



**BURNHAM-ON-SEA &
HIGHBRIDGE TOWN COUNCIL**

**ANNUAL REPORT
and ACCOUNTS**

2015/2016

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

The new council, which was formed following the elections in May, saw several new members elected, I'm sure that their views and concerns represent those that elected them, and that as a council, we all have the best interest of Burnham on Sea & Highbridge at heart.

As always the town council has had a very busy & challenging year, and has tried hard to ensure that the local community receives value for money, in a world of local government that constantly sees funding squeezed, and shrinking resources, all members of this council strive to ensure that Burnham on Sea & Highbridge achieves the best possible outcome.

I have been honoured to serve as Mayor over the last twelve months, and am proud of the wonderful community spirit that exist in our towns with so many organisations, clubs and groups facing difficult times, both recruiting and retaining members, Burnham on Sea & Highbridge host such a great mix of people, it enables most of these groups to not only keep going, but in some cases expand.

My thanks to Denise our town clerk, for all the hard work she carries out on behalf of this Council, and to Lorna 1 and Lorna 2, I'll let you figure out which is which, but to one of them especially for keeping my diary up together, and reminding me where I need to be!

My thanks also to Rev Sharon for acting as my Mayors Chaplin, to Daisy for acting as Mayors cadet, and special thanks to Cllrs Bill Hancock & Paul Young for all their hard work as Deputy and second Deputy Mayor.

And a very big thank you to you all from myself and Maria, for granting us both the honour to represent our towns

Cllr Michael Clarke

April 2016



BUDGET 2015-16

Introduction

In preparing the budget for 2016-17 the solid format used in previous year has helped new councillors take part in the budget process through the committees they sit on. Each committee reviews the work they have done over the past year and considers what they services they wish to deliver in the next year and then how much funding they need to do this work. The Council finances its expenditure – using a combination of income, partnership working and precept.

The budget agreed will allow the council to achieve its aims for the next year and the additional projects they have undertaken.

Financial Strategy

The budget adopted by the Council achieves a sustainable balanced budget, whilst allowing some flexibility to deal with new challenges.

Each committee presents a budget for the year ahead, that will fund the services they provide, as well as considering the overall budget for the Town Council and resulting precept requirement.

Burnham & Highbridge Town Council has a policy of preparing a budget that allows for continual maintenance of their assets rather than have to increase the precept when there are major works required, such as roofing or plumbing in the Old Courthouse or Princess Theatre.

The strategy also identifies areas where support may be needed from the Town Council's General funds and considers how unspent revenue balances are dealt with at the end of the year. This is particularly pertinent for the Burial Committee who budget carefully for work in the three cemeteries at the same time earmarking any unspent revenue to build funds for the future expansion of Brent Road cemetery. This will enable the committee to maintain this valuable service to the community whilst planning for the future. This practical financial approach is rolled out across the Town Council.

Implication of the Budget Adopted

The income required from the precept for 2016/17 is £588,045, an increase of £17,449 or 3.06 Last year the budget resulted in an increase per band D household of just 1.12%. Expenditure has increased by 4.96% but when you add the loss of support grant £21,449. However the tax base has also increased making the cost on a Band D property £3.71 per annum or 4.55% over last year.

The support grant which was £84,101 last year or 15% of the precept, will be phased out over the next four years.

Some of the work and initiatives to be carried out by the Town Council over the coming year (2015/16)

Joint services

- ◆ Support the use and maintenance of CCTV in our parish, by contributing 50% of the overall cost to Sedgemoor District Council, currently £15,000.

- ◆ Allocate £38,055 to the continued opening of the toilets in the parish. In partnership with the District Council the Town Council pay 50% of the costs to manage the toilets on the Esplanade, Oxford Street car park and May to September opening of the toilets in Manor Gardens. The cost of the toilets in bank Street car park in Highbridge is paid in full by the Town Council, again in partnership with the District Council who maintain them.
- ◆ Support the maintenance and emptying of dog bins in the parish. The District Council operate the service which currently costs the Town Council £24,000 a year. The Town Council also provide new bins when required.

