

You are hereby summoned to attend a Meeting of the **Finance and Policy Committee** to be held on Monday 19th December 2016 in the Old Fire Station Community Room, 37 High Street, Brackley, following the Meeting of the Direct Responsibilities and General Purposes Committee

Dated: 14th December 2016



Town Clerk

MEMBERS OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC ARE INVITED TO ATTEND

AGENDA

337/16 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

338/16 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members are asked to declare any disclosable pecuniary interests in item on the agenda, and the nature of that interest, in accordance with the Localism Act 2011 and the Brackley Town Council Code of Conduct.

339/16 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

This section of the meeting gives members of the public who are present an opportunity to speak. You may speak on any item which appears on the agenda for this evening's meeting.

Please state your name and address before asking your question

340/16 APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Members are asked to receive and approve the minutes of the previous meeting of the Finance and Policy Committee held on Monday 21st November 2016.

341/16 MEMBERS REPORTS

342/16 FINANCE REPORTS

To receive for approval:

- 1) List of Accounts 9 in the sum of £120,869.72
- 2) Internal Monitoring Report.

343/16 PROPOSED BUDGET FOR 2017/18

The draft budget, five year plan and reserves were considered at the previous meeting and the draft budget was uploaded to the Council's website and facebook page for consultation. One response has been received, which has been circulated to Members.

Members are asked to consider whether to RECOMMEND the draft budget to Council, at its next meeting, as the basis on which the Precept Demand is calculated.

344/16 INSURANCE PROVISION FOR TOWN HALL CONTRACT

The terms of the contract for the Town Hall require that the Town Council (the Client) insures the scheduled works in joint names for the duration of the contract.

The broker has taken advice from Aviva based on the schedule of works and notified us that the additional premium would be £4549.47 including Insurance Premium Tax.

Councillors are asked to approve the payment as there is sufficient funding available in the current year under this budget heading.

345/16 RECOMMENDATION FOR DIRECT REPOSIBILITIES

Members are asked to receive and consider a recommendation from Direct Responsibilities and General Purposes Committee in relation to the purchase of an additional vehicle for the Groundworks team.

346/16 MATTERS FOR DISCUSSION OR INFORMATION

FINANCE AND POLICY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting of the Finance and Policy Committee held on Monday 21st November 2016 in the Old Fire Station Community Room, 37 High Street, Brackley.

Present: Cllr Cartmell (Chairman), Cllrs Bagot-Webb, Barrie, Morrell, Ross, Thompson, Waldron, P Wiltshire

Also Present: Cllr Sharps

Officers: Town Clerk (L Carter) RFO (A Moses)

289/16 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received and accepted from Cllrs Butler and Rawlinson

290/16 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllrs Morrell and Thompson re payments

291/16 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

None

292/16 APPROVAL OF MINUTES

On the proposition of Cllr Waldron it was **RESOLVED** to:

Receive and approve the minutes of the previous meeting of the Finance and Policy Committee held on Monday 17th October 2016.

293/16 MEMBERS REPORTS

None

294/16 FINANCE REPORTS

On the proposition of Cllr Barrie it was **RESOLVED** to:

Approve the list of accounts 8 in the sum of £119,809.78

Cllr Waldron agreed to conduct the next Internal Monitoring process and report back at the next meeting.

295/16 DRAFT BUDGET FOR 2017/18

The Clerk explained the new headings and the budget breakdown to Councillors. It was explained that until we know the new Tax Base it was not possible to exactly calculate the precept but this was a working document.

On the proposition of Cllr Thompson it was **RESOLVED** to:

Approve the draft budget for publication on the Council's website for consultation prior to the next meeting of this committee.

296/16 EXTERNAL AUDITOR'S REPORT

The Clerk was asked to reiterate to the Auditor the Council's previous comments regarding the ability to hold reserves. In the future the levels and need for earmarked reserves would be minuted more clearly when the budget is approved.

297/16 PENSION SCHEME

On the proposition of Cllr Morrell it was **RESOLVED** to:

To approve the admission to the pension scheme of the new Groundsman Mr P Horsler

298/16 SOUTH NORTHAMPTONSHIRE COUNCIL OFFICE PROVISION IN BRACKLEY

The Town Council had been approached, some time ago, about the possibility of taking on this service provision for Brackley residents if the SNC Office were to close. The Town Clerk had had further discussions regarding the staffing implications and the proposed timing of such a move. If Councillors approved the suggestion, then further negotiations would take place with regard to financial and IT support.

