

## HASSOCKS PARISH COUNCIL

To: All Members of the Policy, Resources and Communications Committee (Kate Bailey, Frances Gaudencio, Peter Gibbons, Sue Hatton, Ian Weir, Georgia Cheshire, David Hammond and Frank Rylance ) with copies to all other Councillors for information.

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A meeting of the POLICY, RESOURCES and COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE will be held on Tuesday 19 November 2019 at 7.30pm in the Parish Centre, Adastra Park, Hassocks.

Ian Cumberworth  
Parish Clerk  
13 November 2019

### AGENDA

#### 1. APOLOGIES

#### 2. DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS

To deal with any disclosure by Members of any disclosable pecuniary interests and interests other than pecuniary interests, as defined under Hassocks Parish Council's Code of Conduct and the Localism Act 2011, in relation to matters on the agenda.

#### 3. MINUTES

3.1 To accept Minutes of the Meeting held 15<sup>th</sup> October 2019 (previously Circulated).

#### 4. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

#### 5. CLERK'S REPORTS

##### 5.1 Draft Budget 2020/21

The attached paper set out as (Appendix 1) details of the draft budget proposal for 2020/21. Members are requested to consider the contents of the report and determine whether the draft budget proposal should be forwarded to Council for consideration and make any recommendations regarding the level of proposed precept for 2020/21.

5.2 **Communications** – The Communication Policy was reviewed by Policy Resources & Communications Committee (October 2019) (PRC19/43.2) Members are requested to note the amended policy set out in Appendix 2 which reflects the revisions made at the last meeting.

5.3 **Information Technology – Email system** - Members current email system is operated via IONS, it is proposed to move member's accounts over to 'Exchange online' which will provide an improved secure corporate security email system. Members email accounts will also then change from .net to .gov.uk accounts.

In determining the above solution discussions have been held with the Councils IT support providers who have recommended the above proposal. The key benefits are improved security, good functionality and ease of use. It is proposed that the Council consider moving over to an annual licence plan. Therefore based on Council membership this would equate to £524 pa. In addition in the first year there would be a labour charge to set up each user with the online account. It is also understood that the accounts can be configured to automatically notify members of emails received.

Members are requested to consider this proposal and approve the migration over to Exchange online to enhance security and improve functionality of the Councils corporate email system operated by Members. Based on projected expenditure within our IT support budget for this year there are sufficient funds to finance the necessary licences and the additional labour costs to set up this arrangement.

**5.4 Information Technology – Website** All public sector websites will be required to meet the accessibility standards set out in the Public Sector Bodies (website and Mobile Applications) (No2) Accessibility Regulations 2018 by 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2020. Currently the Councils website does not fully meet these requirements therefore our current provider was contacted to seek assurance that our site was firstly able to be made compliant and secondly to establish the cost if any to achieve this.

Our provider has confirmed that our website is capable of meeting the accessibility standards with further development work in the sum of £640 (net).

At the same time it was confirmed that our website is currently not mobile friendly therefore a proposal was sought to resolve this issue at the same time as the website development work. Based on the work being commissioned at the same time a further cost of £320 (net) would be incurred to enable our website to become mobile friendly.

In light of the requirement to comply with the Accessibility Regulations and the advantages of the Councils website being mobile compatible members are requested to approve the sum of £960 net to deliver this solution. As the Councils communications are underpinned by the Councils website it is proposed to fund these works from the Communications budget which has sufficient funds to meet these costs. Member's views are sought.

6. **Urgent Matters** at the discretion of the Chairman for noting and/or inclusion on a future agenda.
7. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING** 17 December 2019

**EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS** In view of the confidential nature of the business about to be transacted Councillors will be referred to the Confidential agenda. If any members of the public or press are present they will be requested to withdraw from the meeting.

## 8. STAFFING MATTERS

- 8.1 Resources
- 8.2 Review of opening hours
- 8.3 Christmas opening hours

## FILMING, RECORDING OF COUNCIL MEETINGS AND USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

During this meeting members of the public may film or record the Committee and officers from the public area only providing it does not disrupt the meeting. The Confidential section of the meeting may not be filmed or recorded. If a member of the public objects to being recorded, the person(s) filming must stop doing so until that member of the public has finished speaking. The use of social media is permitted but members of the public are requested to switch their mobile devices to silent for the duration of the meeting.