Grants

This year the Town Council has assessed the grant scheme and tightened up on the information and criteria with which it considers applications for grants. There is also to be a new monitoring system ensuring that grant recipients return evidence of the grant spent. The application will inform members of the event or funding need, while any grant over £1,000 will require the presence of applicant at the meeting to answer questions, should members wish to ask anything. This year the grant fund has been increased to £45,100.

Grounds and building maintenance

The Town Council has a policy of progressive maintenance of its buildings and properties, in other words it allocates sufficient each year in its maintenance budget to cover the upkeep of the fabric of its buildings and assets, rather than bid for funding when there are major works required.

It is currently allocating £39,800 a year to run the Town Council offices, £30,000 of which is set aside for the fabric of the building. The remaining funds are supported by income of £7,200 a year and are used for the rates, heating, security, cleaning and general maintenance.

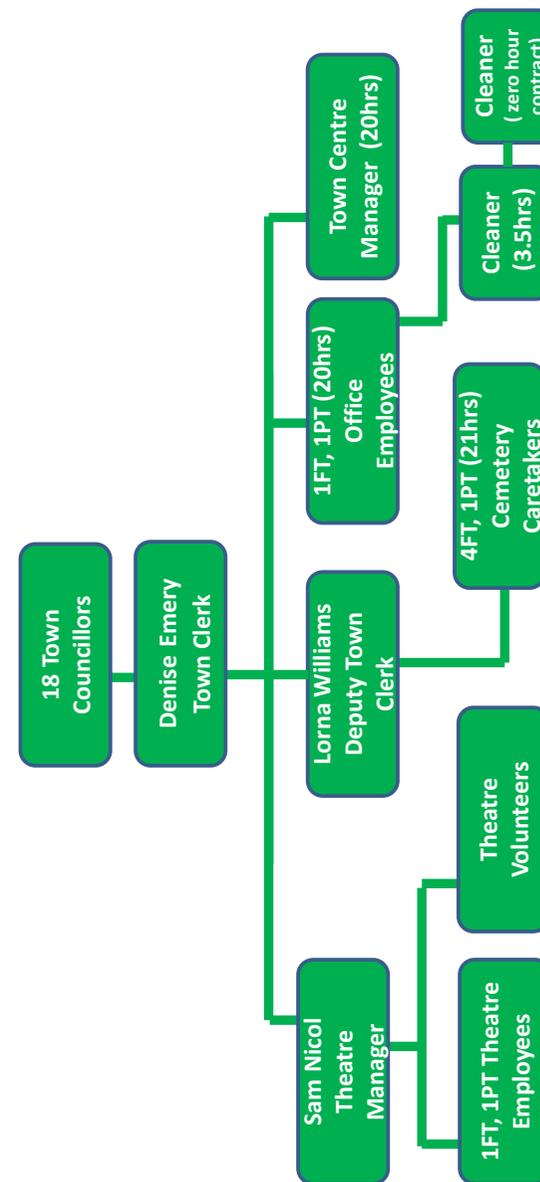
As well as The Old Courthouse the Town Council own and manage the Princess Theatre and Arts Centre. This is now a thriving community hub, with many forms of art and crafts, kurling, a coffee bar, as well as offering meeting rooms, a home for the Pantomime, theatre and music. £64,300 has been allocated to provide these amenities, primarily for the benefit of local people but also to attract visitors to the town.

Burnham Joint Burial Committee is a committee of 5 members of Burnham on Sea & Highbridge Town Council and 2 members from Burnham Without Parish Council and together they manage the three cemeteries in the parish. There are caretakers in each cemetery to assist visitors, and records for all three cemeteries, since inception, are held in the Town Council offices. The net expenditure for the next year is expected to be £147,605, which includes £29,430 repayment of the Public Works Loan, taken out to build Brent Road cemetery.