Councillors felt that there was currently insufficient space in 9 Market Place to accommodate this additional service and were also concerned that the withdrawal from the library could threaten the viability of that service.

On the proposition of Cllr Cartmell it was **RESOLVED** to:

Advise South Northamptonshire Council that the Town Council understands what is trying to be achieved but we do not believe there is currently adequate space or resources in the Brackley Town Council office but are prepared to review the situation when the Town Hall is back in operation.

299/16 MATTERS FOR DISCUSSION OR INFORMATION

None

Meeting closed 20.13

Chairman

Date

**Authorise Payments - November 2016
Month 8**

Invoice Date	Invoice No	Our Ref Number	Supplier Name	Net Value	VAT	Invoice Total	Analysis Description
				Salary/Tax & NI/Pension			
25/11/2016		NOV/SAL/01	Salaries	£ 13,490.82	£	£ 13,490.82	Salary
25/11/2016		NOV/SAL/02	Tax & NI	£ 4,304.46	£	£ 4,304.46	Tax & NI
25/11/2016		NOV/SAL/03	Pension	£ 5,125.30	£	£ 5,125.30	Pension
Payments made before the meeting							
01/11/2016		2016/293	WBN Catering	£ 110.00		£ 110.00	Part payment - 5th November
11/10/2016	124353624	2016/294	Anglian Water	£ 51.66		£ 51.66	
03/11/2016	Q005 5H	2016/295	BT	£ 255.26		£ 255.26	
02/11/2016	303782262/2/5	2016/296	SNC	£ 2,035.00		£ 2,035.00	Unit 2 - Rates
17/10/2016	0	2016/297	Matt Banner	£ 19.90		£ 19.90	
14/11/2016	1678	2016/298	Art Contracts	£ 4,244.41	£ 848.88	£ 5,093.29	OFS - Alarms
23/08/2016	223091	2016/299	Bee Tee Alarms Ltd	£ 36.00		£ 36.00	
20/10/2016	791	2016/300	Lathbury Limited	£ 450.00		£ 450.00	
19/10/2016	0	2016/301	Steph Campbell	£ 9.65		£ 9.65	Refreshments - 5th November
19/10/2016	7401	2016/302	Cherwell doors	£ 1,394.00	£ 278.80	£ 1,672.80	Unit 1 & 2 - Roller door repairs
21/10/2016	0	2016/303	M Morrell	£ 105.10		£ 105.10	Mega phones - 5th November
21/10/2016	0	2016/304	F Baker	£ 352.00		£ 352.00	Mayors Allowance
04/11/2016	LW2713	2016/305	Lockwood Landscapes	£ 24,568.80	£ 4,913.76	£ 29,482.56	St James lake Improvements
04/11/2016	0	2016/306	M Morrell	£ 150.00		£ 150.00	Equipment - 5th November
04/11/2016	0	2016/307	Bicester Town Council	£ 90.00		£ 90.00	Mayors Allowance
11/11/2016	0	2016/308	Sally Mundy-Webb	£ 9.48		£ 9.48	Tissue paper for Lantern workshops
Online payments							
