

Observations on Finance for the ATM 2022

The financial year 2021-22 once more had its challenges, with reduced income for bookings due to the continuing impact of the pandemic. However, we finally moved towards something nearer pre-Covid normality as the year progressed, reflected in an increase in bookings for the town hall, sports pavilion and sports facilities once more.

We retained the restrictions on spending that were adopted by HTC due to the pandemic and this means that, once more, the Council's accounts are in a positive and stable position.

A review of our income shows total receipts of £416,451 of which £359,002 was raised through the precept. HTC had budgeted for £81,034 from income but received £57,449.

The draft figures for the year-end will be audited by the Internal Auditor in May and HTC hopes to have another financial year which will signed off as complete and unqualified by the External Auditor.

Going forwards, council unanimously agreed at the December full council meeting an overall recommended spend of £468,044 and a precept demand of £369,677 for 2022-23. The anticipated provisional figure calculated against Band D properties was £61.05, against the 2021-22 figure of £59.29. This will be adjusted based on the revised tax base but the provisional estimate was for an increase of £1.76 per annum, equating to £0.15p per month, £0.03p per week. That small increase in part reflects additional expenditure for the coming year related to the Queen's Platinum Jubilee celebrations and Hythe hosting the Cinque Ports speakership.

The retendering of the council's significant grounds maintenance contract for the next five years was a particularly important piece of work in this last year and reflects, I feel, this council's adoption of best practice procurement.

I have had the pleasure to chair the Finance and General Purposes Committee for the past three years and would like to take this opportunity to thank all the members of the committee for their hard work and commitment, as well as the staff, particularly Julie as our clerk/responsible finance officer, and Roland, recently promoted to finance officer. The clarity of the reports and figures that have been brought to the committee have been a great aid to the F&GP members over the year, so too the prompt and helpful responses to questions.