### Please Note

All members of the public are welcome to attend meetings of the Parish Council and its Committees.  
**Item 4** – a period of 15 minutes will be set aside for the public statements and questions relating to the published non-confidential business of the Meeting.

It may be necessary to consider particular items in confidential session and where this arises, these items will be considered at the end of the agenda.



# Hassocks Parish Council

## Draft Budget Proposal 2020/21

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## 1. Introduction

The following paper sets out the projected budget out turn for 2019/20 and a draft budget for consideration for 2020/21.

The aim of this document is to create a budget that takes into account both revenue and capital expenditure. As part of the budget setting process a number of factors are required to be considered which include:

- Allowing for general (e.g. inflationary) changes to expenditure where necessary.
- Allowing for future staffing costs.
- Allowing for changes to the Councils operational priorities identified as part of the Business Planning process.
- Taking into consideration the potential possibility that Parish Council precepts may be capped in future years.
- Setting aside an amount to be transferred to reserves to contribute to the cost of longer term projects to support the Councils priorities.
- Being prudent in the Councils assessment of future income streams.
- The level of unallocated reserves should be set at a prudent level to allow for unforeseen but possibly costly expenditure.

The Council has moved over to adopting a 'balanced budget' approach in 2018/19 rather than relying on reserves to fund any shortfall in operating costs which was not sustainable. At the same time Council allocated funds to support the longer term priorities of the Council. This has enabled the Council to establish itself on a sound financial footing and protect its existing reserves to be utilised to fund the Councils priorities. Based on the current budget projections if the Council chose not to increase its precept for 2020/21 the budget would run at a projected **surplus** of **£6,970** Members may therefore wish to consider a modest inflationary increase in precept alongside potential increase to allow further sums to be allocated to Earmarked Reserves to support the Council priorities. Based on the projected outturn for 2019/20 some savings may be realised therefore Members may wish to take the opportunity to transfer some of these to savings to Earmarked Reserves to support the longer term priorities of the Council prior to the Financial year end.

**Appendix A** in this report it sets out the impact on the Council Tax Bands if the Council were to choose to retain the current precept level would deliver a small surplus budget and equate to a 0.73% decrease in a band D equivalent property due to the increase in number of properties within the parish. This has assumed that no additional funds would be raised to support ongoing priority projects.

### **Timescale for setting the budget**

Legally Hassocks Parish Council must set its precept no later than 1<sup>st</sup> March for the financial year that commences 1<sup>st</sup> April 2020. In practice the Council normally determines the precept requirement in December. We have not yet received confirmation of our tax base figures from Mid Sussex District Council which are normally provided in December. Therefore for the purposes of calculating the precept the Council Tax Base figure has been estimated to enable the draft precept to be calculated.

## 2. Summary of Budget Information

HPC Precept Year	Property Tax Base (Band D equivalent)	Total Precept	Precept per Band D equivalent Property
2013/14			£55.69
2015/16	3296	£166,276	£50.44
2016/17	3329	£181,500	£54.42
2017/18	3348	£188,760	£56.38
2018/19	3365	£275,009	£81.73
2019/20	3382	£280,545	£82.95
2020/21	3407 (Est)	£280,545 (for illustrative purposes)	£82.34 ***

\*\*\* if the Council were to retain the (2019/20) precept level due to the increase in property base of Band D equivalent properties the Band D precept would reduce to £82.34 per annum. (Appendix B) This would deliver a surplus budget of £6,970