06/10/2016	731879	2016/309	Wicksteed Playgrounds	£ 586.00	£ 117.20	£ 703.20	
09/10/2016	H1391E921A	2016/310	E-On	£ 16.83	£ 0.84	£ 17.67	
30/09/2016	230	2016/311	Ingham Pinnock	£ 2,500.00	£ 500.00	£ 3,000.00	HLF
05/10/2016	7168	2016/312	M-Trac	£ 85.80	£ 17.16	£ 102.96	
11/10/2016	Q005 5H	2016/313	BT	£ 466.34		£ 466.34	
14/10/2016	INV13823	2016/314	Ecolocation	£ 307.85	£ 61.57	£ 369.42	HLF - Nesting Bird Check
17/10/2016	26413	2016/315	A.L.C	£ 1,099.00	£ 219.80	£ 1,318.80	HLF - Lime Mortar Workshop
15/10/2016		2016/316	Robert D Bowerman	£ 41.86		£ 41.66	Parking Fees
17/10/2016	4403280586	2016/317	PEAC	£ 299.00	£ 59.80	£ 358.80	Photocopier rental
17/10/2016	336479	2016/318	George Browns	£ 6.05	£ 1.21	£ 7.26	Carburettor repair kit
11/10/2016	118160	2016/319	Hazchem Safety	£ 53.56	£ 10.71	£ 64.27	Swarfega
21/10/2016	6660	2016/320	Haverstock Associates	£ 9,271.00	£ 1,854.20	£ 11,125.20	HLF - Professional Fees
26/10/2016	1251988	2016/321	Badgemaster	£ 10.03	£ 2.01	£ 12.04	Councillors Name badges
26/10/2016	9115	2016/322	NALC	£ 19.99		£ 19.99	Local Councils Explained (book)
30/09/2016	150229	2016/323	TBS Hygiene	£ 715.50	£ 143.10	£ 858.60	Dog Waste collection - September
27/10/2016	33499	2016/324	Blachere Illumination	£ 3,500.00	£ 700.00	£ 4,200.00	Christmas lights Repairs/Re-connection
26/10/2016	4002105	2016/325	SNC	£ 60.94		£ 60.94	OP2 Rent
30/10/2016	64343640	2016/326	PHS Group	£ 12.48	£ 2.50	£ 14.98	Hygiene services
28/10/2016	OP/107430	2016/327	Sutcliffe Play	£ 132.12	£ 26.42	£ 158.54	Various replacement parts - play equipment
25/10/2016	119280	2016/328	Hazchem Safety	£ 54.00	£ 10.80	£ 64.80	Hi-Viz vest - 5th November
31/10/2016	10864	2016/329	Ian Soden Heritage Services	£ 4,500.00	£ 900.00	£ 5,400.00	HLF - Looking after your Listed Building
31/10/2016	119769	2016/330	GSS Architecture	£ 556.79	£ 111.36	£ 668.15	OFS - Professional services
31/10/2016	7110	2016/331	Hazchem Safety	£ 47.32	£ 9.46	£ 56.78	PPE
01/11/2016	1938	2016/332	Healthmatic	£ 494.17	£ 98.83	£ 593.00	OFS - Public Toilet Cleaning
31/10/2016	1938	2016/333	Greatfield Plants	£ 878.98	£ 175.80	£ 1,054.78	Spring bedding
31/10/2016	25179	2016/334	Brimnick Locksmiths & Security	£ 66.67	£ 13.33	£ 80.00	OFS - Call out Public Toilet door
31/10/2016	630134108	2016/335	Lyreco	£ 217.98	£ 43.60	£ 261.58	Stationery

