

Turville Parish Council
Recommendations of parish councillors on budget and precept for 2015/16 and use of accumulated surplus

The attached schedule summarises the budget and expected income and expenditure for 2014/15 and is based on the information in the October agenda/minutes. It also includes a proposed budget for 2015/16 - the only new items from October are the costs of the parish council election in May 2015 and the income from council tax support grant for 2015/16. The schedules do not currently include expenses for any of the three items identified below as possible uses of the accumulated surplus.

At a working meeting on 9 December, parish councillors agreed the following recommendations for consideration by the parish council on 8 January.

1. The precept for 2015/16 should be set at £6,500.
2. The precept for 2015/16 should not be reduced below the current level of £6,500 in view of the possibility of government capping of parish council precepts and the consequent need for a referendum if a future parish council were to decide to increase the precept by 2% or more.
3. Councillors did not support a suggestion that the parish council should reimburse the surplus to residents by direct payments to them, i.e. without the reducing the precept.
4. The parish council should use its expected accumulated surplus as at 31 March 2015 (approximately £9,000) and any expected surplus for 2015/16 to contribute towards the cost of the following projects which would be beneficial to the parish:
 - i. Repairs to damaged road surfaces, in particular repairs to pot holes other than category 1 pot holes repaired by BCC within 24 hours – work to be carried out by BCC (first priority);
 - ii. Removal of invasive plants (Japanese knotweed and Himalayan balsam) on Northend and Turville Heath commons – work to be carried out in conjunction with landowners, local residents and Chiltern Conservation Board commons project (second priority); and
 - iii. Improvement of footpaths and bridleways by, for example, replacement of stiles by gates and installation of benches – work to be carried out in conjunction with the Chiltern Society, landowners and local residents (third priority).

It was agreed to recommend that no commitments should be made on items 2 and 3 until BCC has responded to the parish council's offer to fund some road repairs. Councillors noted that the first year's operation of the Hambleden valley community bus service would be fully funded by BCC (through the LAF) and that no other funding would be required until January 2016 at the earliest.

5. Two other suggestions were made which may require further investigation:
 - i. One councillor expressed concern about litter at road edges and suggested the installation of litter bins - it was unclear who would be responsible for emptying them and whether the bins would be an effective deterrent.
 - ii. Another councillor suggested the creation of playgrounds/play areas for children within the parish. No suggestions were made about their location but it was

noted that the church is considering such a possibility on the land around the church (which may require planning permission). Councillors were unsure whether the parish council could contribute to a church project.

6. Parish councillors did not discuss the possibility of the receipt of community infrastructure levy (CIL) money. The council will receive a share of CIL money in 2015/16 if the planned works on Dolesden Farmhouse, Woodpeckers and Juniper Cottage are started by 30 September 2015.