3. Summary of projected Income & Expenditure 2019/20 and proposed budgeted 2020/21

Receipts	2019/20 Yr. end predicted	Receipts	2020/21 Draft Budget
Precept	280,545	Precept (illustrative purposes only)	280,545
Bank Interest	700	Bank Interest	700
Miscellaneous Income	0	Miscellaneous Income	0
Allotment Income	1,450	Allotment Income	1,450
Burial Fees	10,500	Burial Fees	6,000
Adastra Park Pavilion	3,500	Adastra Park Pavilion	3,600
Adastra Park Grounds	7,250	Adastra Park Grounds	7,250
Adastra Park Tennis	2,000	Adastra Park Tennis	2,000
Adastra Park Bowling Green	2,800	Adastra Park Bowling Green	2,650
Parking Disc Income	900	Parking Disc Income	900
<b>Total Receipts</b>	<b>309,645</b>	<b>Total Receipts</b>	<b>305,095</b>
<b>Payments</b>		<b>Payments</b>	
Staff (see note 1)	134,375	Staff	152,150
Administration (note 2)	26,451	Administration	31,250
Civic	1,150	Civic (see note 3)	5,350
Grants	2,740	Grants	3,000
Allotments	850	Allotments	1,350
Burial Grounds	4,950	Burial Grounds (see note 4)	4,950
Parish Centre/Garage	8,600	Parish Centre/Garage (See note 5)	11,100
Adastra Pavilion	11,900	Adastra Pavilion	12,250
Adastra Park Grounds	13,600	Adastra Park Grounds (see note 6)	17,750
Adastra Play Equipment	1,000	Adastra Play Equipment (see note 7)	3,000
Adastra Skate park	0	Adastra skate park	0
Adastra Tennis Courts	900	Adastra Tennis Courts	700
Bowling Green	2,400	Bowling Green	2,500
Parklands Copse	750	Parklands Copse (see note 8)	1,250
Talbot Field	1,150	Talbot Field (see note 9)	1,750
Street Scene	11,855	Street Scene (see note 10)	16,875
Street Lighting	16,000	Street Lighting	17,000
Environmental Improvements	1,950	Environmental Improvements (see note 11)	9,350
Neighbourhood Plan	17,000	Neighbourhood Plan (note 12)	1,500
Parking Discs	950	Parking Discs	800
Christmas Lights	3,500	Christmas Lights	3,750
Economic Development	50	Economic Development	500
<b>Total Payments</b>	<b>262,121</b>	<b>Total Payments</b>	<b>298,125</b>

### EFFECT ON RESERVES

RESERVES	2019/20	RESERVES	2020/21
Opening Balance brought forward (a) ***	386,302	Total Consolidated Reserves Opening Balance b/fwd. (a)***	376,468
Less Total Earmarked Reserves	(277,480)	General reserves 159,346 EMR 217,122 (projected breakdown of reserves)	
General Reserves Balance (working capital)	108,822		
<b>OPERATING COSTS</b>		<b>OPERATING COSTS</b>	
Add total Receipts	309,645	Add total Receipts 2020/21 Precept for illustrative purposes only added assuming no increase	305,095
Less Total Payments	(262,121)	Less Total Payments	(298,125)
Projected Budget Surplus (a) ***	47,524	Budget Deficit/Surplus– (based on no increase in precept) ***	6,970
EMR projected a Expended in year (a) ***	(57,358)	This assumes EMR expended in year (for illustrative purposes only) (a) ***	(140,000)
EMR carried forward	217,122	EMR Balance carried forward	97,122
Projected Total Consolidated Reserves (a) ***	376,468	Projected Total Consolidated Reserves (for illustrative purposes only) (a) ***	243,438

(a) \*\*\* Opening Reserves Balance + Surplus – EMR expended = Consolidated Reserves c/fwd.

The current Reserve picture is based on existing allocations to Earmarked Reserves (EMR) and does not take into account at present all longer term projects currently under consideration. The 2020/21 balance is based on £140,000 allocated (EMR) being expended in year which is line with the current scheduling. Due to savings achieved through the budget this year (19/20) further opportunities exist to allocate additional funds to Priority projects by way of EMR late in the year.