Items in red have been added since the Agenda has been issues

**Authorise Payments - November 2016
Month 8**

01/11/2016	63619	Woodberry	£	4,900.40	£	980.08	£	5,880.48	Picnic sets and Benches - St James lake (Tesco funded)
11/11/2016	110526	Hydraxem	£	49.00	£	9.80	£	58.80	Consumables
11/11/2016	9361	Microshade VSM	£	236.20	£	47.24	£	283.44	Hosting
01/11/2016	2278401	Fuel Genie	£	237.29	£	47.44	£	284.73	Fuel - October
08/11/2016	MCSI 208	Magdalen College School	£	250.00	£		£	250.00	Field rent - 5th November
08/11/2016	117515	ARB Sound & Vision	£	120.00	£	24.00	£	144.00	Radios - 5th November
08/11/2016	Inv1137	Soundwave Audio	£	448.50	£	89.70	£	538.20	Sound system - 5th November
04/11/2016	120617	Hazchem Safety	£	39.67	£	7.93	£	47.60	PPE
31/10/2016	INV0237	Ingham Pinnock	£	2,500.00	£	500.00	£	3,000.00	HLF - Professional Fees
08/11/2016	Q006 L3	BT	£	82.34	£	16.47	£	98.81	Telephones - 9 Market Place
06/11/2016	H13B06E1A0	E-on	£	8.43	£		£	8.43	Unit 2 - Electricity
31/10/2016	BB02	Boxwood & Brass	£	1,400.00	£		£	1,400.00	HLF - Georgian Dancing
10/11/2016	121080	Hazchem Safety	£	66.30	£	13.26	£	79.56	Cleaning product
11/11/2016	121195	Hazchem Safety	£	29.16	£	5.83	£	34.99	Cleaning product
09/11/2016	120962	Hazchem Safety	£	22.39	£	4.48	£	26.87	Cleaning product
09/11/2016	02544p	Rainbow Print Media	£	210.00	£		£	210.00	Town Talk - Christmas Edition
01/11/2016	0	WBN Catering	£	110.00	£		£	110.00	Final payment - 5th November
17/10/2016	117964569	Anglian Water	£	119.29	£		£	119.29	Town Hall - Water
02/11/2016	2016-11-003	Arnold Thomson	£	2,614.50	£	522.90	£	3,137.40	OFS - Professional services
20/06/2016	221356	Bee Tee Alarms Ltd	£	18.00	£		£	18.00	OFS - Alarm tags
15/11/2016	7458	Cherwell doors	£	575.00	£	115.00	£	690.00	Unit 1 - repairs to door
13/11/2016	2	Bertie & Floss	£	176.00	£		£	176.00	Remembrance Day refreshments
22/09/2016	2204	C R Stubbings	£	1,909.72	£		£	1,909.72	9 Market Place - Roof
14/11/2016	7200	M-Trac	£	138.66	£	27.73	£	166.39	Hedgecutter parts
11/11/2016	4002632	South Northants	£	240.00	£	48.00	£	288.00	Bins - 5th November
16/11/2016	337548	George Browns	£	42.75	£		£	42.75	PPE
16/11/2016	14407	MP Printers	£	494.00	£		£	494.00	Town Talk - Christmas Edition
18/11/2016	337621	George Browns	£	14.08	£	2.82	£	16.90	Filler Cap
28/10/2016	150286	TBS Hygiene	£	572.40	£	114.48	£	686.88	Dog Waste collection - October
16/11/2016	258036	SRBE	£	50.00	£	10.00	£	60.00	Barriers - 5th November
16/11/2016	258035	SRBE	£	280.00	£	56.00	£	336.00	Barriers - 5th November
16/11/2016	258034	SRBE	£	870.00	£	174.00	£	1,044.00	Toilets - 5th November
17/11/2016	33816	Blaichere Illumination	£	710.00	£	142.00	£	852.00	Running repairs
18/11/2016	781579	Gem Tool Hire	£	571.12	£	111.06	£	682.18	Floodlighting - 5th November
18/11/2016	781581	Gem Tool Hire	£	626.88	£	121.34	£	748.22	Floodlighting - 5th November
15/11/2016	2	D Morrell	£	40.00	£		£	40.00	Casual work
Paid by Direct Debit									
05/11/2016	138721346/16	Total Gas & Power	£	40.34	£	2.01	£	42.35	Unit - Electricity
09/11/2016	Q008 F9	BT	£	0.18	£		£	0.18	Town Hall - Telephone
08/11/2016	B975169040	Utility Warehouse	£	15.50	£	3.10	£	18.60	November - Telephone
05/11/2016	138721335/16	Total Gas & Power	£	154.39	£	7.72	£	162.11	Town Centre - Electricity
05/11/2016	138721357/16	Total Gas & Power	£	704.31	£	140.86	£	845.17	Town Hall - Electricity
02/11/2016	Q008 M0	BT	£	201.70	£	40.34	£	242.04	Market Place - Telephone/broadband
15/07/2016	277164	SWG Payroll	£	34.00	£	6.80	£	40.80	Payroll costs
12/10/2016	137662574/16	Total Gas & Power	£	437.76	£	21.89	£	459.65	Town Hall - Gas
09/10/2016	B974472157	Utility Warehouse	£	15.50	£	3.10	£	18.60	October - Telephone
17/11/2016	287697	SWG Payroll	£	78.00	£	15.60	£	93.60	Month 8 - Payroll costs
£ 105,255.86 £ 14,554.12 £ 119,809.78									