Maintenance of other properties such as public furniture, the bandstand and war



Organisation Chart for the Management of Health and Safety



PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE - 2015/16

The Planning Applications Committee is a consultee to the Planning Authority at Sedgemoor District Council (SDC) for all Planning applications and Advertising Consent applications within the Parish of Burnham-on-Sea and Highbridge. As such we are asked to comment on each application but do not have the authority to approve or decline an application.

Following the election in May 2015 I took over the chairmanship of the Planning Applications Committee from Councillor Mrs. Pat Burge who was not standing for re-election. I am very grateful to Mrs. Burge for her experience and commitment to understanding planning applications within Burnham and Highbridge.

The Planning Applications Committee is comprised of Councillors Martin Cox, Bill Hancock, Ms. Katie Lawson, Paul Young, Peter Burrige-Clayton, acting as vice chairman, and myself Andy Brewer as chairman of the committee. Councillors Miss Louise Parkin and Ms. Victoria Weavell have also recently joined the Planning Applications Committee.

Over the past year we have considered 118 Planning Applications and 13 Advertising Consent Applications. These have ranged from relatively small applications, such as the addition of a porch or car port, right through to major developments such as the Brue Farm development in Highbridge that is comprised of 550 dwellings. In all cases we endeavour to familiarise ourselves with as much of the available documentation and information as possible, and very often a member of the committee will make an informal visit to establish the context of an application.

We have also been consulted on the Supplementary Planning Document for the proposed Isleport 2 expansion as well as Sedgemoor's Local Development Framework and associated Local Plan Review Consultation Document. These are both very large documents that have taken a considerable amount of time to review, and are likely to have a significant impact on the growth and future of our towns, therefore the Planning Applications Committee has endeavoured to be as thorough as possible in our response to Sedgemoor District Council.

During the year myself, the Clerk and Deputy Clerk have attended a number of Planning Training and Awareness sessions organised by both SDC and Somerset Association of Local Councils in order to gain a greater understanding of the Planning system and to assist us in providing a more comprehensive response to SDC

I would like to thank all the members of the committee for their input and support over the past year, as well as other Councillors who have attended Planning Application Committee meetings to contribute to our response to SDC. I especially need to thank the Deputy Clerk, Mrs. Lorna Williams for the time and effort put in to prepare as much information as possible for our consideration at the committee meetings.

Cllr Andy Brewer

April 2016

memorial at Highbridge has been allocated £3,650

Ground maintenance including a contribution to the town centre cleaning in partnership with Sedgemoor District Council has a budget of £21,450, this includes the Town Council Van costs.

The allotments are maintained in Burnham by a management committee and in Highbridge by the Town Council, and are expected to have no real cost after rent for the next year.

£19,000 has been allocated for Town Improvements such as floral displays, the capital expenditure for notices, seats and bins and the Annual fireworks display.

Continued pressure on all levels of local government, has led to decisions being made on the services that can be maintained as well as constant reviews of how best to deliver them. Partnership working between Town, District and County Council is necessary to provide the best value to residents with the funding available. Where a service to residents is deemed to be important and can best be provided by another tier or council the Town Council will work with them to fund it, whilst continuing to monitor the need and cost of that service.

As well as funding some services provided by the District Council, the Town Council agreed, in 2012, to take on the delivery of the Tesco Project. Money held by the District Council under a 106 agreement from the Tesco expansion of their out of town store in Burnham and refunded money from the Regional Development Agency is being used to provide new Street Furniture, lighting and hanging basket columns in Burnham Town Centre and for a dedicated Town Centre Manager whose contract ends October 2016. A full report of the works delivered by this project and how the money was spent is available on the Town Council's website.

This money is not the Town Council's and is therefore not part of the Budget, although it is part of the audited accounts, and has to be accounted for in the same way as all Town Council expenditure.