#### 4. Budget Notes 2019/20 – 2020/21

<u>Notes</u>	<u>Details (Significant variations/suggested options)</u>
1	<b>Staff Costs (19/20)</b> savings realised this year as currently carrying a vacancy but option to retain budget sought to enable flexibility in the event of revising establishment at some future point. Therefore proposed budget for next year will be consistent with this year's original budget set for 2019/20. Provision for 2020/21 reflects an allowance for inflationary uplift and incremental progression where appropriate.
2	<b>Administration (20/21)</b> Proposed budget marginally down compared to budget set for 2019/20. The majority of projected underspend this year relates to Professional Fees – new code established in 2018/19 £4,000 – Projected £1,000 expenditure this year. This budget was originally created to support any conveyancing in the event of any land being transferred to the Parish. It is however proposed to retain this budget allocation element of £4,000 for 2020/21
3	<b>Civic (20/21)</b> decrease in proposed budget primarily relates to the MSDC budgeted costs to deliver the Parish elections in May 2019 not being required however this is offset by potential of up to additional £4,000 allocation for Twinning 20/21. ***
4	<b>Burial Ground (20/21)</b> Repairs & Renewals to be retained at higher level to consider repairing /resurfacing path which is currently starting to break up. This was initially programmed this year (2019/20) but funds had to be utilised to replace entrance gate therefore this work is still required to be completed.
5	<b>Parish Centre Repairs &amp; Renewals Budget</b> Proposed to reduce budget marginally but to schedule in works to the outside of Parish offices painting/treating wood frames /doors etc. deferred in 2019/20 therefore increase allocated in 2019/20 to be reflected in next year's budget.
6	<b>Adastra Park Grounds</b> – Suggest increasing Adastra Park masterplan support/resource costs by £3,500 to cover ongoing support for the delivery of the project and to protect the Earmarked reserves.
7	<b>Adastra Play Equipment</b> – Suggest increasing by further £500 to £1500 for R & R and £3,000 overall for this cost centre. The level of repairs required identified as part of the H & S inspection have increased and it is important the Council maintains it equipment in good order. In addition for 20/21 some equipment that is to be retained as part of the proposed upgrade to the facility will require refurbishment. In addition with additional equipment programmed to be installed next year additional inspections regimes will be required.
8	<b>Parklands Copse</b> – Increased as proposed this will Incorporate potential agreement re permissive paths.
9	<b>Talbot Field (19/20)</b> Costs down in part as volunteer group undertaking some remedial work. In 2019/20 a grant was paid to The Fauna & Flora Group as way of contribution to their direct costs associated with management of the field. It is suggested that an annual budget fund be set up in acknowledgement of the work they undertake in partnership with the



	Council to manage the site and develop its nature value. This would be paid via the site budget as opposed to the grant budget therefore releasing funds from the grants budget to be allocated to other community groups.
<b>10</b>	<b>Street scene</b> – Budget to be maintained at existing level.
<b>11</b>	<b>Environmental Improvements</b> – The anticipated underspend this year relates to Footpaths and a reduction in reactive work undertaken by BHTC although they will continue to support salt re winter arrangements. It is also suggested that the Council consider allocating a £3,600 for the planting of street trees. This figure is based on estimate provided by the tree planting co-ordinator and would enable the Council to continue to support one of its ongoing priorities.
<b>12</b>	<b>Neighbourhood Plan</b> – Based on preliminary discussions with our Planning Consultant it has confirmed that an allowance of £1500 be allocated for the next financial year. Once the plan has passed through the examination stage all future costs are likely to borne by District.

Items that were raised at Committees (PR & C and G & E for future consideration) at their most recent meetings. No additional items were identified beyond the current priorities which members wished to continue to support and provide additional funding where feasible and required to support these.

### Income Streams

The Council has a number of key Income Streams that it can utilise.

Precept

#### Other Income

Adastra Park – Community Pavilion – hire fees  
 Grounds (pitch hire fees etc.)  
 Tennis Courts (hire fees)  
 Bowling green (fees)

Burial Ground

Parklands Allotments

#### Miscellaneous Income

Sale of Parking Discs

Bank Interest.