Items in red have been added since the Agenda has been issues

**Authorise Payments - December 2016
Month 9**

Invoice Date	Invoice No	Our Ref Number	Supplier Name	Salary/Tax & NI/Pension	Net Value	VAT	Invoice Total	Analysis Description
23/12/2016		Dec/sal/01	Salaries	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ 14,020.93	Salary
23/12/2016		Dec/sal/02	Tax & NI	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ 4,649.57	Tax & NI
23/12/2016		Dec/sal/03	Pension	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ 5,360.21	Pension
Payments made before the meeting								
08/12/2016	LW2719	2016/372	Lockwood Landscape	£ 35,874.40	£ 7,174.88	£ -	£ 43,049.28	St James Lake Pathway
13/12/2016		2016/373	Arnold Thomson	£ 750.00	£ -	£ -	£ 750.00	Legal - OFS
13/12/2016	1	2016/374	K M R Sharps	£ 450.00	£ -	£ -	£ 450.00	Town Talk - Delivery
Online payments								
14/11/2016	3217		Banner Contracting Ltd	£ 13,734.00	£ 2,764.80	£ -	£ 16,498.80	Grass cutting
17/11/2016	INV1145		Soundwave Audio	£ 334.00	£ 66.80	£ -	£ 400.80	Armistice Day 2016
17/11/2016	INV1146		Soundwave Audio	£ 334.00	£ 66.80	£ -	£ 400.80	Remembrance Day 2016
22/11/2016			Fiona Baker	£ 27.39	£ -	£ -	£ 27.39	
15/11/2016			Robert D Bowerman	£ 41.66	£ -	£ -	£ 41.66	Parking Fees - November
21/09/2016	7143		M-Trac	£ 135.10	£ 27.02	£ -	£ 162.12	Hedge Cutter Repairs
23/11/2016	122442		RVS Group	£ 243.72	£ 48.74	£ -	£ 292.46	Photocopier Rental
25/11/2016	6676		Haverstock	£ 10,577.00	£ 2,115.40	£ -	£ 12,692.40	Professional Services - HLF
24/11/2016			Stephanie Campbell	£ 13.10	£ -	£ -	£ 13.10	Civic expenses
20/11/2016			Matthew Banner	£ 26.99	£ -	£ -	£ 26.99	PPE Expenses
28/11/2016	2811001		AGU Treecraft	£ 345.00	£ 69.00	£ -	£ 414.00	197 - Maple tree works
30/11/2016	A4760		Auditing Solutions Ltd	£ 840.00	£ 168.00	£ -	£ 1,008.00	Internal Audit
30/11/2016	INV0246		Ingham Pinnock	£ 2,500.00	£ 500.00	£ -	£ 3,000.00	Delivery Phase - THB
11/12/2016	9424		Microshade	£ 252.80	£ 50.56	£ -	£ 303.36	Hosting
01/12/2016	24544935		WPS Insurance	£ 900.00	£ 85.50	£ -	£ 985.50	Commercial Combined
01/12/2016	7169		Healthmatic	£ 494.17	£ 98.83	£ -	£ 593.00	Cleaning - Toilets OFS
28/11/2016	182740		Linnell Bros	£ 23.00	£ 4.60	£ -	£ 27.60	Sand
30/11/2016	6630135058		Lyreco	£ 159.95	£ 31.99	£ -	£ 191.94	Stationery
01/12/2016	5299		Playground Supplies Ltd	£ 685.00	£ 137.00	£ -	£ 822.00	Basket Swing - Egerton
30/11/2016	111496		Hydramax	£ 116.41	£ 23.29	£ -	£ 139.70	Consumables
07/12/2016	34072		Blachere Illumination	£ 4,500.00	£ 900.00	£ -	£ 5,400.00	2nd Year
23/11/2016	1611024027		Aviva (Borras)	£ 4,135.88	£ 413.59	£ -	£ 4,549.47	Construction Insurance
09/12/2016			Anthony Hayward	£ 1,150.00	£ -	£ -	£ 1,150.00	Cemetery works
23/11/2016	4002375		SNC	£ 180.00	£ -	£ -	£ 180.00	Licence TH
30/11/2016	INV0246		Ingham Pinnock	£ 2,500.00	£ 500.00	£ -	£ 3,000.00	Professional Services - HLF
Direct Debit								
08/12/2016	B975879694		Utility Warehouse	£ 15.50	£ 3.10	£ -	£ 18.60	
08/12/2016	289274		SGW Payroll	£ 58.00	£ 11.60	£ -	£ 69.60	
02/12/2016	139899622/16		Total Gas & Power	£ 180.44	£ -	£ -	£ 180.44	
				£ 81,577.51	£ 15,261.50	£ -	£ 120,869.72	

Internal Monitoring Form for BTC Office Systems

All Inspections, once completed must be filed in the Town Council office and retained for a period of 12 months

