

HATFIELD PEVEREL PARISH COUNCIL



ANNUAL REPORT 2018/19

Contents

Chairman's Report	3
Environment Advisory Group Report	5
Traffic Advisory Group Report	7
Sport and Recreation Advisory Group Report	9
Neighbourhood Development Plan Executive Committee Plan	10
Parish Paths Partnership Report	13
Income and Expenditure Account	15
Income and Expenditure 2018/19 Breakdown	17
Braintree District Councillor Report	18

Chairman's Report

Firstly, I would like to thank a few people who have added to the development of the Parish Council and to recognise the time and effort that they have put in, although have since retired from the Council over the last year. I would like to thank former Councillors Evans, Hinkley and Pennick for all their hard work. They have put in many years of service to the Parish Council. I would also like to welcome Councillor Livermore who recently joined the council.

I joined the council 3 years ago. After a year I accepted the role as Chairman, which I must say I am enjoying, but find it challenging and rewarding. Over this short time a lot has been happening in the Village! Housing has become the hot topic with the aggressive attacks on the land from the developers and land agents. This has been defended by local residents and the Parish Council through letters to MPs, demonstrations and vigorous defence of the Neighbourhood Development Plan by the Council! As a village, we came together and represented our wishes to the Secretary of State in a bid to prevent development of the village in areas that we, the villagers, felt was not in the best interest of the village. Many thanks to all involved for their hard work, but at the moment, the jury is still out! It may be some months before we know an outcome.

Just a couple of interesting points: the village will be getting two Special Constables after the selection process and training. They will have all of the power that a full-time police officer has with the power of arrest. The other great piece of news is the country park which we as a village now have control of. Before we can open to the public, we must work through a management plan and to assist us with this we have engaged Savilles to help with our management plan and the development of the site to create an area of beauty and environmental interest. It may take several years to develop, but when complete it will be a great place to visit. Are you a professional in these areas? Please let us know as we could be calling on you to help with the development of our new country park.

There is a lot going on in the Parish Council and we are always looking for support! I do note there are a lot of people on Facebook who have ideas and a passion to change things! I implore you to move away from the keyboards and come and join working parties or attend meetings and raise your ideas and get involved. The Party in the Park is on the 29th of June this year and we desperately need helpers!

Hadfelda Square Car park is now going to be run by the Parish Council, and it is our intent to retain the 2 hour no charge parking but also offer permit parking for a limited number of customers. If the Parish Council hadn't taken the car park over there was a risk that it could have reverted to a pay and park parking area, and we as a council wanted to retain no charge parking for the villagers. I must thank John Cockell for all his hard work and commitment in working with the Council and Braintree to work through the detail and documentation to make this happen.

We are looking to start a Youth Council so if you have a young person who would like to be involved with the thoughts of the young people of the village, please encourage them to come forward and write to the Parish Clerk. If you have a young person between 13 and 17 and would like to get involved, please ask them to step forward. My intention is to try and get more of the village involved in village matters and be available for people to put their thoughts across.

My thanks go out to Ken and Jackie Earney for the production of the Hatfield Review, and look forward to working with them on our communication strategy for the future. To make this easier we have changed the time that the Parish office will be open so on weekdays there will be someone there between 9.00 and 13.00, but I suggest you phone before you come to the office as the Clerk has duties outside the office and may be out.

That's just a short summary of the what's gone on over the last year. I am sure that you have questions and there will be an opportunity to ask the chairs of our advisory groups and committees later on the agenda.

Cllr Mark Weale

Environment Advisory Group Report

This is the feedback from the Environment Advisory Group.

The first point to note is that we have changed our name. We are now the Environment Advisory Group as oppose to the Environmental Working Party. The reason for the change of name is that we are an ongoing group who are tasked to consider any environmental issues that affect the parish. A Working Party is normally formed with an end goal in mind. Once that has been achieved, then the group should disband. As the parish concerns about its environment never stops, then we couldn't call ourselves a Working Party. One downside to this for you all (I think?) is that our minutes are no longer published on the website. However, if you feel particularly deprived, then you could always ask our clerk for a copy as we still take the notes of our meetings. Although our name has changed, the membership is still the same, the three councillors, me, Diane Wallace and Marel Elliston, the ex-councillor, Peter Endersby, and the people's representative, Leslie Moxhay.