Also not part of this Town Council's budget but a large work in progress, is the Neighbourhood Plan. Again a working party has been set up to look at the future needs of the parish and build a Neighbourhood Plan that will sit with the Local Development Framework or Core Strategy for consideration in future development of the two towns. This work is being funded by a grant that the working party successfully obtained from 'Locality' to enable them to start the consultation process, as well as the £20,000 Pathfinders grant, which the District Council were awarded for Burnham & Highbridge to proceed with a Neighbourhood Plan, and have passed on in full. The working party have held many meetings in Burnham & Highbridge, have visited the schools to find out what the children would like to see in their towns, and organised several surveys open to everyone to have their say. Funding is being held by the Town Council, for the working party to use, any funding not used will be returned to the District Council.

Denise Emery
Town Clerk

25/05/2016

Budget by Department against last year

	2015-16	2016-17
1 Admin	125,500	140,740
2 Democratic Services	12,200	14,200
3 BJBC	147,956	147,605
4 Joint Funding with Others	97,850	94,950
5 Grants	40,000	45,100
6 Princess	57,350	64,300
7 Old Courthouse	46,500	39,800
8 Town Improvements	43,240	41,350
	570,596	588,045

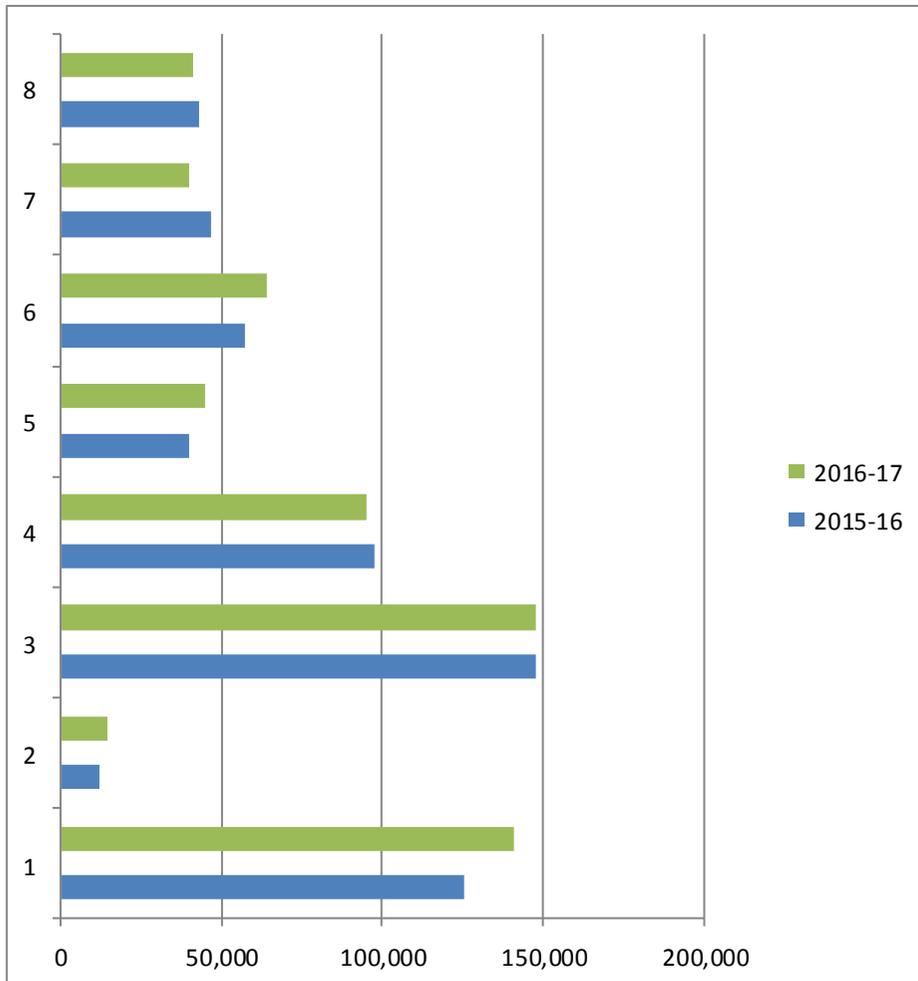
All 3 cemeteries have been visited by the committee this year. The focus has been on the development of the New Garden of Rest at Brent Road cemetery. The committee have been considering the landscape proposals and defining the area to be developed. Tenders will be sought in the coming months with construction to be started at the end of the summer.

