

**STAPELEY & DISTRICT PARISH COUNCIL
DRAFT BUDGET PROPOSALS 2012/2013**

MEETING: 5 JANUARY 2012

1 INTRODUCTION

At its meeting held on 17 November 2011, the Parish Council gave consideration to its budget proposals for the year 2012-2013. At that time, it agreed that the local electorate should be given the opportunity to comment on the draft before the Parish Council made its final decision on 5 January 2012. Members of the public were encouraged to attend the meeting on 1 December and wide publicity was generated using local press, Nantwich blog, the website, notice-boards, leaflets in schoolbags for pupils of Stapeley Broad Lane School and Pear Tree School. Brine Leas School included a reference to it in its weekly newsletter. Only one member of the public was in attendance at the meeting.

2 ZERO-BASED BUDGETING APPROACH

The Parish Council is reminded that it should adopt a zero-based budgeting approach to its spending in 2012-2013. This approach to budgeting encourages Members to question more closely each item of expenditure. It starts from the premise that no costs or activities should be factored into the plans for the coming budget period simply because they were in the costs or activities for the current or previous period. **Every item of expenditure must be considered and justified, and there must be a reasonable prospect of each item coming to fruition during the financial year, to avoid criticism by the auditor.**

3 BUDGET PROPOSALS – 2012-2013

The budget proposals shown on the attached schedule amount to £62,910. This would require a precept of £16,000 which would amount to additional Council Tax of £11.78 per Band D equivalent.

In 2011-2012, a precept of £40,000 was requested costing £28.57 per Band D property.

Attention is drawn to the following items:

Line 18a	Purchase of street light for Cronkinson estate	£5,000	This was a suggestion made by a member of the public. There has been no evaluation of whether a street light is required on the estate and the Parish Council may wish to remove this from its proposals.
Line 22	Hearing Loops for community hall	£1,300	The Parish Council might wish to review these items given that there is currently no indication of an entry date to the community hall.
Line 23A	CCTV for community hall	£5,000	
Line 33	Land at Talbot Way	£3,000	The costs of maintenance of this land have been included under the heading of "grounds maintenance" during 2011-12 and at December, only £905 had been spent with a predicted further maximum of £300 to the end of the financial year.

Line 34	Grass cutting and general maintenance	£3,000	The Parish Council may wish to consider amalgamating Lines 33 and 34 with a total proposed expenditure of £3,000.
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4 BAND 'D' PROPERTIES

There are approximately 1,400 Band 'D' properties in the parish. The precept which results is divided by the number of Band 'D' properties to give an indication of additional Council Tax to be levied.

5 CALCULATION OF PRECEPT

The precept is calculated as follows -

	£	£
(a) Forward year budget proposals	62,910	
(b) LESS Balance available on 1 April 2012 [see paragraph 6 below]	(50,404)	12,506
(c) ADD reserves/working balance	4,000	16,506

Precept required = £16,500 (rounded down)

6 CALCULATION OF LIKELY BALANCE AT 1 APRIL 2012

	£	£
(a) Bank balance at 19 December 2011	59,479	
(b) LESS payments due before 31 st March 2012	(9,075)	50,404
<u>Expected Balance on 1 April 2012</u>		50,404

7 SECTION 137 CONSIDERATIONS

Under S.137 of the Local Government Act 1972, Councils are permitted to make grants which are "for the benefit of the community" and it is a matter for the Parish Council to decide what is of benefit. The formula is £6.50 (to be confirmed) x the number of electors in the parish. Any proposed spending under this heading should be identified within budget proposals. For Stapeley & District which has approximately 2,270 electors, this would equate to £14,755.

Where a Council has a statutory power which is restricted by a limitation or condition, S.137 cannot be used to circumvent that limitation or condition.

Provided that there is no alternative power, whether limited or conditional or not, and no statutory prohibition, the Council may incur expenditure under this section provided that it is satisfied that there is a direct benefit to the area, or part of the area, or to some or all of the inhabitants. However, the Council must ensure that the spend is not disproportionately large to the benefit derived from the spend; for example, spending the whole of the Council's allowance under S.137 which amounts to £10,000 for the benefit of two persons would be unlikely to confer commensurate benefit to the expenditure incurred. This spend can be challenged by the auditor or a local government elector (pursuant to S.16 Audit Commission Act 1998).

8 LOCAL SERVICE DELIVERY

It is understood that the timetable for devolution/transfer of services/assets from the Borough Council to town and parish councils has slipped and is not to be implemented until 2013 although the process has already commenced for some town and parish councils.