

Annual Report and Accounts for Pitstone Parish Council Year Ending 31-3-2024

| | To 31-3-2023 | To 31-3-2024 | Variance to previous year |
|---------------------------------|--------------|--------------|---------------------------|
| Total Receipts | £189,150 | £224,729 | +19% |
| Total Payments | £166,670 | £197,749 | +19% |
| Balances Carried Forward | £173,135 | £200,115 | |

The parish council is financially secure with no loans or debts. The majority of our capital projects progress with a high level of external grant funding, thus the rise and fall in receipts corresponds with the rise and fall in capital projects being undertaken.

Our accounts are subject to three layers of audit each year. The first is carried out by council members. The second is conducted by an 'internal auditor' appointed by the Parish Council – IAC Ltd. The Parish council and the internal auditor's findings are then submitted to an 'external auditor' appointed to us, in our case PKF Littlejohn. Members of the public can view all audit reports on our website. This report provides a more descriptive narrative, rather than purely financial.



Last financial year there were no major capital purchases and this financial year saw the purchase of the double lane cricket practice nets (part funded by a receipt of Section 106 developer contributor monies from Buckinghamshire Council) on the recreation ground, four information panels for the Local Wildlife Site (part funded by a Community Board grant), a memorial bench (part funded by the family) and a replacement playground gate. There was an increase in the cost of ground-keeping, utility and water costs, and delivering devolved services on behalf of Buckinghamshire Council. These were partially offset by an increase in rental income at the pavilion, cost savings related to printing Pitstone Parish Post and the completion of the LED lantern roll out to our street light portfolio.



The normal council operations continue, and these receive no external grants, so are funded via the precept (or partially offset via income generated from hire of our facilities or advertising in our magazine). This includes maintaining streetlights, Christmas illuminations, litter picking, emptying dog & litter bins, maintaining play equipment and open spaces, producing Pitstone Parish Post, supporting local community groups with grants, running the Volunteer of the Year Scheme, running the youth café and community car schemes, operating our two mVAS units, running the allotment site, maintaining parish assets, and maintaining the pavilion and football pitches.



Devolved Services

The parish council undertakes some right of way maintenance, grass verge cutting and siding out on behalf of Buckinghamshire Council (BC) under powers they have devolved to us for these purposes. They pay a contribution of £3,988.15 towards the delivery of these services, which cost the parish £9,485 to deliver. However, it does mean that our grass can be cut more frequently (Bucks would now only provide 2 urban cuts and 3 rural cuts (visibility splays) over the year), works can be carried out more efficiently, and we have more control over delivery of these services. Due to complications arising from changing their Highways Contractors, Buckinghamshire Council only offered a one-year contract for 2024 and is yet to confirm what, or if, there will be a devolved service offering for 2025 onwards.

Ongoing Projects by Other Bodies/Tiers of Government

- Hertfordshire County Council continues to work with the Canal & River Trust and Buckinghamshire Council to specify possible cycle route improvements towards Tring station. All roadside options tested failed the required safety audits so a direct straight-line cycle/pedestrian route along Northfield Road was deemed unviable. They are now concentrating on possible improvements to the route via Marshcroft Lane and the canal.
- Buckinghamshire Council continues to work with developers (Taylor Wimpey, Croudace, Nicholas King Homes and Bellway) to fulfil their highway and leisure obligations including the issues surrounding the multi-use games area.
- The Chiltern's Beechwoods in Ashridge were designated a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) as they are of European importance. This gives rise to mitigation measures that must be put in place to protect them from over-use. Local Planning Authorities are working to establish what these mitigation measures may look like, and as Bucks Council do not yet have approved mitigation in place, this means that no planning applications for new residential dwellings are currently being granted. Once the situation has been resolved it is anticipated that a number of applications that are currently on hold will then be determined by the Planning Authority.

If anyone has any specific queries they would like to ask about the receipts or payments during the financial year, please email parishclerk@pitstone.co.uk and we'll be happy to provide more detailed information.