

## **CHRISHALL VILLAGE HALL BUDGET PROPOSAL FOR 2019/2020**

All expenditure will be reviewed prior to delivery and must be in accord with Chrishall Parish Council Financial Regulations and Standing Orders.

**Recommended Precept: £31,426 (2.7%)** £30,900 (1%) (£30,600) no change

**Income:** The precept is the only official form of funding which the Parish Council can utilise. It must be recognised that the Parish Council has a number of beneficial assets which it must maintain, and this will impact on the level of precept applied through the Council Tax of residents.

The Robert Reed Hall is let to Chrishall Primary School on a 10 year lease from 2018 with a 5 year break, at £3,200 + APR accrued annually. The funds do not have to be used on the Robert Reed Hall.

Methodist Burials: two plots have been reserved. The charge for burials is the same as for the Anglican Church and is managed by the respective funeral directors. This income must be understood to be variable and cannot be relied upon when budgeting.

**Expenditure:** £42,149.22

### **Parish Council Assets:**

*The New Village Hall, The Robert Reed Hall, The Brand Pavilion, Jigneys Meadow.*

Funds must be available to ensure that emergency works can be completed in a timely manner.

Roof (Robert Reed Hall) Completed

Swings £6000 to be completed April 2019.

Buffy Bus: There is an opportunity to make a donation should the PC wish to do so.

Buildings: £10,000 recommended reserve to be retained to cover any emergency works required to the fabric of: Brand Pavilion; New Village Hall; Robert Reed Hall; Burial Ground; Car Park.

### Robert Reed Hall formerly the Village Hall

The management of the Old Village Hall was transferred to Chrishall Parish Council on the 1<sup>st</sup> November 2015. Chrishall Primary School is now the lessee of this hall on a 10 year lease with a five year break clause. The freehold ownership of the building has been confirmed as Chrishall Parish Council by Tees Law solicitors and has been registered with the Land Registry.

The charitable status of the Village Hall Committee relating to this building has been verified. Chrishall Parish Council is the freeholder of the building. The Charity Commission has agreed the variation of the governing document with the Village Hall Committee, and this is now applicable to the New Village Hall.

Chrishall Parish Council has insured the fabric of the building as part of the overall Parish Council insurance policy.

Flat roof: the flat roof had a substantial leak which commenced at Easter 2018. The Artexed plasterboard ceilings were removed (as they contained a small amount of asbestos within the Artex) under the authority of the insurance company, Hiscox. The roof was replaced by CLS Roofing Specialists which guarantee the roof for 20 years. The ceilings were replaced by Hadham Ceilings. Part of the exterior cladding was replaced as it was warped and would let water on the south and east sides. The Cost was £26,252 including the controlled removal of the Artexed plasterboard. The Parish Council received substantial funds from the insurance company. The £3,500 grant from UDC has been received.

***The PC must ensure that an annual inspection of the roof is completed to ensure the 20 year insurance backed warranty, which commenced in July 2018 remains valid.***

**It is recommended that an accrual fund of £1,000pa is commenced immediately to ensure that funds are available in 20 years' time to replace the roof.**

Chrishall Primary School pays £3,200pa + APR compound rental which will contribute towards the upkeep of the building going forward, including general repairs and maintenance.

### New Village Hall (Methodist)

Chrishall Parish Council used the Public Works Loan Board to purchase the building, which will now continue to be repaid over the 37 years from 2014. Chrishall PC owns the freehold of the building.

Chrishall Village Hall Committee will continue with the same arrangement as previously agreed with the Old Village Hall, whereby CVHC maintain the interior of the building, provide public liability for users of the building, and manage the building for the benefit of the parish. Chrishall Parish Council has insured the building and is responsible for the external upkeep of the building.

