



MIDDLEWICH TOWN COUNCIL

Middlewich Town Council Budget Statement for 2017-18

Budget
477,129
Income
53,076
Use of reserves
10,000
Precept requested
414,053
Band D equivalent properties
4,761.61

Council Tax per Band D

2016-17 £85.11
2017-18 £86.95
Increase of £1.84 per annum

Council Tax adjustment

2016-17 Adjustment received from CEC
9,334
2017-18 Adjustment received from CEC
NIL
2017-18 Increase in Budget
6,732
Net Reduction
2,602

Issues to add uncertainty to the Budget setting

7,477.91 Estimated insurance reclaim [Income]
5,165.00 Workplace pension entitlement (if taken up) [Expenditure]

Statement

Middlewich Town Council will NOT spend almost £7,000 more than was budgeted for. The Budget has been developed, refined and approved as part of a lengthy and thorough process which commenced in early September.

Salaries and Wages

The Town Council has signed up to be a Living Wage Foundation Employer, paying the recommended rate of £8.45 per hour. That means that the wages for hourly paid staff working for the Town Council and Community Trust will amount to £9,658 for the year. All Staff, as a legal requirement, will be entitled to contribute to a work place pension. As the Town Council, as the Employer, is obliged to contribute 20.8% of the gross wages, this could add an additional £17,779 to the wages budget. Both these increases have been absorbed into this Budget in total: £27,437.

Office and Administration

These are the fundamental and often legal requirements for the Town Council to function, including audit, insurances, printing, IT, utility bills, phones etc. These core costs are kept to a minimum as far as is practicable, but the Council has no control over certain costs such as audit fees and energy.

Election Contingency

After much debate it was decided to include an amount of £11,000 in case there is a by-election during the financial year. This cost is an actual. If Members were in a position to co-opt a new member in the event of a vacancy, this expenditure would not be required.

Community Support

We will continue to support Education in Middlewich, floral displays, PCSO and CCTV. This heading is increased due to a reallocation of existing budgets; standing grants to established community groups is now included in this section at £2,000.

Growth areas

This is reduced by £3,700 by reducing office decoration and IT expenditure, no planned further spending on Branding, and less spend on Neighborhood Plan (replaced by Government Grant bid)

Events

Events are NOT heavily impacted. The new way of promoting and marketing the FAB Festival has allowed the Council to reduce its funding contribution to this major event by £2,500. Funding is not cut. Rather, revenues have been grown and the event will continue to develop and prosper until it breaks even or even makes money for the Town Council, much as it does for local Business.

Additional sponsorship has been secured to support the Christmas Fayre, to reduce costs. There has been a reduction in spending on events infrastructure, equipment and signage.

Community Trust

The handover period for the running and management of the Victoria (Civic) Hall continues into a second year, with the Town Council continuing to support the staffing costs and providing a contingency fund for the Trust to guard against unforeseen costs, emergencies and repairs. As the revenues from the Hall begin to grow, so the dependence upon the Council's support will decrease. However, this is a lengthy and complicated process.

Middlewich Vision

The working budget for the Vision has been revised downwards, to reflect that rent and service charge costs for the office accommodation in the Victoria Building have been netted down to zero, as the Town Council continues to be the landlord. Funding will support the Vision post salary, environmental projects, the Scribe Literary Festival. In addition, the Community Life and Economy Action Groups will be supported, and a new Action Plan; 2020 Vision will be consulted upon and completed.

Christmas Lights

Negotiations on a new contract for the Christmas Lights will commence shortly, and some economies have been identified. The tree, which is the highlight of the Christmas offer, costs over £1100, but there will soon be some exciting sponsorship news to announce in this regard.

Heritage

The new Heritage Trust is now established and successfully creating a new website, Heritage Open Days, developing the Brine Pump restoration project, an active archive and working to support the Saltscape initiative. In addition, the Romans are returning in September, for a fabulous and exciting celebration of our Roman heritage.

Conclusion

The Middlewich Town Council budget for 2017-18 represents good value for money for Middlewich residents, businesses, stakeholders and Middlewich Town Council itself.

The Council has listened to local concerns and has addressed many local priorities and needs in the setting of this budget.

The process has been extensive, detailed, professional and responsible in order to set a budget that allows Middlewich Town Council to be fit for purpose and function, in order to carry out the duties, provide the events and activities and to meet the responsibilities that it has chosen to undertake.

Middlewich Town Council takes its role very seriously and is acutely aware of its role as the Custodian and heart of the wonderful Community of Middlewich. At an average cost of £86.95 for the year, the Town Council invites all members of our community to come to FAB, the Roman Festival, Classic Car & Bike Show, the Oscars, the Markets, Christmas Fayre and all the Civic events, and to take part in the Vision Action Plan consultation and development of the Neighbourhood Plan. The Council will retain the Victoria Building, and support the Victoria Hall. It will keep the Southway toilets open and support the Allotments. It will seek major external funding to support Heritage projects and secure investments in our Parks and Play areas.

Jonathan Williams BA (Hons)
Town Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer