



Report to: Cabinet

Subject: Parish Aid Outturn 2009/10

Date: 7 October 2010

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PURPOSE OF REPORT

To inform Members of the activities of the Parish Councils during 2009/10, in the light of a review of their revenue funding carried out during that year.

BACKGROUND

A system of Parish revenue grant-aid allocation established over twenty years ago operated until 2004, and was based on contributions to the “concurrent” expenditure of each Parish. Such expenditure was defined as “that in respect of services that could also be provided and paid for directly by the Borough Council”, for example playing fields.

By 2004 it was concluded that this system had become somewhat subjective and warranted a review. Following meetings with members from each parish council, a report was presented to Cabinet detailing the findings. The basic principles employed in the Review were:

- No parish should receive a cut in cash terms
- No incentive to spend or tax more should be created
- Any scheme should be simple to calculate, and not be based on arbitrary decisions regarding “types” of expenditure
- Aid for one parish should not be greatly impacted upon by spending changes by others

Three alternative schemes for revenue grant-aid were proposed, and that adopted was based on 50% allocated per-capita and 50% allocated pro rata to net Parish Expenditure, with a reducing “protection element” to ensure that no Parish suffered a cut in funding. Whilst simple in principle, this involved complex calculations to ensure that all parishes were protected.

This scheme operated until 2009/10, however anomalies arose, with the spending decisions of one parish affecting the allocations to others. The protection calculation became increasingly complex, and one parish still remained in protection.

A further review was undertaken during the period leading up to the 2010/11 budget process, the outcome of which was to freeze the allocation to each parish at the level of its 2009/10 allocation. This removed the requirement to calculate individual sums each year, with any increase or decrease in the sum available to be shared pro rata in future years. For 2010/11, the sum available for parish revenue aid was frozen in the light of increasingly challenging economic circumstances. It was also agreed that, in recognition of the parishes' excellent work, the fact that they would receive no increase in funding, and to assist them with their cashflow, the full sum of any revenue aid would be paid in April of each year. In addition to assisting the parishes, this has allowed the administration of the payments to be cut by a half.

Furthermore it was agreed that the parishes would in future provide basic information regarding the activities they intended to undertake each year, and that they would report on their progress against these intentions at the year-end. This procedure was implemented for the 2010/11 budget cycle, but encouragingly, all the parishes have also provided a brief review of their 2009/10 activities, a summary of which is shown below for Members' information.

The categories of activity for which information was requested were designed to capture information pertinent to the Council's own priorities, with the intention of enabling Members to better understand where the grant aid they provided was being spent. It is apparent that some parishes allocate the similar activities to different categories, however a useful insight into the considerable efforts put in to improving the lives of residents by the parish councils can be gleaned from the information received.

(1) Community Safety

- Bestwood – recreation grounds and grounds maintenance.
- Lambley – calibration of speed camera, undertaken in partnership with Calverton and Woodborough.
- Linby – removal and refitting of roadside railings.
- Newstead – Multi-use games areas.
- Papplewick – hedge cutting, verge trimming and path maintenance. Equipment maintenance and replacement.
- Ravenshead – rental of Police garage.

(2) Community Involvement

- Bestwood – bus shelter cleaning.
- Burton Joyce – work with the local school and the History Society to implement changes to The Grove open space. Provision of consultants for the update of the recreation ground. Included the Preservation Society in planning application meetings.
- Calverton – planned the redevelopment of the pavilion in the Memorial Park.
- Colwick – upkeep of the community centre to provide facilities for local groups including both the very young and the over 60s.
- Lambley – work carried out to the playgrounds and cemetery.
- Linby – maintenance of the Heritage Centre.
- Newstead – support of the parish plan and of community groups.
- Papplewick – donations, room hire, newsletter, churchyard extension, firework event and play-day event.
- Ravenshead – grants to local groups.
- Woodborough – running, maintenance and improvement of village hall, publication of minutes and other notices in the Woodborough Newsletter, Christmas lights, Remembrance wreath, donations to Woodborough charities.

(3) Environmental Improvements

- Bestwood – grounds maintenance.
- Burton Joyce – refurbishment of The Grove and improvements to floral displays throughout the village.
- Calverton – upkeep of paths and tree planting at the cemetery.
- Colwick – provision of a litter picker and upkeep and replacement of plants.
- Lambley – provision of a village sign.
- Linby – planting of borders with bedding plants, provision of cobblestones for a service road in the village, purchase and erection of village signs and replacement of York flag-stoning.
- Newstead – village and cemetery maintenance, extension of the cemetery, landscaping works and the creation of a wildlife park.

- Papplewick – bulb planting.
- Ravenshead – maintenance of play areas and open spaces.
- Stoke Bardolph – hire of skip.
- Woodborough – grass cutting, tree pruning, removal of leaves, cemetery ground works, and removal of litter. Maintenance of railings and gates, flood alleviation, and donations to Woodborough in Bloom and Woodborough Community Association.

(4) Leisure, Health and well-being

- Burton Joyce – clearance of allotment space to create more tenanted plots, and improved usage of Poplars Sports Ground.
- Calverton – maintenance of parks, pavilions and cemetery.
- Colwick – provision and upkeep of the community centre, and summer fun events for children and adults.
- Newstead – maintenance and upkeep of the multi-use games area and provision of a Christmas tree and lights.
- Papplewick – playing field and park maintenance and inspection, grass cutting and equipment replacement.
- Ravenshead – leisure centre running costs.
- Stoke Bardolph – provision of a Christmas tree.
- Woodborough – recreation area and playground equipment maintenance and inspection, maintenance of allotments.

(5) Employment, Education and Training

- Bestwood – play attendant and cleaner.
- Burton Joyce – provision of a designated educational area in The Grove.
- Ravenshead – employment of all staff for the leisure centre

(6) Administration

- Clerk's salary and expenses, stationery and office equipment, room hire, subscriptions, audit, insurance and website costs etc.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Members note the report.