The second point to note is that I have tried to reduce the scope of the EAG. Our remit was getting too large and our meetings were going on too long. Thanks to John Cockell, we are now having regular traffic meetings. He has been able to pick up those issues relating to "street furniture". The influx of newer councillors has meant that we could create a new group, The Sports and Recreation Group. This will be chaired by Charley Dervish and will cover any items relating to the KBMG and the Rec.

So, what has happened in the last year?

The biggest project completed by the EAG was the replacing of the fencing on the new, old burial ground and the fencing around the new, new burial ground. Although it cost us over £20k, we had section 106 monies that we could use to pay for it all. I have to say the end result is impressive. My thanks go to Peter Endersby for kicking off this project a couple of years ago, and David Wallace who managed the day to day installation with the contractor Kevin. David now mows the new site and it looks very impressive.

Other areas that we covered include:

Attending to dangerous trees and the cutting back/down of encroaching vegetation. Last year's biggest job was the removal of a line of tall Leylandii at the back of New Road on the rec boundary. I'm pleased to report that we had a professional tree survey carried out which looked at all of the trees that we have on our parish property. Apart from a couple of trees in the Community Park, there was nothing urgent that needed to be done.

More disappointingly is our attempt to plant new trees in the village. It seems as if they are out of the way, they are left undisturbed. However, any that are planted on the rec get unwanted attention. We have all seen the sorry state that some of the trees that were planted around the MUGA pitch have become. We could address this by planting bigger trees, as well as purchasing sturdier tree guards, so that it is harder for them to be vandalised.

We are in the process of becoming a major landowner in the parish! As well as the Community Park, we have taken over the little driveway next to Peter Hindle's property, on the corner of Church Road and the allotment site. We are also in the process of transferring over three small parcels of land by Rowan Way and Church Road which are currently owned by BDC.

We have recently cleared the land behind the library. Older residents will remember that there were swings there and it was a nice place for kids to play. However, the overgrowth of the hedges and trees has resulted in less desirable elements congregating there. By opening it out, it has made it a more attractive area. I see that our efforts have attracted favourable comments on Facebook (unusual for us!)

We continue to refurbish/replace seats around the village, site new dog poo bins, cut back encroaching vegetation, maintain the play equipment on the rec and at Nounsley, keep the grassy areas owned by the P.C. looking nice, etc, etc.

Most of these duties are carried out by our handyman, David Wallace. At this stage I must thank him for his hard work and dedication in keeping our parish looking so pleasant. I know that he is often carrying out work, over and above, what is expected of him. A mention should go out to our litter pickers, one of whom, Alan, has retired this year.

What of the future?

Well, we have entered the Essex Village of the Year award. The assessors have already been around and seemed to be impressed with what we have here. We may very well enter the Best Kept Churchyard award this year. So, I will end on a request that we all continue to keep our village looking nice, as it makes life pleasant for us all!

Cllr Munt

Traffic Advisory Group Report

The TAG has met six times during the past 12 months, at approximately two-monthly intervals.

One of the main tasks over the past year has been to bring to a successful conclusion the protracted negotiations for the transfer of ownership of Hadfelda Square car park from Braintree District Council to the Parish Council. One of the key reasons for doing this is to protect the current two-hour free parking facility for the benefit of residents and for customers of local businesses. Completion of the transaction is imminent, with full ownership expected to be vested in the Parish Council by late September, once all the legal formalities are complete.

On the positive side, we have secured the provision of a replacement bus shelter opposite the Co-op and have acquired a new Vehicle Activated Sign to add to the four Speed Indicator Devices, one of which is currently undergoing a refurbishment of the LED lights. The village also benefits from use of Essex County Council's Vehicle Activated Sign equipment for nine months each year, and all six pieces of equipment are rotated through the 13 sites in Hatfield Peverel and Nounsley, moves taking place approximately every three months.

Applications have been made, or are in the process of being completed, for additional signage in Station Road and Church Road/Crabb's Hill warning of pedestrians and horse riders respectively, and efforts are being made to secure replacements for missing speed and directional signs in Ulting Road and Bury Lane. On the recommendation of the TAG, the PC has supported the Co-op's application for the installation of "yellow lines" opposite the store.

Work is in progress to try to secure an upgrade for the pedestrian crossings in the village, all of which present hazards for both pedestrians and motorists in poor visibility and at night, and when traffic is heavy. Similar work is progressing in respect of an application for "white gates" at several entrances to the village, and we are in discussions with the relevant authorities which hopefully will lead to widening the footpath in one small section of Maldon Road.

In the coming months the TAG hopes to reach a successful conclusion in respect of several hedges overgrowing the adjacent footway, various overflowing drains and the operation of the temporary lights at Latneys on the southbound slip road from Witham.

The Group has considered the merits of taking part in Essex County Council's pilot on the devolution of highway services, which would give the PC some autonomy over work currently undertaken by ECC. However, it was considered that the financial allowance by ECC for this work would fall far short of the costs likely to be incurred by the PC, and the additional resources required would be extensive. It was therefore recommended to the full PC, and subsequently endorsed, that the PC should not become involved in this pilot scheme.

Problem parking remains an issue throughout the village and we will be publishing, in the Review, details of how to report poorly or illegally parked vehicles.

Funding has been secured for new signage to be located outside the schools, requesting parents to be courteous in terms of not stopping on the zig-zag lines. Later this year, we hope to be able to submit a request for a 20mph speed limit in the vicinity of the schools.

On the negative side, we have had to suspend Speedwatch activities owing to a lack of volunteers, despite an appeal being launched in 2018 for additional members to come forward. We are now reliant on the Police to undertake the occasional speed monitoring exercise, the latest of which was in evidence in Maldon Road in late March.

Finally, thanks are due to everyone who has been a member of the TWP/TAG over the past year, or who has assisted with issues that have arisen. Their help and support have been invaluable and greatly appreciated.

John Cockell, Chair of TAG

Sport and Recreation Advisory Group Report

The Sports and recreation group was formed in March 2019 with Cllr Dervish being temporary chair. The Groups Terms of reference are yet to be finalised which will be done at the first formal meeting of the full advisory group. Once the full council meeting has been held in May 2019 councillors will be invited to join the group and terms can then be finalised.

The Sports and recreation group will cover topics such as, play areas, open spaces, liaison and relationship management with Football Club, Cricket Club, Bowls club, allotment association, Village Hall, and all other groups whom provide a service to the community.

Key objective to the group is to ensure the Parish Council facilitate and provide suitable recreational facilities and sports facilities for the wellbeing of the parishioners.

Cllr Dervish

NDP Executive Committee Report

Progress on the Plan has been frustratingly slow since this time last year due primarily to confusion around application of E U Habitat regulations and lack of consistent guidance from government and statutory authorities beyond the control of the NDP team.

It must be acknowledged that the responsibility for progressing the NDP through examination rests with the LPA from the stage that it was handed over to them although the NDP team have liaised closely with the LPA to provide every assistance possible.

At each stage as appropriate the group have met with and sought guidance from Ann Skippers, Place Services and Braintree District Council who have all worked hard alongside them to try and find resolution to the difficulties encountered.

10th April 2018

Examiner letter received confirming agreement to changes to policies being offered as suggested in the Statutory Environmental Assessment (SEA) following Natural England's comments, subject to consultation.

15th June 2018

Examiner requested clarification from the PC and Braintree District Council (BDC) on their view of what further work was needed to ensure the NDP was compliant with EU habitats regulations following the 'Sweetman' judgement.

The PC and BDC (following legal advice obtained by BDC) concluded that in order to be compliant the plan should be subjected to a new SEA screening with an Appropriate Assessment then completed for the NDP.

28th August 2018

This action was agreed by the examiner subject to a further consultation period in which the whole plan clearly annotated with the proposed changes would be presented for comment.

There followed a period of uncertainty when it appeared that although required to do so in order to be compliant with EU habitat regulations, a neighbourhood Plan was not legally empowered, not being considered as a 'Competent Authority' to produce an AA so therefore could not progress further.

28th October 2018

Examiner advised that consultation should include the AA that had been prepared for the NDP.

There was still no clarity from government guidance changes issued until 23rd December 2018 finally making it possible for a NDP to undertake an AA where needed and progress.

19th January 2019

In view of elapsed time since the start of 2018 during which outline planning permission was granted to the Arla site, Natural England had changed their position in October 2018, recognising that

environmental concerns had been dealt with for the site through the conditions attached to the grant of planning permission.

Being regarded through this situation as an exceptional case, Natural England confirmed that in their view the plan could proceed without the need for an AA.

A new SEA was therefore commissioned which established that the plan did not now require an AA and changes to policy wordings dealt adequately with EU habitat requirements for future development proposals.

A full set of updated documents including the NDP, SEA and Basic Conditions Statement were sent to Statutory Consultees in February 2019.

Responses were received within one week enabling a further six week public consultation to take place before the purdah period for the local council election.

The PC and BDC reviewed the responses and sought advice from the examiner regarding the next steps

2nd April 2019

The examiner replied with questions relating to written responses to the consultation comments alongside legal opinion on issues raised by developers and an opinion on the NDP from BDC.

BDC have since been engaged in collating answers to these questions and with agreement from the PC responded to the examiner on 8th May 2019 on behalf of both themselves and the PC. The only matter remaining outstanding was a response to the legal opinion produced by Gladman Developments Limited as BDC await completion of their own legal opinion.

Copies of correspondence with the examiner are available on the parish council website.

The principal issue raised by the developers is one that in their opinion the NDP must have an appropriate assessment without mitigation being taken into account. The NDP view on this is that the Competent Authority (BDC) has been able to conclude that the plan, as it is, would not have an adverse effect upon the integrity of the protected sites falling within the Zone Of Influence of the Hatfield Peverel parish boundary.

I wish to extend my sincere thanks to the team members for the tireless input they have continued to make over the course of the last year trying to ensure the NDP is brought to a satisfactory conclusion.

Secretary of State (SoS) Inquiry Stonepath and Gleneagles

Following conclusion of the inquiry in the early part of last year there followed a succession of reference back letters from the SoS.

21st June 2018

The SoS requested comment from parties on their view of how the 'Sweetman' judgement on EU Habitat regulations effected the arguments presented at the inquiry

20th August 2018

The SoS asked for comment from parties on how the Revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) might impact on his decision.

1st October

The SoS asked for views on the effect Revised Housing Needs projection figures released by the Office for National Statistics may have on his decision.

5th March 2019

The SoS asked for comment on the perceived effect the following may have on his decision

Ministerial statement on Housing and Planning policy

Housing Delivery Test

Consultation responses to technical updates on planning policy and guidance

12th March 2019

The SoS asked parties to comment on the Consultation on Further Changes being undertaken by BDC to the NDP

11th April 2019

Further comment invited on the significance of the appeal result on a site at Bures Hamlet (a Gladman Developments Limited proposal). BDC had refused the proposal, a decision which the appeal inquiry upheld. The applicants were subsequently denied an attempt to challenge the appeal decision further.

In each instance appropriate advice was sought from either legal representatives or planning consultants and a response made to the SoS office.

A final decision is still awaited and believed to be imminent.

Copies of all the correspondence between the Parish Council and the SoS is available on the parish council website.

I extend thanks again to the NDP team for the tireless work they have put into dealing with these requests for further information.

The Stonepath Meadow Residents group are also to be commended for their efforts to support and protect the entire village as they have responded to the same information requests.

Mike Renow

Chair Hatfield Peverel Neighbourhood Development Plan

Parish Paths Partnership representative (P3) report

1 Current status of the Parish Paths Partnership scheme

ECC grant-funding covers only one of the four or five regular seasonal surface cuts by DW Maintenance (parish handymen David and Damon Wallace) usually needed on three key paths (FPs18, 39 and 47). All further costs fall on the parish council. ECC contractors carry out one annual cut to a further three of our paths. A number of other field paths are maintained by farmers John Upson and Richard Lewis (Mowden Hall Farm).

Non-scheduled issues, such as a problem on one of our paths, are reported on the Highways problem reporting pages of the ECC website. The local footpath inspector reads the reports regularly, usually daily, and visits site to look at the problem and arranges for it to be dealt with by an ECC contractor or occasionally a volunteer working party such as the Friends of the Flich Way. However, this arrangement usually results in delays in getting problems attended and as reported a year ago a volunteer group was formed to deal with some of the problems in a more timely manner.

2 Parish volunteer working group

The group came together twice last season to cut back path-side vegetation on the path leading from the Duke of Wellington bridge to The Vineyards (FP2) access road and in the vicinity of the burial ground (FP20), subsequently receiving favourable comments.

However, the group members have decided that they don't wish to carry out any more substantial tasks beyond vegetation clearance. Need for work other than this, to do with structures such as waymaker posts, bridges and gates for example will have still to be referred to ECC for action.

3 ECC works

3.1 Path from New Road to The Street via Bennett Way (FP4)

The section from Bennett Way to The Street was resurfaced and a much improved (mobility-scooter-friendly) barrier erected at The Street, completed in April last year.

3.2 Surface improvement of section of path from the Church Road allotments to the burial ground (FP20)

Much more recently road planings were laid along this section of path to improve its all-weather qualities.

3.3 Stiles - crossfield path from Scout & Guide HQ to Sportsmans Lane (FP37)

The long-delayed replacement of the two extremely unsatisfactory stiles by pedestrian gates/kissing gates appears likely to occur early in the current year. The delay in getting necessary agreements in place before this can occur has been due to a succession of personnel changes in ECC. The gates are likely to be installed by Friends of the Flich Way volunteers.

4 Path diversions

The path diversions on four paths on Lord Rayleigh's Farms land - FP1 and 2 around Termitts Farm, FP36 and 44 in the vicinity of Toppinghoe Hall and FP34 from the Hatfield Peverel-Boreham road to Terling Hall Road are now in place. Waymarking has been checked recently and appears adequate.

5 Stonepath Meadow – FP43

Ministerial decision on the Gladman development application of this land remains in abeyance, presumably stalled due to national government's preoccupation with the Brexit situation. We must be on our guard for any attempt to divert the path should the application succeed.

6 Path flooding and boggy surfaces

The flooding on FP7 (Church Road to Sportsmans Lane) has fortunately not recurred in the past twelve months, but may yet be proved not to have gone away.

7 Maintenance of paths by local resident volunteers

Thanks to those residents who cut side growth and mow, strim or otherwise maintain path surfaces in their neighbourhood as the need arises throughout the year. Their efforts are much appreciated.