A formal agreement has been drawn up and signed between Chrishall PC and Chrishall VHC to ensure clarity regarding responsibilities for the building moving forward. Chrishall Parish Council remains responsible for the fabric of the building, boundary fencing and the car park. Chrishall Village Hall Committee will undertake all internal repairs and cover the cost associated with the day to day running of the premises including public liability insurance to a value of £5m.

The issue of a Premises Licence and Personal Licence Holders needs to be established with the VHC. It is recommended the Parish Council holds the Premises Licence and members of the VHC hold the Designated Premises Supervisor and Personal Alcohol Licences. It is further recommended that any TENS events are notified to the Parish Council at least 4 weeks before the event takes place and that the Parish Council makes its insurer aware.

**Down pipes: the down pipes don't terminate into the ground and water is splashing against the brickwork. This needs urgent attention.**

It is recommended that any works recommended to be undertaken by the Village Hall Committee to the fabric of the building, the boundary fencing or the car park will require the Village Hall Committee to present a case to the Parish Council before commissioning any work, and to also comply with the Parish Council's Financial Regulations and Standing Orders. Any anticipated expenditure must be presented to the Parish Council for inclusion in the Parish Council's budget for the following year. It must be understood by both parties that unless an issue is an emergency situation, funds must be correctly budgeted which may result in an increase in the precept. Only works considered to be necessary and legal will be approved by the Parish Council.

### Methodist Burial Ground:

Chrishall Parish Council has a 999 year lease on the burial ground commencing 2014, and is responsible for all ground's maintenance. Current cost is anticipated to be in the order of £700pa as indicated by the ground's maintenance invoice for 2018.

The Parish Council has agreed to abide by the Church of England charge for burials and internments. There is a £50 deposit ring fenced for a burial.

The Vicar has agreed that he is prepared to liaise with the funeral directors and conduct any Christian burials. Cllr Sheena Lashko will oversee the burial ground and its uses.

### Methodist Car Park:

This area is currently vulnerable to incursion by the travelling fraternity. The oil tank is accessible from the car park area. It is strongly recommended that a system is discussed with Village Hall Committee to secure this area, possibly using a height barrier. The VHC has proposed that the wall to the front of the New Village Hall be replaced. In addition, that the boundary to the North of the New Village Hall is recommended to be replaced (subject to proof of ownership). **A height barrier would cost approximately £4,000. It is recommended that the Parish Council liaise with the VHC to explain the financial restrictions the PC has and its requirement that the VHC present any ideas in advance of the VHC undertaking detailed investigation to prevent misunderstanding between the two parties.**

### The Brand Pavilion:

It was the former Chairman's initiative to turn the Pavilion into a 'Village Hub', for the benefit of the whole community. A number of user groups were identified: Chrishall Library, Chrishall Village Archives and Parish Clerk's office. Subsequently the newly formed Youth Club have become regular users along with the 'Drop in and Draw' and 'Knit and Crochet' groups.

The pavilion renovation has been completed under the direction of the former Chairman. However, there is no dedicated heating system, the rear doors don't fit, the cavity walls need to be filled and the loft insulation needs to be fully

installed and increased to meet current legislation. The loft will need to be cleared to lay the insulation. Further items for repair and consideration are:

Rainwater downpipes (brackets and terminations). Needs to be done. (sewage charge – no surface water into sewer. 'abatement').

Removal of all debris dumped around and against Brand Pavilion walls area.

Non- working shower unit

New fridge

Improvements to the lighting levels throughout the in Pavilion.

Installation of low-level shatter proof light fittings on the West facing external wall to illuminate a small area for the safety of Youth Club members.

Kitchen to be finished – there is plasterboard propping the oven up!

Sanitary facilities to be provided in the toilets

Available hot water in both toilets to meet health and safety remit.

Repair/replace the entrance gate into Jigneys Meadow.

Storage space to be considered under changing room benches.

Replace barrel lock to library storage room inside of PC office for security.

Signage to indicate site of Pavilion.

Key safe for wall.