This year there were 38 burials and 58 interments of ashes, a total of 96 interments. 61 new memorials have been placed in the three cemeteries.

I would like to thank the committee members for their support and encouragements during my first year as Chairman. I would also like to extend my thanks to all the staff involved in keeping the cemeteries in exemplary condition.

Cllr. Mrs Fiona Hector

April 2016



BURNHAM JOINT BURIAL COMMITTEE 2014 – 2015

I became a newly elected councillor in May 2015 and chairman to the Burnham Joint Burial Committee (BJBC). I would like to take the opportunity to thank the previous Chairman for all her hard work and dedication in ensuring that the provision for local residents was professionally delivered by the staff and committee members –it will be a hard act to follow.

In May the committee considered and agreed to have the front wall of Westfield Road Cemetery repaired and partially repointed. The new dog bin that the committee purchased has been installed in the alley way behind St. John’s Road. Further replacement doors and cladding have been fitted at Brent Road cemetery.

Brent Road cemetery has received several donated benches during the year; one being placed at the front of the cemetery and two in the Children’s section. To develop Children’s section the committee agreed to have an arbour installed and a bird bath with planting around the area to encourage bees & butterflies. The Hornbeam hedge that was planted in the winter of 2014 is now well established.

The information booklet has been uploaded to the website, and is also displayed in wooden leaflet holders at each cemetery. Forms, fees, accounts, statistics are all available on the BJBC pages on the Town Council website.

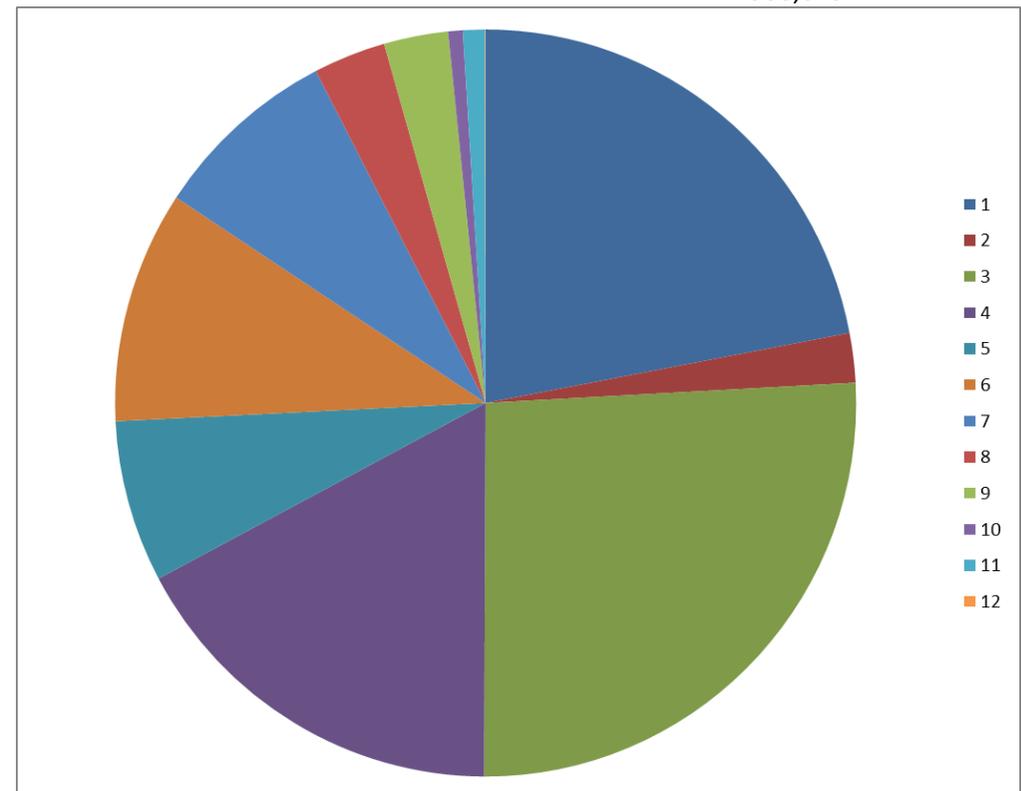
Highbridge cemetery has received a donation of a handmade planter. The front bed has been replanted with roses and is looking lovely. Burnham cemetery has also received a few donations of shrubs and trees. Letters have been received by members of the public saying how helpful cemetery staff have been and how beautiful the grounds are kept.

