilities Project awaits planning permission and a revised funding plan there is an expected year end surplus which will be ringfenced in reserves as has been the case since 2018
Maintenance	Lengthsman costs have been running to the agreed plan. 2022 will see an additional drainage grant being used to clear grips and gutters. The Parish Footpath Officer, supported by landowners and Balfour Beatty, has continued the work of maintaining both the parish footpath and bridleway networks to a high standard. The Parish Council funded ?? new gates in 2022-23 and has plans to fund a further ?? new gates in 2023-24.
Roads & Traffic	A program of replacing all notice boards throughout the parish with reclaimed plastic alternatives. To date 5 of the 7 have been replace with the remaining 2 planned to be complete by the end of the year. Speedwatch is a community led group supported by the Parish Council and was very successful, so much so that the role has been taken over by Police until such time as speeding is deemed to be under control. A Traffic Management Group was formed in late 2021 to develop proposals to reduce speeding throughout the Parish. A consultation event was held in order to gain parishioner views. Unfortunately, the response was very poor. Moving forward the group will identify a short and longer term plan.
Major Projects	Following the outcome of a parishioner poll run through February 2022 specifically relating to funding the project has been paused. The intention is to restart the project once planning approval for NHF site has been granted. Alternative funding options are being considered prior to further consultation with parishioners. An update to the Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) was started in early 2022 with the aim of following Herefordshire Councils Core Strategy Update consultation process. It is anticipated that the group will need to run a full call for sites process following Herefordshire Council setting new housing target for Marden
	The Marden Gardeners Association, supported by the Parish Council, has implemented the agreed plan to improve the green spaces around the Parish. All the planed work has been completed other than the Rudge Grove site which it is hoped will be completed in early 2023. The Parish Council will look for further suitable sites for a similar makeover
	The Parish Council has agreed with the owners of the land behind the hairdressers / fishing tackle shop to a rental agreement that will allow the site to be used as a quite tranquil place for parishioners. Work will hopefully commence in 2023
Environment & Climate change	The working group has continued to concentrate on providing environment information to parishioners via News & Views and Facebook pages. Parishioners are being encouraged to join the "Great Collaboration" web portal allowing everyone to get involved and help meet Herefordshire Council climate change and environmental targets.

BUDGET 2023 – 2024 OBJECTIVES

1. Provide adequate training to facilitate the Clerk gaining appropriate qualification which will allow the Parish Council to retain its General Power of Competence.
2. Actions that mitigate climate change and improvements to biodiversity are of the highest priority.
3. Develop and implement new community facilities based on the assumption that planning will be approved, and a funding plan agreed.
4. Continue to improve communications with parishioners and local businesses:
 - a. Online by continual improvement of both the Parish Council and Marden Links websites, improving the use of the parish council Facebook page and providing one to one or group training on how to use the internet safely.
 - b. Continued use of N&V and noticeboards to provide summary information that is not time critical.
 - c. Provide face-to-face information sessions on climate change actions, the environment, and areas of general community support.
5. Following the success of this year's "The Big Lunch", other events will be planned to bring parishioners together.
6. Continue to identify and implement improvements to the Parish, examples being:
 - a. Develop a quiet space behind the Hairdressers.
 - b. Provide appropriate area for secure storage.
 - c. General enhancements to support parishioners.
7. Continue to use the Lengthsman Scheme to main roads, verges, pavements, and public rights of way.
8. Develop a feasible transport plan to improve road safety and protect or ancient bridges while involving Sutton St Nicholas and Moreton-on-Lugg as appropriate.
9. Continue to make appropriate grants to organisations within the Parish.

Key Assumptions in preparing the 2023-24 Budget

THE PRECEPT WILL REMAIN THE SAME LEVEL AS LAST YEAR AT £51500. THIS INCLUDES £13500 RINGFENCED TO ASSIST IN THE DEVELOPMENT AND FUNDING OF A NEW COMMUNITY CENTRE AND VILLAGE GREEN

Staff and Councillor Costs

- Clerk's salary: allowance for 5.0% increase.
- Additional hours planned to cover the development of the new community facility and bring the review of the Neighbourhood Development plan to conclusion.
- Expenses reduced, largely due to a reduction in travel.
- Clerk training leading to appropriate qualifications.
- Councillor training: continue ongoing training as appropriate.