Overhead door shelter to entrance of PC office.

Review of security of the building: there are a large number of users with access to the whole of the building including the PC office. This is unacceptable, as confidential information cannot be housed in the building. All documents are currently securely stored in the Clerk's home. Correct storage and also archive storage are required.

A landline telephone and broadband connection was installed by XLN Telecom in December 2017. There is extremely limited mobile reception in the village.

The pavilion running costs will increase, but until the building is in daily use it is not known how much this will be. An increase in the budget for electricity costs has been made. Cleaning has been included in this budget at £500 per annum. There is an agreement with the Cricket Club that they will clean the building after use, but this agreement appears to have slipped. Cllr Slade has indicated that she would be willing to clean the building, but no discussion has as yet taken place. Additional costs will include fire inspection, PAT testing, consumables (toilet rolls, washing up liquid, tea, coffee, toilet cleaner, polish, towels, etc) which need to be considered.

There are a number of user groups using the pavilion which includes access into the storage room off the Parish Office. It has been brought to the Clerk's attention that some items have been moved within the building, but that some items have been removed completely from the pavilion. This may be a result of mis-communication over ownership. However, it means the pavilion is not secure for Parish Council business. It is therefore suggested that the secure storage facility at Flint Cross is used for archive documents which Essex County Council will not accept into the County Archive at Chelmsford. This will cost approximately £2.55 per week.

It is further recommended that the Parish Council ensure that all user groups and the respective volunteers are in regular contact to ensure issues surrounding the use of the building are brought to the attention of the Parish Council. This will include repairs and maintenance issues, and use/provision of consumable items such as toilet rolls. The security of items must be established, including allocation and distribution of keys and who has access to which areas of the building. The front door locks have been replaced under warranty. A Parish Council sub-committee needs to be established to oversee any maintenance/repairs that may be required.

Cricket Club: the cricket club will be required to erect safety netting around the pavilion for every match and practice session to prevent further breakages to windows, doors and roof to the western elevation.

It should be noted that the regular users include the library on a daily basis, the history archive on a daily basis, Drop in and Draw, Knitting & Crochet. The History Archive provided an excellent display for 11.11.18, and also led the

11.11.18 tributes to the fallen at the War Memorial. The use of the pavilion as a community hub is becoming more established, and it is hoped that other people will start groups to increase inclusivity. There is an initiative to get individuals working together for the benefit of the community -Men in Sheds provides a space for usually but not exclusively men to come together to either make things for sale to fund raise, or to work together in the community. It might be that another 'shed' could be built behind the pavilion to house such a group if the Parish Council has an appetite for such a project.

### Jigneys Meadow

The Parish Council is committed to provide and maintain the wildlife areas. £2,000 had been allocated for 2018/19. This is a requirement agreed by the Parish Council to increase habitat as part of the development at Langford Drive. The Parish Council will continue to work with the community and primary school to achieve this. Cllr David Thomas will assist the school. MKA Ecologists, and Essex Wildlife Trust have provided advice on the management of the meadow for wildlife. The Parish Council has installed swift boxes on the pavilion, and there is an intension to supply a number of bird and bat boxes for installation. The grassed area between the play area and the school has been increased for compliance with the English Nature Gt Crested Newt habitat requirements. Additional 'bug hotels' and woodpiles will be sited around the edge of the meadow, with areas which are to be left with long grass.

Bat box	£20 each (recommended 3 per tree)
Bird box	£15.00
Barn Owl box	£149.99

It was agreed that plug plants will be installed in the wildlife area. An initial cost has indicated this will be approximately £300 and should be completed within 2018/19.

No funds have, as yet, been allocated in the financial year 2019/20 as it is not known how much of the £2,000 will be used in 2018/19.