All staff have been trained in Memorial safety and testing. The memorials in the 3 cemeteries have all been tested in line with our policy and procedures. Only a very few have failed and owners have been notified where possible.

Whilst the committee were reviewing the cemetery regulations they agreed to introduce a 30 year lease on new burials in addition to the existing 50 year lease. This allowed for a choice.

1 Admin	140,750
2 Democratic & Civic	14,200
3 BJBC	147,605
4 Joint Funding with Others	94,950
5 Grants	45,100
6 Princess	64,300
7 Old Courthouse	39,800
8 Town Improvements	17,200
9 Town Improvements Maint'	14,500
10 Other properties	3,900
11 Handyman	5,850
12 Allotments	-110

588,045



**Burnham & Highbridge TC 2014-2016
Balance Sheet as at—31st March 2016**

2015		2016
	Current Assets	
2,834	DEBTORS	2,500
12,787	SUNDRY DEBTORS	2,988
20,945	VAT REFUNDS	5,397
1,284	PREPAYMENTS	0
31,045	NATWEST CURRENT ACCOUNT	46,113
405,110	NATWEST DIRECT RESERVE	405,719
55,367	TESCO PROJECT	99,854
300	PRINCESS PETTY CASH	300
1,069	PAYPAL ACCOUNT	1,087
88	PETTY CASH	75
60	Neighbourhood Plan Petty Cash	60
530,888		564,094
	530,888 Total Assets	564,094
	Current Liabilities	
0	CREDITORS	93
0	PTAC GIFT VOUCHERS	55
3,222	ACCRUALS	3,183
1269	RECEIPTS IN ADVANCE	3,111
242	Holding Deposits	750
0	New Jersey Boys Agency	1496
680	Raymond Froggatt Agency	737
0	Escuela Fuego Flamenco Agency	-100
38	Town Band Anniversary Agency	0
469	Indians Showband Agency	0
194	Anita Harris Agency	0
0	Bookends Agency	-151
0	Waiting for Godot Agency	293
0	Blood Brothers Agency	718
0	Talent Showcase Agency	8
0	Brass Band Agency	785
0	Kaye Morgan-Anstee Agency	134
369	Gypsy Watkins	126
280	Serenade Big Band	-36
0	ART SALES - AGENCY	-69
44	DVD Echo Sales Agency	0
6,805		11131
	524,083 Total Assets Less Current Liabilities	552,962

STAFFING:

This committee is responsible for all matters concerning human resources including assessing annual salary increases, in accordance with increment tables and up to date responsibilities. Staff include those employed at the The Old Court House, the Princess Theatre and Arts Centre, at the cemeteries and for the role of Town Centre Manager. At the time of this report we employ a total of 16 staff across all these sites. Confidentiality is obviously an essential ingredient when dealing with staffing issues and this means many agenda items are not discussed with anyone outside this committee and the Town Clerk.

The Town Centre Manager

Beverley Milner-Simonds, who leads the Community Coastal Team, obtained a grant of £10,000 to write a long term economic plan for Burnham on Sea. This would give details of opportunities that lie ahead including a future plan and timescales to achieve various objectives.

As a major part of The Town Centre Managers role is preparing an action plan for the future, it was agreed she could have 6 months to complete this work, and this plan was duly completed by the January 2016 deadline.

