

## **WHITCHURCH AND GANAREW GROUP PARISH COUNCIL**

### **NOTES – FINANCE YEAR ENDING 31 MARCH 2024**

**Prepared 17 April 2024**

#### **Income**

The precept remained unchanged once again this year - the working group and council members aware of the increased living costs experienced by residents and families. We have been able to gain a lengthsman maintenance grant from Herefordshire Council and Balfour Beatty which is most welcome to have this financial facility once again to assist this maintenance work. The grant funding does not include public footpaths.

We are also grateful to the Balfour Beatty locality steward who makes regular parish inspections and meetings with Chairman and Clerk helps us to gain some work projects directly from Balfour Beatty. A good example being drainage work and the planned safety signage improvements at the Whitchurch village end Llangrove road.

From the Community Hub grant received earlier this year we have purchased equipment and have reserve funds for further investment against their agreed spend audit. This membership gains us possible further funding and the advantage of meeting and exchanging ideas with other county Good Neighbour Schemes.

We are delighted to report that with grateful thanks to the team of kind-hearted dedicated residents we have a thriving and ever-expanding community group of activities and friendships in our parish.

Funds for the Good Neighbour Scheme represent £531.53.

The parish council also hold a reserve emergency fund representing £10000.00.

#### **Payments**

This has been an exceptionally busy year for the Council with working projects to improve community wellbeing and improved road safety areas and some a surprise involving litigation against our Neighbourhood Plan website.

Neighbourhood Plan – photograph litigation against unauthorised use. A professional photographer who makes his living from this industry determined that a photograph selected by the then steering group was used within the Neighbourhood Plan. We have needed to take legal advice to minimise the claimed costs of infringement. An abject lesson for the future that although it was requested to the steering group that all matters relating to the Plan should be submitted to the council for approval this was not.

Community wellbeing activities – our Good Neighbour Scheme activities go from strength to strength with grateful thanks to our dedicated resident volunteer team. The latest group meeting – Friendship Group – has just started.

The play area has started major improvements for the younger families and teenagers. New super quality safety matting installed for the junior area and the table tennis table totally refurbished to make it impossible not to consider playing! This area is to have slabs surround for all weather play and a new slabbed picnic area is being created with tables to enjoy family group time together.

Road safety improvement – we have through the Balfour Beatty and Herefordshire Council community commissioning model agreed to have improved signage awareness made at the Whitchurch village end of Llangrove Road. This is all scheduled – waiting for the dry

weather please ! The road painted signs and red tarmac can only be done when it is dry. The objective to create greater awareness of this 30mph speed zone.

Other cost segments are in general level with cost increases and inflation.

Grit bins around the parish – like many segments of parish and town maintenance the service schedules provided by Herefordshire Council due to diminished budgets have also declined. The council have therefore purchased grit mix which is stored and can be obtained from E & I Williams on the Doward by booking an appointment during normal office hours. Our grateful thanks to the Williams family for this kind community gesture.

Finally more thanks – to The Old Court Hotel who willingly let council members meet to conduct various business meetings associated with our activities and programmes and who act as our distribution point for council related deliveries. It is much appreciated.

Related matters of activity

Churchyard maintenance contribution to St Swithins and St Dubricius

Community Hub Good Neighbour Scheme group social activities and all related matters

Christmas related activities

Family play area

Grass cutting to selected social areas

Litter and dog refuse bins and their regular attendance schedules

Memorial Hall wifi

Defibrillator sites and the regular maintenance / service programme

Clock Tower electricity supply and clock service maintenance. The parish council do not own the Clock Tower but support these services as participation to the village well being.

Parish Council and Neighbourhood Plan website

Parish facilities benches and notice board

Public Rights of Way clearance programme for residents' usage and supporting tourism