Tree inspections: it is a requirement of the Parish Council insurance that a professional assessment of the health of all trees in Parish Council ownership is

carried at least bi-annually, and preferably annually. £1,000 has been allocated to do this work, but no contractors have been approached for quotes as yet. Failure to do this work could result in the Parish Council being held liable for any tree failure resulting in injury or worse. It is believed that trees on Jigneys Meadow, Mill Causeway and Crawley End are in the ownership of the Parish Council.

Youth Club: Cllr Slade has developed a brilliant Youth Club which runs to promote good relationships between all young people. Based in the pavilion, it utilises the facilities in the vicinity including the play area and meadow. A grant has been obtained from UDC for £500 in the year 2018/19 for the purchase of football goals with appropriate safety padding. It is recommended this purchase goes ahead in the financial year 2018/19 to ensure the grant is received. The Youth Club requires affiliation with the Essex Boys and Girls Clubs to obtain the necessary insurance cover. This group also provides excursions and activities over and above those offered in the parish. To ensure this excellent service continues, it is important that the Youth Club is able to offer a variety of experiences. It is therefore suggested that a £500 fund is established to enable at least one excursion to be organised for the memberships per annum. Youth Club cannot be held in the winter months in the pavilion as it is too cold to be compliant with Health & Safety legislation.

Play area:

The junior swings have reached the end of life and need urgent replacement. An accrued fund of £6,000 will be available to install new swings in the spring.

To ensure compliance with current insurance requirements and health and safety legislation, Cllr Lashko has stated that she will conduct weekly inspections.

It is recommended that a minimum £1,000 accrual fund be commenced to ensure funds are available to replace pieces of equipment as they fail. The Ship has been noted as requiring replacement for some years. The PC contractor Broadmead Leisure is able to carry out a lot of repair work, but there will come a point where the Ship will need to be replaced. Current replacement with similar would be in the order of £15,000 plus installation. The play area is heavily used by the school and local children. It is an important facility for



parishioners and visitors alike and must be maintained in good order. Councillors will advise the level of accrual to be included in this budget.

#### Village Furniture:

The notice boards need urgent maintenance (rubbing down and wood preservative), as are the benches. A quote of £575 has been received to repair the main noticeboard on Palmers Lane. Failure to carry out this work will mean the main noticeboard is likely to fail in the next couple of years. The Memorial bench at Chambers Pond requires sanding and an appropriate timber treatment applied. Other benches are in need of renovation.

**WWI Commemorative Bench:** Cllr Slade has recommended a bench be purchased and sited near the War Memorial. The anticipated cost would be approximately £1,000 installed.

Bus Shelter: The Bus Shelter has been cleared of ivy and the accumulated leaves removed by former Cllr Parish. The paintwork requires rubbing down and two coats of Barn Paint applied.

Clerk's Salary: it has come to light that the clerk has not received the annual % salary increases due from 2017/18. It is therefore suggested that the clerk contact EALC for the correct % increase figure, to allow the wages company to calculate the backpay as officially indicated by EALC. Future salary increases need to be applied each year.

Training: It is recommended that Chrishall Parish Council utilises the service for a 2-hour whole Council training session provided by EALC at a cost of £400 following the election which will take place on the 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2019. It is further recommended that all new Councillors attend the New Councillor Training scheme which is an in-depth training module to ensure all Councillors are aware of their role and responsibilities in relation to the public, fellow Councillors and staff members.

Election: Chrishall Parish Council must allocate £1,000 in the budget to cover the cost of a contested election.

#### S137:

Consultants: Chrishall Parish Council resolved at the Parish Council meeting held on 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2015 that it would use specialist consultants as necessary going forward. This was agreed initially in response to the Windmill Farm planning application and also due to the high number of planning applications being submitted in Mill Causeway and Abrams Lane. Whilst the use of specialist consultants may be employed to respond to difficult planning applications, the appointment of consultants will not be restricted to planning issues. There is provision in Standing Orders for the Clerk to seek specialist advice to enable the Parish Council to formulate, for example, a specification for building work to be undertaken. No specific fund has previously been identified, and the initial undertaking was on an 'ad hoc' basis of need. It is suggested that a £1,000 sum be included in the budget for 2019.20.