	Task	Seen		If "No" then comment required	Completed
		Yes	No		
Financial					
1	All bank statements filed (all accounts)	✓			Ⓜ
2	Bank Reconciliation completed for previous month	✓			Ⓜ
3	Invoice folder completed for previous month	✓			Ⓜ
4	Banking received completed for previous month	✓			Ⓜ
5	Date of last VAT refund?	✓		31/10/16	Ⓜ
Payroll/Staff					
6	Monthly Payroll pack filed (previous month)	✓			Ⓜ
7	TAX & NI Paid up to date (enter amount & date of last payment)	✓		4304-46. NOV 2016	Ⓜ
8	Pension contribution (enter amount & date of last payment)	✓		5125-30 NOV 2016.	Ⓜ
Minutes					
9	Minutes signed, dated & filed from previous month	✓			Ⓜ
10	Attendance Register up to date (date of last entry)				Ⓜ
Cemetery					
11	Register of Burials up to date (enter date of last entry)	✓		9/12/16.	Ⓜ
12	Individual Pocket created for last entry.	✓			Ⓜ
13	Map of Graves/database up to date	✓			Ⓜ
Old Fire Station - Hire					
14	Form, Insurance, payment for each event booked	✓			Ⓜ
15	Diary up to date (check form to diary entry)	✓			Ⓜ
Miscellaneous					
16	Notice boards up to date	✓			Ⓜ

General comments/recommendations to improve services

11
13

Red Books & white Books are the only legal Documents and should be kept in a safe environment. I would suggest that a fire safe is used.

9 Look at ways of creating an index of minute nos. used.
create a spreadsheet of 2 pages, 1 page for minute items that are used every meeting & 1 page for 1 off minutes items.

* noted That there was no Lighting at the front of the building. IT looked like the office was closed.

*Discuss with staff/Raise at Town Council Meeting (*delete one)

Audit completed

Councillor.....

Dated 13-12-2016

Clerk/RFO.....

Actions completed

Councillor.....

Dated

Clerk/RFO

-----Original Message-----

From: geoffcwilkins@tiscali.co.uk

Date: 06/12/2016 6:14

To: "Town Clerk" <town.clerk@brackleynorthants>

Subj: 2017/18 Precept Consultation

Good morning Linda,

As you are aware, for many years I was a Town Councillor and as such, was used to scrutinising proposed annual budgets and have taken some time in looking at the current proposals.

With the exception of one year, over recent years the Town Council has consistently increased its annual precept well above the rate of inflation and this has been compounded year on year. Sometimes increases were said to be for one year to cover a specific item but never reduced the following year. Again this year you are proposing a 4.3% increase which is well above the 1% current inflation rate. I know in hard cash terms this is not a great deal of money but when you add it to the expected Dist Council, County Council, Police and Adult Care supplement, there could be a substantial increase in the overall Council Tax bill next April for our residents. As a Band D Council Tax payer, I currently pay over £1,600 per year, which I can afford but there are many who cannot.

A few pounds may not be much to Town Councillors but there are many people in our community, which Councillors represent, who are struggling and a few pounds means a lot to them. I have been a Feoffee Trustee for more than 20 years and still see regular requests coming in for help from our Relief in Need Fund, there are still Brackley Residents having to use the Food Bank, I know of Pensioners who have a State Pensions of less than £600 per month who see 20% of their monthly income going on Council Tax, I know of people who are seriously ill who have to pay out considerable amounts of money to get to and from hospitals at both Northampton and Oxford where there is no viable public transport. These people, many on the minimum wage who are really struggling and these should not be ignored.

I think Councillors should be mindful of these things and do their best to set an example and reduce the Town Council's costs wherever possible and as such I urge you to review the proposed precept and tweak the figures to bring the overall increase down to no more than the 1% rate of inflation. I can personally see areas where this can be done.

There are many in our Community who view the "Old Fire Station" as a white elephant and waste of money and now they see that they are having to subsidise it, they are rightly annoyed. While the Council made a democratic decision to pursue this venture, I and many see it as a mistake. The Council is there to provide services to our community and not to engage in commercial ventures such as providing cafes etc in the Fire Station and Town Hall, especially when the parking situation in the Town will clearly be so bad and as such prevents the likelihood of them from ever being successful ventures. As soon as the new Community Facility is complete on the Radstone Fields Development, I believe the Council should cut its losses and dispose of the Old Fire Station for a start thereby saving a considerable amount of money.

I can also see areas where the Town Council is failing to maximise its income. While I accept that the Council's expertise is in providing services to our community, it and its Councillors have never been particularly good at business acumen and marketing itself to maximise its income. This E Mail is not the right place to go into specifics but a working party should be formed to explore this as another way of the Council generating income rather than inflation busting annual precept increases.

I would be obliged if you would forward this E Mail to Councillors before your budget setting meeting for their consideration and to encourage you and them to do your best to reduce the proposed increase figure to no more than 1%.

Regards,

Geoff Wilkins