I would like to thank all the members of the Staffing & Resources Committee, and particularly the Town Clerk, Denise Emery, for their valuable help and support over the last year in dealing with many varied issues that arose.

Cllr Martin Cox

April 2016

STAFFING & RESOURCES COMMITTEE – 2015/2016

This committee comprises six Councillors plus the Mayor as ex-officio and meets as required, which is usually on alternate months.

RESOURCES:

The committee is responsible for the asset management and maintenance of all the property and land owned by the Town Council. This includes The Old Court House in Jaycroft Road; the Princess Theatre & Arts Centre; the three cemeteries at Burnham Road Highbridge, Westfield Road Burnham-on-Sea and Brent Road in Berrow; two allotment sites; the town water fountain and various other smaller assets.

During the year the committee has dealt with a range of issues including

upgrading the Council Chamber microphones and repairing the wall speakers. Speech can now be more easily heard at the back of the Council Chamber during our Council meetings.

The Water feature at the top of Abingdon Street needs constant maintenance and annual servicing to ensure it's running correctly; the nearby flagpole also needed repairs and a cherry picker was used to examine the rope mechanism.

Sounds and Voices

This long running charity rented some rooms in the Old Courthouse and over the last 33 years provided the blind and visually handicapped with regular audio news in its 'Talking Newspaper'. Sadly they decided to close at the end of last year as unfortunately there were dwindling numbers of people using their service. The committee asked them to carry out some decorating before they left and for the future a structural engineer looked at possible damage should we need to remove the division for the recording studio.

These rooms in The Old Courthouse are now available to rent, by another local charitable organisation, should they approach this Council.

The Registrars Service

The Registrars Service continues to rent Courtroom 2 and is open two days a week on Tuesday and Friday. We are very keen to retain this valuable service in Burnham on Sea.

2015	Represented By	2016
161,224	GENERAL RESERVE	169,739
10,150	EMR WELCOME SIGNS	9,718
9,625	EMR P&F ELECTION COSTS	0
0	EMR DONATION JW	10,000
48,020	EMR FABRIC & MAINT OCH	78,020
6,066	EMR PROPERTY MAINTENANCE	6,566
0	EMR GROUNDS MAINTENANCE	2,750
18,825	EMR GRANTS	0
40,500	EMR TI REGENERATION	22,500
2,500	EMR TOWN GUIDE	2,500
10,450	EMR REPLACEMENT TIMPS	11,878
1,000	EMR LEGAL FEES	1,750
1,000	EMR PRINCESS GEN MAINT	1,000
4,674	EMR TI MSC FUNDING	6,074
446	EMR PRINCESS LIGHTING FUND	446
20,000	EMR REPLACE SUPPORT GRANT	40,000
5,000	EMR REPLACEMENT VAN	8,000
91,122	EMR TESCO S106	99,854
925	EMR PAST MAYOR BADGES	0
20,000	EMR NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN	15,910
910	EMR FIREWORKS	910
0	EMR YOUTH COUNCIL	5,000
3,100	EMR TRAINING BUDGET	4,100
11,590	EMR ESP LIGHTING	15,090
20,680	EMR JOINT FUNDING WITH OTH-ERS	0
850	EMR OFFICE EQUIPMENT	3,550
2,900	EMR STAFFING BUDGET	5,080
750	EMR YOU ARE HERE BOARDS	750
30,327	EMR PRINCESS SINKING FUND	30,327
1,450	EMR HANDYMAN EQUIPMENT	1,450
524,084		552,962

POLICY and FINANCE REPORT – 2015/16

The Policy and Finance Committee met eight times during the year.

POLICIES

With a new council this year, it has been a time to reflect on the policies that are in place, review them and update where necessary and add new policies in line with modern local government. There are a list of policies held by the Town Council on the web-site along with the date they were last reviewed and a date for the next review.

As well as a review of all the policies the committee are constantly looking at the services provided by the Town Council and how they can be delivered.

