**ALFRISTON PARISH COUNCIL**

Date: 7th October 2024

Report Subject: Budget & Precept 2025/26

By: Suzanna Dry, Clerk & RFO

The purpose of this report is to present a draft budget for the Financial Year 2025-26 for consideration at the APC Finance Meeting on Monday 14th October 2024. The draft budget document shows last year’s budget, this year’s budget, predicted year end and proposed budget for 2025/26.

Background

As the Responsible Finance Officer, I have looked at each budget line taking into consideration expenditure for the previous financial year, the actual figures as at the end of Qtr 2 (Sept. 2024) and projected figures for the year end (March 2025). Added to this I have calculated in an expected rate of inflation on council bills where appropriate of 3% (as per the latest figures from the office of national statistics – annual average).

The proposed budget of **£59,425.00**, with a Precept of **£58,175.00** represents the minimum amount required for APC to function. If Councillors wish to increase ringfenced reserves in order to pay for future projects, this will mean an increase in the proposed precept.

Despite the unavoidable overspend in 2024/25 due mainly to a need for an election, water leak, recruiting a new Clerk and UK inflation rates, the budget figure for 2025/26 is only a 3% increase. As a comparison some local town\parish councils were forced to put their precept up between 10-40% in 2024/25.

Analysis

Effect on Band D Council Taxpayer – This is calculated by dividing the Precept by the Council Tax Base (CTB) Wealden District Council are yet to confirm the CTB for 2025/26. As an estimate, if we work with the CTB used for the Financial Year 2024/25 which was 441.1, this would give a Council Tax Band D annual charge for APC of **£131.88** for the year (£58,175 ÷ 441.1). The Proposed Budget results in a **£3.84**  increase on last year (3%) which was £128.04.

Increased Amount in Budget Lines:

Earmarked Reserves - £5,000 to be put back into general reserves, as per the Clerk’s and Internal Auditor’s recommendations. Replenish Playground, NDP, Tye Rd Surface & Election Costs with £500 each = £7,000.

Staff Costs - The budget figure includes the following :

National Pay Agreement 2024/25 -estimated figure, as this is still to be decided & will be backdated to Apr 24.

National Pay Agreement 2025/26 - estimated figure, for the same agreement in April 2025/26.

These figures are agreed by Local Government and set for all council workers. Est. figure = last year’s actual.

Annual Performance Review – decided on by APC at Staff Appraisal, using NALC pay scales.

Increase of Clerk’s hours from 22.5hrs to 25hrs pr wk, as previously agreed to review. Using NALC pay scales.

Recommendation

That APC puts forward the motion to agree the draft budget of **£59,425** for the Financial Year 2025/26, with a Precept of **£58,175.**