Ken Earney, Parish Paths Partnership (P3) representative, Hatfield Peverel

Income and Expenditure Account

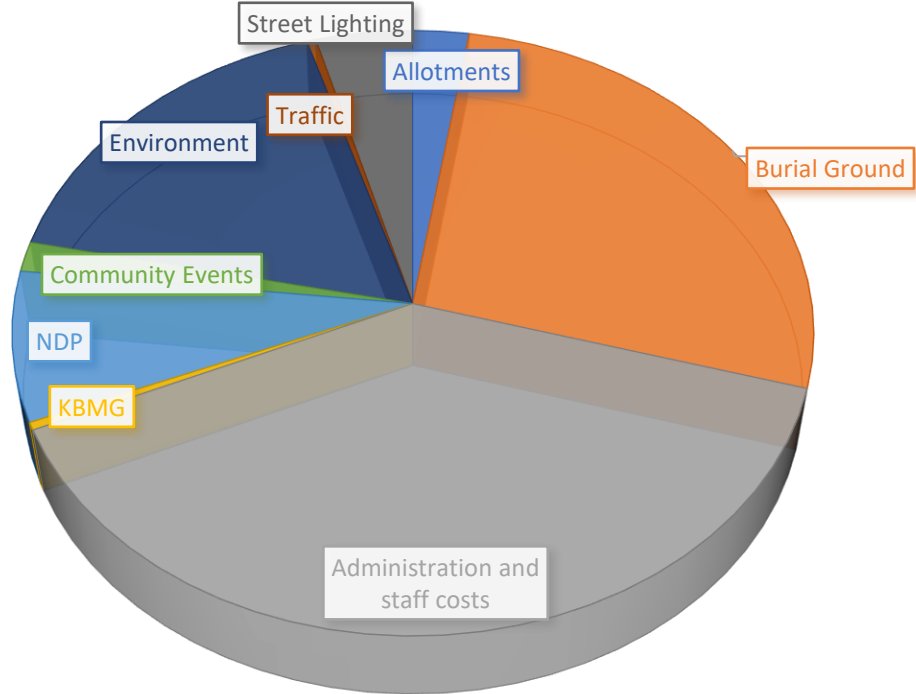
31/03/18 £		31/03/19 £
	INCOME	
2,056.02	Allotment Rents	2,399.74
350.00	Bowling Club Rent	350.00
3,469.96	Braintree District Council - Street Cleaning	3,554.59
6,140.00	Burial Fees	9,305.00
77.50	Compensation	0.00
0.00	Council Tax Collection Fund Surplus	977.00
2.00	Electricity Wayleave	0.00
24.60	Essex County Council - Parish Paths Partnership - Grant	24.60
503.60	Football Club Client Saver	1,212.26
1,800.00	Football Club Rent	1,200.00
0.00	Grant from Braintree District Council	22,468.52
0.00	Grant from Essex County Council	20,000.00
159.28	Grass Cutting for Essex County Council	134.68
1,026.00	Income	0.00
89.84	Interest	162.60
0.00	Neighbourhood Plan	3,300.00
0.00	Parish Support Grant	3,539.00
2,748.32	Party in the Park	1,723.25
65,660.00	Precept	60,399.00
18,595.86	VAT on income/VAT repayments	6,930.97
2.46	Youth Capital Fund	6.82
102,705.44	INCOME TOTAL	137,688.03
	EXPENDITURE	
2,092.63	Allotments	2,728.85
3,976.48	Burial Ground	26,256.52
14,973.56	General Administration	19,981.26
967.40	Income Tax	1,835.80
1,433.49	Keith Bigden Memorial Site	389.16
1,580.79	National Insurance	1,765.04
41,783.75	Neighbourhood Plan	7,682.00
2,220.88	Party in the Park	1,504.95
251.83	Pension	1,023.76
19,610.95	Playing Fields and Open Spaces	15,907.40
20.00	S. 137 Payments	20.00
500.50	Speed Display Equipment	416.51
16,278.69	Staff Costs	12,733.29
3,865.89	Street Lighting	4,142.44
0.00	Youth Capital Fund	263.50
109,556.84	EXPENDITURE TOTAL	96,650.48

Please note: The figures given are based on unaudited accounts

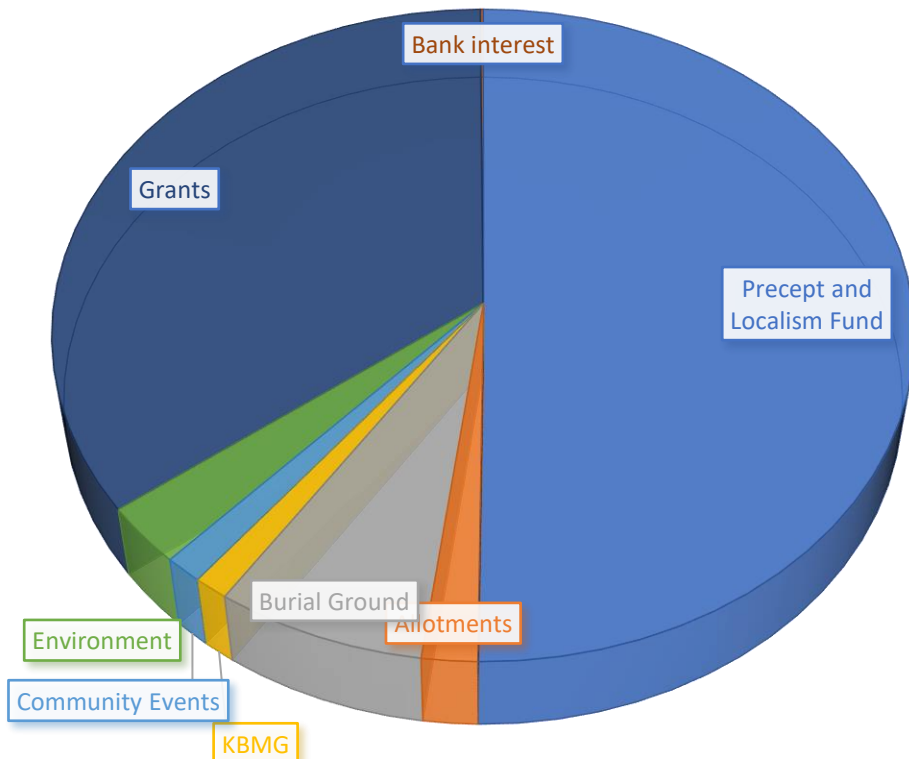
31/03/18		31/03/19
£	EXPENDITURE	£
49,890.28	Balance as at 01/04/18	43,038.88
<u>102,705.44</u>	Add Total Income	<u>137,688.03</u>
152,595.72		180,726.91
109,556.84	Deduct Total Expenditure	96,650.48
0.00	Stock Adjustment	0.00
0.00	Transfer to/ from reserves	0.00
43,038.88	Balance as at 31/03	84,076.43