### **PRECEPT FOR 2019/ 2020**

Chrishall Parish Council claimed £30,600 for 2018/19.

Whilst Councillors have suggested no increase in the precept is required, the level of asset maintenance is high. The previous Chairman, Derek Ailes, was insistent that the APR should be applied to the precept as a minimum increase. EALC has also stated that failure to increase the precept by APR is an effective cut to the precept. Failure to increase the precept may result in the Parish Council finding itself in the same predicament it was some 10 years ago when a previous Chairman cut the precept in half. The precept had to be increased from £16,275 to £21,000 in 2014/15. An accountant has stated that it is imperative that a small increase is applied to prevent large increases when reserves are depleted. The Parish Council should consider its duty to future Councils when managing the public purse and maintaining its assets.

Herewith is an extract of the September 2018 minutes where the Chairman made the following comment in response to a comment received within the meeting from the parishioner present that the precept should be reduce: ***He further commented that the Parish Council now has a number of assets and it was important that sufficient funds are available to maintain them. Reducing the precept was not recommended but ring-fenced funds were needed to ensure assets were protected.***

In the usual course of events, it would have been recommended that a modest £300 increase be applied providing £30,900 for 2019/20 which is a 1% increase in the precept. The cost of living index is currently 2.7%. Application of this figure would provide an increase in the precept of £826. Councillors will need to justify a refusal to increase the precept given the recommendations of a previous Chairman and EALC.

Chrishall Parish Council now has three buildings, the Methodist burial ground and car park, the play area, Jigneys Meadow, War Memorial, benches, notice boards and bins.

Uttlesford District Council will recharge the election cost which will take place on 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2019. Should more candidates stand than there are seats, the election would be contested and may cost in excess of the £1,000 budgeted. If there are the same number of candidates or fewer, those standing will be elected unopposed and the administrative cost of the election will be recharged by UDC. This would be approximately £250 to cover the costs of posters, voting cards and the election.

Should anything occur which has not been accounted for in the budget, such as the need to replace a notice board, erect fencing, or vandalism to the assets, the Parish Council must be in a strong financial position to deal with all eventualities. Keeping the precept at the same amount has proved to be counter-productive in the past, particularly if Central Government caps the precept in the future. Whilst the precept was fixed for some three years during the recession, the financial reserve was seriously reduced as prices continued to rise.

The EALC recommended minimum reserve is £20-£25,000. Chrishall Parish Council is projected to hold £25,303 which is just above the minimum recommended reserve. EALC recommends the precept is increased in line with inflation as failure to do so effectively means a reduction in the precept. As has been seen when the Robert Reed Hall roof failed, the reserve needs to be of sufficient size to ensure the buildings are protected. It is therefore recommended that a separate £10,000 savings account is opened as a priority to ensure sufficient funds are always available for emergencies relating to buildings. It is also recommended that £1,000 annual accrual is saved for the

replacement of the Robert Reed Hall roof in 2038, and also £1,000 accrual to replace play equipment as it fails.

The recommendation is for a 2.7% increase in the precept for the Financial Year 2019/20.

Projected account for 2019/20

Brought forward:	£43,239.89
Plus income	£36,213 .00 ( <b>£31,426 precept</b> )
Less expenditure	£43,149.22
Less Emergency Building Fund	£10,000.00
Less play and RRH accrual	£2,000.00
TOTAL	<b><u>£24,303.67</u></b>
PROPOSED PRECEPT:	£30,600.00 £30,900 (1%) <b>£31,426 (2.7%)</b>

**ACCRUALS:**

**Robert Reed Hall Replacement Roof Fund: £1,000pa commencing 2019 to 2038.**

**Play area: £1,000pa commencing 2019.**