

Dear Residents,

In light of the current UK economic backdrop and our commitment to responsible governance, Burlescombe Parish Council is pleased to present the 2024/2025 precept proposal, which showcases our dedication to fiscal prudence and community well-being.

1. **Economic Context**

Understanding the financial challenges facing our residents, we are cognizant of the need for fiscal responsibility. The economy, is facing various economic pressures, including the recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, inflation concerns, and a changing global landscape. Recognising these challenges, we have diligently reviewed our budgetary commitments to ensure the financial well-being of our community.

1. **Precept Proposal**

Our proposed precept for the 2024/2025 fiscal year demonstrates our commitment to financial stewardship. We propose a reduction of £2,081.65, equivalent to a 15.55% decrease from the previous year. This reduction reflects our proactive approach to aligning our expenditure with the needs and resources of our community.

1. **Administration and Staff Costs**

In pursuit of efficient resource allocation, we have made adjustments to the Clerk's budget. Specifically, the Clerk's broadband and expenses have been reduced to better reflect the actual usage of these budgeted line items. This measure not only ensures cost-effectiveness but also demonstrates our commitment to managing our resources prudently.

1. **Membership and Subscriptions**

In response to changing priorities, we have decided to discontinue our corporate membership with the Friends of the Grand Western Canal. While appreciating the valuable work of this organisation, we believe that our resources can be allocated more effectively elsewhere.

1. **Community Grants**

We have conducted a thorough review of our funding allocations to St Mary's Church and Westleigh United Reformed Church. As a result, we have decided to close the community cemetery grants fund. This decision aligns with our objective of optimising our financial commitments while continuing to support our community in alternative ways.

1. **Training and Events**

Our approach to training and events reflects a commitment to fiscal responsibility while maintaining a high standard of governance. We do not maintain a regular schedule of hosted events and will cover these expenses from our reserves when necessary. Training expenses will be raised in the year preceding an election to prepare for the potential onboarding of new councillors. Given the experience and training of our current councillors, it is unlikely that new members will join during non-election years. However, if any councillor is co-opted, this expense will be covered from our reserves.

1. **Miscellaneous**

While we have historically raised funds to meet miscellaneous expenses, we now maintain ample reserves to address any essential, unforeseen costs that may arise within a six to twelve-month period. This prudent approach ensures that our community's financial stability remains intact and that we can respond effectively to any unforeseen circumstances.

1. **Facilities and Venues Expenses**

In alignment with our commitment to optimising resources, we have decided to reduce the number of council meetings held annually from 10 to four. Consequently, we expect a corresponding reduction in facilities and venue expenses. This adjustment reflects our focus on efficient governance while still ensuring that our council remains accessible and effective.

1. **Total Savings for Term**

Our commitment to fiscal responsibility, as evidenced by the proposed reduction for the 2024/2025 fiscal year, will result in substantial cumulative savings.

These savings represent a significant contribution to our long-term financial stability, allowing us to continue serving our community effectively while being prudent stewards of our resources. We remain dedicated to ensuring the financial well-being of our community for years to come.

1. **Conclusion**

In conclusion, our 2024/2025 precept proposal embodies our dedication to both financial prudence and community well-being. We are confident that these measures will enable us to navigate the economic challenges ahead while continuing to provide essential services to our residents. We remain committed to serving our community and look forward to your support in the upcoming fiscal year.

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| Lewis Worrow |
| for and on behalf of Burlescombe Parish Council (the “Chairman”) |
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| November 2023 |