Please note: The figures given are based on unaudited accounts

HPPC EXPENDITURE 2018/19



HPPC INCOME 2018/19



Braintree District Councillor Report

BDC Budget

Over the past few years DCLG then MHCLG have applied progressive, ever tightening requirement of councils to prepare for a regime of stringent reductions in direct Government grant funding and this, at an early stage, we have confidently taken on board in our planning in order to facilitate as smooth a transition as possible.

We have evaporating sources of funding support from Government, with our Settlement Funding Assessment now stripped of the last vestiges of Revenue Support Grant which now ceases. SFA now comprises just solely of retained business rates. It could have been worse, however, as the Government has withdrawn its original intention to charge us with negative RSG of £291,482... but we continue with capped limits that can be raised on council tax.

As ever, though we have been resolutely responsive and adaptive, so we have had to plan for unavoidable pressures on costs of our services and this includes costs off recycling. At the same time we also need to invest to protect and nourish services, such as making financial provision for impact of welfare reforms including prevention of homelessness, and to promote economic development, So we are reliant on making ongoing further savings to protect front line services, and, of course continuing to maximise income.

Some of the most significant savings arise from boosting income in particular from proactive initiatives to increase rental and investment income. including from adding to our pooled funds investments. However, challenges still lie ahead, and despite taking advantage of the latest opportunity to increase council tax, we still need to make substantial savings/ and or increase income from 2019/20 onwards with projected shortfalls for the 3 years from 20/21 of £539k, £7k and £163k a total of just over £700k.) We do face considerable ongoing uncertainty, given that the current 4 year settlement ends in 2019/20 and the estimated subsequent shortfalls are likely to be subject to inevitable change given the potential redistribution effects of the Fair Funding Review and introduction of the 75% Business Retention scheme in 2020/21.

Nevertheless, we remain totally resolved to ensure best value for money for Braintree District's council and business tax payers.

Key achievements

- We have proactively striven to address the financial challenges of having to cope with dramatically tapering annual reduction of Government revenue support grant (RSG) which now reduces to nothing by the end of this financial year, a reduction of £4.58million since 2013.
- Since 2010 Braintree District Council has found £13million through savings (£8.6million) and income generation (£4.4million) to address the shortfalls caused by reduced grant, inflationary pressures, increased service demands and new investment.
- Achieved a balanced revenue budget annually with modest council tax increases. Since 2008 council tax changes have ranged between a 1% reduction to a 2.99% increase, with an average increase over the period of 1.6% per annum.
- We have consistently received unqualified audit reports on the Council's accounts from the external auditors. In addition, they have issued unqualified value for money conclusions with no identified significant weaknesses in our arrangements to ensure it takes properly informed decisions and deploys resources to achieve planned and sustainable outcomes for taxpayers.
- Implemented a number of business rate relief schemes, mostly devised by the Government, under the Council's discretionary powers: including supporting small businesses and retail relief.
- Agreed a District Investment Strategy with an initial value of £28million but rising to circa £100million with further development proposals which will deliver benefits over the medium to long-term.
- The Council's investment in infrastructure projects saw Braintree District Council recognised nationally last year for innovation in finance. It means that not only is the council ensuring it can finance the everyday services residents rely on such as waste and recycling collections and street cleaning, it is also helping to solve some of the biggest problems our communities face concentrating on health, homes, journeys and jobs.