**5. EARMARKED RESERVES (PROJECTS) projected closing balance 31/03/20**

	<b>Projected Cost</b>	<b>Value</b>	<b>How funded</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>Hassocks Trading Association</b>	<b>500</b>	<b>Reserves</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>Village sign</b>	<b>3,000</b>	<b>Reserves</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>Park Development scheme</b>	<b>159,685</b>	<b>Reserves/S 106</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>Tree Planting Initiative</b>	<b>198</b>	<b>Reserves</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>Youth Project</b>	<b>5,000</b>	<b>Reserves</b>
<b>6</b>	<b>Amphitheatre</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>Project delivered</b>
<b>7</b>	<b>Burial Ground</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>Reserves</b>
<b>8</b>	<b>Bus Shelter Replacement</b>	<b>10,000</b>	<b>Reserves</b>
<b>9</b>	<b>Repairs Fund</b>	<b>18,785</b>	<b>Reserves</b>
<b>10</b>	<b>Legal/land transfer</b>	<b>8,000</b>	<b>Reserves</b>
<b>11</b>	<b>Operation Watershed</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>Grant funding</b>
<b>12</b>	<b>Parish Acoustics</b>	<b>3,000</b>	<b>Reserves</b>
<b>13</b>	<b>PROW Improvements</b>	<b>6,000</b>	<b>Reserves</b>
<b>14</b>	<b>SDNP CIL Funding</b>	<b>2,954</b>	<b>To be allocated</b>
	<b>Total</b>	<b>217,122</b>	

## HASSOCKS PARISH COUNCIL

### 6. Glossary of Terms

**Financial Year:** The financial year for a Parish Council runs from the 1st April to the 31st March each year, this is set in statute.

**A revenue budget:** Revenue is the running cost of the council and its services, and the income that meets those costs.

**Capital Budget/Earmarked Reserves:** A capital budget involves funding for capital projects - the acquisition or construction of long term assets e.g. the development of facilities within Aadastra Park or creation of a cemetery or the purchase of a new council building.

**The precept:** The Parish Council is able to raise funds by levying a charge on residents. This is known as the precept. The precept is raised through an additional charge on resident's council tax. The billing authority pays, in this case Mid Sussex District Council, each precepting authority the amount they require and collects such sums from its residents through the council tax. Unlike other tiers of government the precept is not capped at present.

**Council Tax Bands:** The amount of Council tax that you pay varies depending on the "BAND" your property is in. Bands run from A-G, the banding is based on a valuation of a property as at 1 April 1991. Band A is the lowest valuation and Band G the highest. Council tax is usually expressed as the Band D equivalent (this being the mid-point).

**Council Tax Base:** The Council tax base is determined by expressing all domestic properties in an area as Band-D equivalents. The total amount required to be met from council tax is then divided by the tax-base to produce a Band D charge. From that amount so produced, each of the other seven band council tax charges are calculated.

**Council Tax Support (CTRS) Grant:** Council Tax Benefit was abolished from 1st April 2013 and each local billing authority was required to provide their own scheme of Council Tax Support to assist vulnerable and low paid residents in paying their council tax.

Support for low income individuals is now provided through a discount applied to their Council Tax Bill, meaning that the Council Tax Base (the number of Band D equivalent properties in a local authority's area that Council Tax is charged on) is reduced and as such, less Council Tax is collected. The net effect of this is that precepting authorities either need to increase their precepts to offset the cost of this or face a reduction in their funding.

**Reserves:** Part of budgetary control is to ensure adequate but not excessive reserves or balances are held.

It is rare for a local council to hold its reserves other than in the form of easily accessible bank deposit or other short-term savings accounts. Councils have no legal powers to hold revenue reserves other than those for reasonable working capital needs or earmarked purposes. The value of all reserves should be approved by the Council and the amount of working capital to be held should also be approved by the Council.



7.