This may be by working with other councils or making a contribution to the District Council to continue service provision, as with the Dog Bins, Toilets, CCTV cameras or it may be taking over a resource so that residents do not lose it, as with the Princess Theatre & Arts Centre. Whatever the Town Council manages on behalf of its residents, must offer best value.

GRANTS

During the Financial Year Council agreed grants to 24 local organisations totalling £42,652. There were seven Grants made of £2,000 or above. Applicants must complete an application and provide a copy of their constitution and bank account as well as details of how they are spending the grant. From April 2016 there will also be a monitoring form to ensure the Town Council receive information on the successful use of the grant funding. As well as funding given from the grant applications the Town Council gave a further £24,750 to community arts and projects.

COUNCIL TAX

The Committee is responsible for the overall budget of the Town Council and for recommending to the Full Council the level required for the Precept. With the District Council receiving less from central government they are no longer able to pass on the support grant to the parishes. Many other District Councils cut the support grant a couple of years ago while Sedgemoor District Council are facing the cuts over the next 4 years. This year this meant a loss of £21,036. The Town Council absorbed some of that loss by making cuts, and increased the precept request by just £17,449 making a Band D Property £85.26 per annum, an increase of 3.71%

The Town Council will, in future, have to balance the budget against delivering services at an acceptable level, and this may mean taking on new responsibilities when they offer best value to the residents.

Cllr Mike Facey
April 2016

PRINCESS THEATRE AND ARTS CENTRE 2015/16

It has been another very successful year for the Princess Theatre and Arts Centre. It continues to go from strength to strength, and has again expanded its range of things on offer for our local community. We now have a new photographic group, and also a Sew Saturday to fit alongside numerous other groups such as Kurling, social bingo, open studios, parchment craft, Burnham Beaders, Yarn over, creative club, and our very own Princess Theatre Company.

The Theatre has seen some big name acts that have proven to be very successful, to name just a few we have had Alexei Sayle, Maddy Prior, Steve Parrish, Raymond Froggatt and many more. We are delighted to say Steve Parrish and Raymond Froggatt will be returning again this year alongside some of our favourite acts such as The New Jersey Boys, Hats off to Led Zeppelin, and the Bookends.

We continue to seek a range of performers to suit all tastes, and this has generally been well supported. In the coming months we will have Tea with Wendy Cope, The Dreamers, The Singular Exploits of Sherlock Holmes, The KMA Dance Company, Strictly in a day, BEES performance of Aladdin, the award winning Ballet Cymru, and an evening with Nikki Kitt a Psychic Medium.

We also have our regulars such as the Burnham Pantomime Society, the Highbridge Festival of Arts and our town band. This combined with private bookings, community meetings, and discrete therapy groups keep the Princess a very busy building indeed. I would like to thank Sam Nicol our manager for all the hard work she is putting in to expand the theatre and keep the building running smoothly. She has done an excellent job this year given the workload that is now required. I would also like to thank Craig our assistant manager and Jess who have also acted as duty managers and have also done a great job. I would also like to thank all the Town Council staff for all their efforts in connection with the Theatre as well, whilst the Theatre continues to grow that does unfortunately mean a greater workload for them as well, and their support is much appreciated.

Whilst I have thanked all the staff and council officers, I couldn't let this opportunity go by without thanking our volunteers. The Princess simply would not survive as we know it without such a committed group of volunteers that we now have at the theatre. The volunteers are led by Jan Huddart, assisted by her husband Alan, and they do a great job in keeping the theatre and café running smoothly. The Friends of the Princess have also been a great support to the theatre as always, and I am very grateful for the numerous donations they have now given to the theatre. With their support our Viridor Grant was successful and our new sound and lighting systems are now complete, and we have seen new stage curtains and exterior notice boards go up. Lastly I would like to thank the Management Committee and the Town Clerk Denise Emery for all their time and input at our meetings, again it is much appreciated. Our new whats on guide has just been printed, and our website has all the up to date information on it, including our online box office for bookings.

www.theprincesstheatre.co.uk Cllr Peter Burrige-Clayton April 2016