Current and future challenges

The Council has had and continues to respond to increasing costs not only from inflationary and market pressures, but also from increased demand on services and new responsibilities. In respect of the latter, the Planning service has had to respond to an increase in planning applications, many of which are for major developments, and as a consequence an increase in work on appeals, and additional financial provision to defend them. The Housing service has recently acquired additional responsibilities under the Homelessness Act. The Council will strengthen its teams in both these areas. Recycling costs are also increasing, whereby councils used to receive income for their recyclable materials, they are now paying to have the material reprocessed. This costs Braintree District Council around £456,000 each year.

In addition, we sporadically experience difficult to predict one - off budget demands such as nationally determined business rate appeals e.g. doctors' surgeries and more recent ATMs at supermarkets and other retail outlets.

The budget setting process is informed by the ever-evolving Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) which assesses changing budget demands and projected shortfall challenges over a 4year period. At this time, of publishing our initial budget proposals for 2019/20 there remains net budget shortfalls for 2020/21 to 2022/23 totalling £728k. But it should be noted that a high-level assessment of the

pressures and/or events which will impact on the Council's financial position over the next four years has identified a number of emerging issues, the majority of which are not easily quantifiable at this time.

Local Government funding reforms are due to be introduced from 2020/21, which will include a 75% Business Rate Retention scheme and a reset of Business Rate Baselines which will be informed by the outcomes of the long awaited Fair Funding Review and of the Government's Spending Review 2019.

The Local Plan

Development and submission of the Local Plan has been a long drawn out frustrating process for many of us, and its ratification by the Planning Inspectorate cannot come soon enough to prevent opportunistic planning applications on sites outside allocated sites in the proposed local plan. In the meantime the HP Neighbourhood Plan Group have worked valiantly to get the NP finalized and we all much hope that within the next few months, after some setbacks, this will be in place. With recent events it might even be in place before the Local Plan.

The Braintree Local Plan was submitted in late summer 2017 and went to the Planning Inspectorate for examination. Examination has to be conducted in two parts. Part 1 is for the proposed new North Essex Gardens Communities, and is a combined submission with Colchester BC and Tendering DC. After this has been examined and ratified, only then can examination move on to Part 2, examination of our specific district development plan. The hearing on Part 1 was held in January last year, with a follow up hearing in May. Subsequent to this matters have progressed prosaically with demands for more evidence and subsequent analysis. This further pushes back when examination of Part 2 can begin. However, the Lead Inspector has published a new timetable with the Part 1 hearing to reopen this summer and with the aspiration that Part 2 hearings will be held in the autumn.

A12 Improvement Scheme

Following the Highways England public consultation two years ago and subsequent representations on A12 options, we were informed that HE would be publishing its final proposals to meet the original start date on site of April 2020. However, publication of proposals have been severely delayed and will also now be further delayed until the Local Plan Part 1 has been ratified. This inevitably means that the start date will be yet further put back. All very frustrating... not least the considerable uncertainties and consequences from potentially closing the village A12 access roads.

BDC Councilor Community Grants Scheme

I am pleased to report that grants have been allocated across the wider ward and for Hatfield Peverel grants have been allocated to village organisations: including the HP Scouts, Cricket Club, Parish Council and Tiger Tots Nursery.

Examples of BDC performance over past year

- Achieved a recycling rate of 50.9%.
- Removed over 800 fly tips within 24 hours of being reported.
- Achieved the Customer Service Excellence Standard for the fourth consecutive year demonstrating the high standard of customer service provided and were recognised as an exemplar in 13 areas.
- Achieved 40 awards from the Essex Playing Fields Association for the standards and high quality of the Council's playing areas.
- Granted planning permission for over 1200 dwellings supporting the delivery of much needed housing across the district.
- Enabled the delivery of 154 affordable homes across the district.
- Approved funds to develop up to five council-owned sites to deliver new mixed tenure homes across the district.
- Prevented over 200 households from becoming homeless.
- Completed the acquisition of a strategic employment site at Great Notley providing additional land to support business growth and create up to 2,000 jobs.
- Secured detailed planning consent for the regeneration of Braintree Town Centre comprising of a Livewell Hub, 70 bed hotel, restaurant/café, commercial unit, 35 residential units, bus interchange, car park and enhanced public realm.

CLlr David Bebb

May 2019