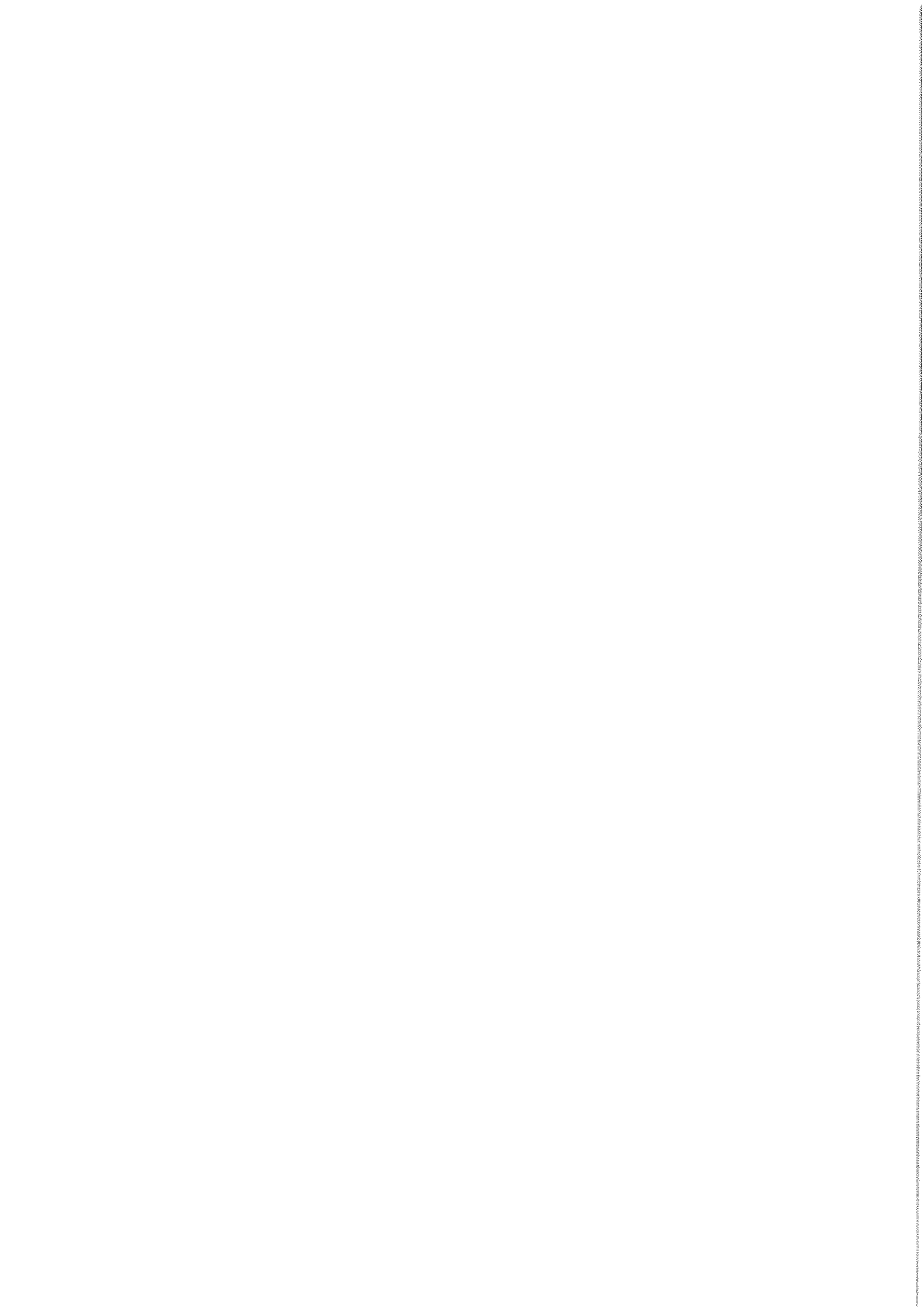
Precept and Banding Calculator

<u>Current Year</u>		<u>Next Year</u>	<u>Increase</u>
£280,545	Precept	£280,545	0.00%
3,382.0	Tax Base	3,407.0	0.74%
£82.95	Band D	£82.34	-0.73%

Band D increase per  
£1,000 precept rise      £0.29

## Full Breakdown by Band

<u>Current Year</u>		<u>Next Year</u>	<u>Weekly Increase</u>
£55.30	Band A	£54.90	-£0.01
£64.52	Band B	£64.05	-£0.01
£73.74	Band C	£73.19	-£0.01
£82.95	Band D	£82.34	-£0.01
£101.39	Band E	£100.64	-£0.01
£119.82	Band F	£118.94	-£0.02
£138.25	Band G	£137.24	-£0.02
£165.90	Band H	£164.69	-£0.02



## HASSOCKS PARISH COUNCIL

### Policy & Resources Communications Public Relations Policy and Procedure

#### Policy

To be reviewed annually in October

The aims of the Communications policy are to engage with the community, through publicising information about the work of the **Parish Council**, by consulting with the community on appropriate issues, to encourage the public to be involved in supporting the greater good of the community and to raise the profile of the role of the Parish Council. This policy will be implemented in consultation and collaboration with the Clerk.

