

RFO'S REPORT - HUNTINGTON PARISH COUNCIL 2018-2019

The financial year 2018-2019 has seen Huntington Parish Council, like many other Local Authorities, having to carefully monitor spending and make every effort to keep well within the budget for the year. This has been achieved, as can be seen from the attached provisional end of year receipts and payments figures. However, it was still felt that a 3% increase in requested Precept for 2019/20 would be required in order to keep pace with spending. The Annual Return for submission to the External Auditors will be based on this, with adjustments to the figures to cover amounts overrunning from the year end.

For the year 2018/19, actual income received was more than the budgeted income by £17061. A larger double taxation request was made to include part of the maintenance of the now closed Churchyard of All Saints, together with additional grass cutting and an amount of £9528 was finally received on 9 April 2019 relating to the year 2018/19. The Parish Council had to make two insurance claims during the year – one for a piece of playground equipment that had been removed and the other for the theft of lead from the Community Centre roof. The insurance claim for fire damaged playground equipment in the previous year was also finally settled.

The actual expenditure during the year was less than the budgeted expenditure by an amount of £7865, mainly due to less being spent on the three Village Halls than had been budgeted. This has resulted in the Council holding more funds to carry forward than in the previous year, being an amount of £15,000, which is much more acceptable in providing a small cushion for unforeseen emergencies.

At the year end, the Parish Council employed five people – Clerk, RFO, Stephen Wadsworth the Street Cleaner/Gardener, John Buckland and John Cliffe the outside caretakers for Orchard Park and Chris Horsley as a seasonal Gardener. Chris is not taking on the Gardening for the coming year and this is to be spread between Stephen and two contracted Gardeners. John Buckland is also leaving his job in mid April – for whom a replacement is currently being advertised. The Clerk is the only employee on the Nest Pension Scheme, which increases again for both employer and employee in 2019/2020.

The insurance for the Parish is currently being reviewed and other competitive premiums are being considered. Regardless of who provides the cover, all Parish assets, liabilities, staff and Councillors will remain fully covered by the Policy.

The Citizens' Advice Bureau fortnightly outreach service held at Huntington Community Centre continues to be funded by the Parish Council, providing a much needed source of advice with queries covering such issues as debt, housing, benefits and family matters

The Parish Council funded another successful Summer Gala at Huntington Sports Club last August and plans are well underway for this year's Gala, with many local organisations involved as well as children's entertainment. Sponsors have been sought for this year and we are very grateful to Shepherds, Huntington Memorial Hall and City of York Council Ward Committee for their support.

New Earswick Parish Council are now contributing 20% of the costs of maintaining the Churchyard – such as grass cutting, tree care and so forth.

Both the Internal and External Auditors were completely satisfied with the Annual Return for 2017-2018. The Parish are very grateful to Mr James Mackman for his services as Internal Auditor for the 15th year running. He provides valuable advice and assistance whilst inspecting the Parish papers and accounts prior to submission to the external Auditor.

I would like to thank Lorraine Frankland as Parish Clerk, the Chair of the Council, Diana Geogheghan-Breen, the Vice Chair, Dave Jobling, the Chair of Finance and Policy, Ian Panter, and all other Councillors for all their help and support during the year.

Gill Chivers - Responsible Financial Officer - April 2019