

Finance and General Purposes Committee

This has been a busy year for the Town Council.

The most significant project this financial year has been the new children's play area. The Town Council submitted an application to South Dorset Local Action Group and was awarded funding in the sum of £73,666 towards the project. Whilst the money from the European Union was very welcome, there was a shortfall of approximately £24,000 that had to be found via the Town Council's budget.

Resources were also expended on the CB3 Community Bus Service operating very successfully on a Saturday between Bridport and Crewkerne, via Beaminster. The Town Council were very fortunate in securing a 16 seater bus courtesy of Dorset county Council together with a grant of £5,000 to assist with the first years running costs.

Discussion were held with West Dorset District Council (WDDC) regarding various services which we might inherit when that tier of Local Government disappeared at the end of March, 2019. In this time of uncertainty for the Town Council, as the second tier of Local Government from 1st April it will need to focus on the following issues:

We already know that the lease on the toilets in the town will come to an end in 2022 after which the Town Council will take responsibility, a grant in the sum of £70,000 has been given by WDDC towards the provision of new toilets.

Greater support for the CAB than before, particularly the outreach service.

The lease on the parking area in the Square is coming to an end and we must take the decision whether to renew it or to manage it ourselves.

Through our Community Fund we have been able to offer a total of £8,000 in financial support to the Youth Club, Yarn Barton Centre, Beaminster Festival and the outreach service of the Citizen's Advice Bureau (CAB). In addition we have also given smaller grants to other organizations for the benefit of Beaminster residents.

In addition other ongoing projects were also in need of funds:

Public Hall - £23,000 has been included to provide storage, a new fire exit for the Fleet Club, an extension of the Cowie Room and a staff toilet.

Skate park project - this has received planning permission. The Town Council received £60,000 from WDDC and is now looking for grants of a further £60,000 to complete the project.

Website - the new logo has been approved by the Town Council. We are setting aside £6,000 to rebuild and maintain a new website.

On first glance at the balances and earmarked reserves indicated in the table it would appear the Council were in a strong financial position. However it must be borne in mind that the sums held in EMR's are due to substantial grants awarded to the Town Council to fund specific projects. On commencement or completion of those projects monies will be transferred from the EMR to the revenue budget to cover expenditure.

The Town Council resolved to levy a 10% increase on the precept for the financial year 2019/20