Administration & Management

- Room Hire: assumed higher due to increase in working group activity (12 Parish Council Meetings and 28 working group meetings).

Parish Maintenance

- Lengthsman work has been reviewed and the workplan reduced to reflect the desire to cut the grass less to help the wildlife habitat. Weeds will be cleared from gutters once per year. Assumed inflationary increase applied.
- Footpath and Bridleways (P3): The Parish Council will continue to support improvements to footpaths and bridleways based on advice from the footpath officer. The budget includes funding for another three gates.
- Money has been included for general parish enhancements as a follow on from the very successful work completed already completed.

Parish Services

- N&V printing assumed to increase in line with inflation.
- Marden Links includes website maintenance / improvements and production and distribution of the Community Guide.

Projects & Working Groups

- Set up and provide storage facility and community support facility.
- The aim of the transport group will be to identify and implement appropriate short term solutions as well as identifying ways to utilise the NHF development S106.
- The Fundraising & Events group will continue to look for events that bring the community together while working to raise funds for the new community facilities.
- This budget ONLY includes the £13500 agreed to be taken annually to assist in the development of a project proposal and support loan repayments on a public Works Loan of up to £300k. A full project budget will be developed and managed as appropriate.
- The Neighbourhood Development Group will aim to update the 2016 plan to reflect the changes made to Herefordshire Councils Core Strategy The target is to have consulted with the parish at several key stages (Regulation 14 and 16) prior to an independent review followed by final referendum.
- Environmental & Sustainability Group will look to provide more direct support to parishioners with further on-line monthly communications as well as direct support events.

Other

- The level of contingency has been slightly reduced Given the current level of uncommitted reserves.

BUDGET & PRECEPT FOR 2022-2023 (THE DRAFT BUDGET EXCLUDES ALL PROJECT COSTS OTHER THAN CLERKS T&E AND LOAN REPAYMENT)

SUMMARY		Original 2022-23 Budget	2023-24 Draft Budget	% Change from 2022-23	Estimated actual spend 2022-23
Payments	Detail				
STAFF & CLLRS	Clerk's salary & expenses and councillor training	£14,420	£11,500	-20%	£14,789
ADMINISTRATION & MANAGEMENT	Insurance, subscriptions, room hire, website, stationery, postage, audit fee and elections	£3,365	£3,200	-5%	£3,317
MAINTENANCE & PROW	Lengthsman, PROW, volunteer & parish enhancement	£11,500	£12,500	+17%	£15,400
PARISH SERVICES	News & Views, parish communication, parish freighter	£2,500	£3,450	+38%	£2,500
GRANTS	Small grants, MVT & MRGT support, support for maintenance of Old Churchyard	£1,750	£1,450	0%	£1,350
PROJECTS & WORKING GROUPS	Environmental & Sustainability	£1,500	£1,000	0%	£500
	Rental Unit & Setup Costs		£7,000		£4,400
	Traffic Management		£300		£100
	Community Facilities Group and Project	£13,500	£13,500	0%	£6,000
	Fundraising & Events Group	£1,500	£2,000	+33%	£3,000
	Neighbourhood Development Plan	£500	£6,000	+1300%	£3,500
CONTINGENCY	Contingency	£6,575	£1,710	-41%	£9,587
OTHER	VAT				£2,000
	TOTAL PAYMENTS (Expenditure)	£57,110	£63,610	+8%	£66,443
Funded By					
	Precept	£51,500	£51,500	0%	£51,500
	Solar Farm	£2,910	£2,910	0%	£2,910
	News & Views advertising	£1,000	£1,200	+20%	£1,200
	Other – donations to CF, VAT reclaim, etc.	£1,700	£4,000	-12%	£6,933
	Neighbourhood Development Grant		£4,000		
	Drainage Grant				£3,900
	TOTAL FUNDS (Income)	£57,110	£63,610	+8%	£66,443