**ALL COMMUNICATIONS, WRITTEN OR OTHERWISE, WILL HAVE A DIRECT LINK TO THE WORK OF THE COMMITTEES, WORKING GROUPS OR EVENTS AT WHICH THE PARISH COUNCIL HAS A REPRESENTATIVE. THERE MAY ALSO BE LINKS TO INFORMATION AND ACTIVITIES OF THE DISTRICT AND COUNTY COUNCILS. ALL OF THIS WILL GIVE CLARITY AS TO WHAT SHOULD BE EXCLUDED.**

**WE NEED TO CLEARLY DEFINE THE PURPOSE OF EACH COMMUNICATION BECAUSE THAT WILL DETERMINE THE MEANS WE USE TO COMMUNICATE IT.**

**FOR EXAMPLE, THE PURPOSE OF A COMMUNICATION MAY BE TO:**

- **INFORM EG. HASSOCKS PARISH COUNCIL ACTIVITIES**
- **CONSULT FOR EXAMPLE: PARKING STRATEGY**
- **ENCOURAGE PARTICIPATION FOR EXAMPLE: ECONOMIC GROUP, YOUTH GROUP**

#### INCLUSIVITY

Although official minutes of all meetings are in the public domain and will be on the website, content and news items using other media will be in plain language and in accordance with good practice within the Equalities Act 2010.

For example written communication, including posters and flyers must be accessible to **all**. All presentations and public consultations must be accessible and inclusive.

#### RESPONSIBILITIES

The Clerk or Assistant Clerk will be responsible for Communications and Public Relations in collaboration with various councillors as below. S/he will be the office contact for implementation.

Final editing of the communication will be a collaboration between the Clerk and the relevant Chairperson.

Any requests for a radio, TV interview or press release should be referred immediately to the Chair of the Parish Council and the Clerk. Advice on how to respond should be sought from the Clerk. The Chair and Clerk will decide which councillor should give an interview if it is to be neither of them.

Press releases will be issued in the name of the Clerk 'Hassocks Parish Council' in order to maintain a consistent 'brand' of the Council.

In recognition of the Councillor involved in the article this can be acknowledged within the article but if so the item should be signed off 'from the office of the Clerk to Hassocks Parish Council.'

## Procedure with various types of communication

### A) News and information relating to projects and specific target groups

Lead Councillors for working groups, or projects focused on various sections of the community, will provide copy for the Clerk who will agree appropriate means of communication. Responsibility for editing and oversight will be the Clerk's. The Chair of the relevant committee should be copied in at the outset.

### B) Consultation events

Public consultation with the community will require criteria to be decided by appropriate committee with the advice of the Clerk. These will include presentations, events and exhibitions.

### C) Partner Organisations

Links to or information from Mid Sussex District Council or West Sussex County Council that we have been asked to publicise.

### How

Information given to the public will be through the following means:

- The Council's website and Facebook. Facebook will be used as a notice board and link to the website articles and news only and will have no capacity for responses from the Parish Council. Minutes and agendas are all parts of news updates.
- Twitter to be used as a link only to direct users to the Council's website articles or news. There will be no capacity for responses from the Parish Council and the facility can be disabled and enabled as appropriate. Minutes and agendas are all part of news updates
- Electronic newsletters to Subscribers signed up to receive Information from the Parish Council. For example 'Mail chimp'
- Hard copy print in local magazines and / or other literature.

***Reviewed by Policy Communications & Resources Committee 15<sup>th</sup> October 2019  
(PRC19/43.2) amended. (Revised version)***