

Notes to accompany 2025-26 draft Amenities Budget

Introduction

It is vital that the Town Council continues to invest in the upkeep and improvement of its assets. Outlined below are some recommendations for improvements to enhance the facilities offered by the Town Council. These do inevitably come at a cost, and this is reflected in the increase in the recreation budget for 2025-26

Item	2025-2026 Budget notes
EXPENDITURE	Amenities and Services and budget
Public Lighting	<p>Loan Slight reduction in loan charges</p> <p>Energy</p> <p>Maintenance – remains the same</p> <p>Column replacement maintain budget at £35,000 to enable 15 concrete columns per year to be replaced as per minute point 553/23 28.9.23</p>
Committee Decision	That the Public Lighting Budget is reduced by £100 to £57,700.
Burial Ground	<p>Minimal increases to cover rates increase, bin emptying costs and general maintenance .</p> <p>£2000 allocation for gravedigging although this is offset by £2000 in income from gravedigging.</p> <p>£1000 has been allocated for any miscellaneous works relating to the cremated remains section.</p> <p>£2000 is retained in the budget for earmarking as it is important to build up an allocation in earmarked reserves for the costs of any future extensions to the cemetery or the cost of creating a new cemetery subject to suitable land being identified.</p> <p>Friends of Whitchurch Road Cemetery have not yet submitted request but for indicative purposes this has been set at £2000</p> <p>Hedge Removal</p> <p>An additional allocation has been made of £13,000 to remove the leylandii cemetery hedge that runs along the oldest part of the cemetery and replace it with fencing. This leylandii hedge is now enormous in both width and height (15ft high) and showing patches of disease. Leyandii hedges provide limited benefit as a wildlife habitat and it currently costs £500 per year to trim.</p> <p>Removing the hedge would improve the light and security in the cemetery and adjacent allotments. Mr Jenkins has recently moved his business from Love Lane and the land directly behind the cemetery hedge is currently vacant. Therefore, subject to permission being granted by the landowner, there is an opportunity to access the land from the Jenkins side to remove the hedge with minimal disturbance to the graves. A quote has been sought for the hedge removal which is £1750 to remove and dispose of the entire hedge and grind out the stumps. An estimate is awaited for the installation of fencing so the allocation of £15,000 may be excessive. Fencing works would require 25m of new metal fencing alongside the access road to the car park to continue the</p>

<p>Committee Decision</p>	<p>existing fencing. At the back of the cemetery on the boundary with Jenkin's yard a metal fence would not be necessary. A combination of wooden boundary fence and planting of trees or hedging would be preferred in this location. Ideally the work should take place in one go however it is appreciated that this would mean a significant outlay so it could be split over 2 years.</p> <p>Whether to increase the Burial Ground Budget to £25,550. As the fencing and hedge removal is a new project it is anticipated that the cost of this could be allocated from The Neighbourhood Fund as the installation of the fencing and hedge are new items to improve the infrastructure of Love Lane Cemetery and Allotments</p>
<p>Allotments</p> <p>Committee Decision</p>	<p>Slight increase to reflect additional repairs.</p> <p>Whether to increase the Allotments Budget by £300 to £1500.</p>
<p>Recreation WSSA</p> <p>Play Equipment</p> <p>Repairs and Maintenance</p> <p>Tree Works</p> <p>Inspections</p> <p>Bin emptying</p> <p>Skate Area</p> <p>Climate change Long Grass Project</p> <p>Recreation Ground Toilet Block</p> <p>Committee Decision</p>	<p>WSSA Trustees request that this contribution is maintained at £21,000 for 2025-26 with £7000 of this amount being earmarked for future machinery purchases</p> <p>Reduce to £8000. Whilst no plans have been made to replace any equipment in 2025-26, Staff recommend that all the equipment on the play areas except the equipment on Wem Recreation Ground is painted to enhance it and prolong its life.</p> <p>Maintain at Total Budget £5000.</p> <p>Maintain at £2000 – biannual tree inspection took place in 2024</p> <p>Increase to £800.</p> <p>Maintain at £1000</p> <p>Maintain at £2000.</p> <p>£500 allocation to undertake project to leave grass long in certain areas this will cover cost of hire of special mower if needed and removal of long grass.</p> <p>Move to public toilets cost centre</p> <p>Whether to set the recreation budget at £40,300</p>
<p>Toilets</p>	<p>This cost centre has been changed to incorporate the costs of the toilet on the recreation ground. It is difficult to predict this budget as the toilet cleaning contract is currently out to tender which will be a 3 year toilet contract to start 1.5.25. The cleaning budget has been increased however but this</p>

Committee Decision	To incorporate the recreation ground toilet and car park toilets into one cost centre and to provisionally agree to increase the Public Toilets budget to £22,800 subject to the outcome of the tender.
Bus Shelters	4 bus shelters, cleaned monthly with annual deep clean.
Committee Decision	To increase Bus Shelters budget by £100 to £1800.
Misc Floral Planters	Maintain
Committee Decision	To increase the floral planters budget by £500 to £6000.
CCTV	Increase to £6000 to permit rationalisation of the system
Committee Decision	To increase the CCTV budget by £1000 to £6000.
Committee Recommendation	A provisional Recreation Budget of £161,650 is set

Amenities and Services Income – as it is so difficult to predict income levels the rates have been increased slightly **from** 2024-25 budget levels to reflect the fact that allotment rents and cemetery fees are due for a biannual review at the 2025-26 budget meeting.

Administration Budget

No significant changes or additions to the Administration Budget. The codes that have been increased as follows.

Code	Notes
Postage & Telephone	Increased costs
Memberships/Subscriptions	NALC / SALC subscription has increased
Elections	The cost of an election in both wards is approximately £11,500. If both wards are contested in 2025 the EMR (£10,024) may not cover the cost of a by-election
Finance Package	Details of the 2025-26 prices have not been released so this is an estimate.
Events	Code to be moved from Admin to Grants/Town Promotion

Proposed New Administration Budgets

Gov.uk	For councillor email addresses etc.
Digitalisation	Funding to create a digital archive of council records

All other codes have been increased by 2.5% to allow for inflation.

Administration Income

Income from bank interest has been maintained at the current level due to the fluctuating nature of interest rates currently.

Committee Decision:

A general 2.5% increase for inflation and additional increases as identified above.