

## **Llangarron Parish Council Budget Financial Year April 2019 to March 2020**

Today there are many uncertainties in life and the United Kingdom faces many challenges. Local government is torn in all directions for funding to address pressing issues. This is true at both a county and parish level. For those unfamiliar with Parish funding it is worth pausing to understand how our parish has been funded in the past.

Historically we have received grants from Herefordshire Council for our Lengthsman scheme. This funding is to help with the maintenance of ditches and general maintenance around the parish in critical locations. (Major work is not covered by this but is funded by Herefordshire Council using Balfour Beatty, this includes work on roads and potholes) In addition, we also received a grant, once again from Herefordshire Council, for the general maintenance of Footpaths.

Our final source of funding is through a levy forming part of your Community Charge bill. This is called our "Precept". Some of you may be unaware that a small part of your rates bill finds its way back to the Parish Council (PC).

Examples of how PC funds are spent are, maintaining and the insurance of parish assets such as the Llangrove War Memorial, work maintaining footpaths, general maintenance on minor roads, communicating with our parish and reviewing all planning applications.

Every Councillor is an unpaid volunteer and we only have one paid employee our Parish Clerk. The professional role of the Clerk is a vital one as they not only attend and minute all meetings but also ensure that we as a Parish Council meet all our legal obligations, they also act as the Responsible Finance Officer and operate our website. There is considerable legislation that governs how a PC may act and its remits and procedures are laid down in law.

This coming year is most challenging for us, as all grant funding from Herefordshire Council has been withdrawn. Any funds the Parish Council wishes to spend have to be raised by the community. As the Precept is now our only source of income it is regrettable that we will need to seek a significant increase to meet the needs of the parish. The PC has spent much time debating the role and tasks we are expected to complete in the coming year and to replace our lost grant funding our precept must increase from

£14K in 2018/19 to £23K in 2019/20. This figure will allow us to maintain existing services and meet our statutory requirements.

The coming year also sees elections in May for both the County and Parish Councillors. The Parish has to bear some of these costs. Elections are very democratic but also very costly to a small parish.

You will see from the budget figures that there are a small number of items that make up the majority of our expenditure. These are the Lengthsman, Clerk's Salary, Election, Footpaths and Insurance. We have also included a sum for Councillor's Training in anticipation of new members in the May election. In today's world Parish Councillors are expected to have a reasonable knowledge of finance, planning and the conduct required when serving a public body.

All public bodies are asking for more funding to tackle wide ranging issues. Unfortunately, not everyone can succeed but we have very carefully compiled our budget to maintain our level of service and hopefully make a positive contribution to our parish. We should emphasise that although individual lines of the budget may vary the PC is committed to working within the overall figure.

We hope the parish community will support our plans and initiatives. It is only after careful consideration and debate that our budget for the coming year was decided. From the information above and the financial numbers it is hoped you may have a better understanding why the Precept must be increased and how our funding is allocated.

At every Parish Council meeting there is an open session for members of the community to bring parish matters of concern to the attention of the PC.

S Morehead

Chairman