**Islip Parish Council**

**Annual Update to the Electorate 2024-2025**

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The Parish Council has maintained essential community services while navigating several challenges this year. We operated at 45.2% of our budgeted expenditure (£29,792.92 of £65,915.00), demonstrating fiscal restraint while still making important investments in community facilities.

**Financial Overview:**

* **Income:** £26,553.31 (88.9% from precept)
* **Expenditure:** £29,792.92
* **Deficit:** £3,239.61 (12.2% of income)
* **Healthy Reserves:** Over £44,000 maintained for future projects

**Major Upcoming Initiatives:**

* Recovery of approximately £5,000 in Swan car park rent
* Completion of VAT return
* Asset rental value review to increase non-precept income

**KEY COUNCIL ACHIEVEMENTS**

**Leadership & Governance**

* New leadership under Chair Cllr Dennis Price (May 2024)
* Enhanced policy governance through review of critical policies
* Established formal Staffing Committee with clear terms of reference
* Co-opted two new councillors: Rebecca Welsford and Doreen Cole
* Improved financial controls following audit recommendations

**Major Consultations Responded To:**

* Cherwell Local Plan Review 2042
* National Planning Policy Framework Changes
* East West Rail Consultation
* Environmental Impact Assessment Scoping

**Community Asset Protection:**

* Successfully secured Asset of Community Value status for The Red Lion pub
* Application submitted July 2024, approved December 2024

**Planning & Development:**

* Reviewed and responded to over 12 planning applications
* Provided substantial response to Fourways development
* Opposed solar farm development at Land North of Manor Farm, Noke

**Environmental Initiatives:**

* Implemented "No Mow May" to support local biodiversity
* Ensured environmental factors were considered in planning responses
* Addressed winter preparedness with adequate salt provision

**Recreation & Community Facilities:**

* Created formal documentation process for playground inspections
* Implemented ROSPA-recommended repairs (£3,890)
* Supported local cricket activities and approved football pitch marking
* Funded village planters to enhance public areas

**FINANCIAL BREAKDOWN**

**How We Spent Your Money:**

| **Top 5 Expenditure Categories** | **Amount** | **% of Total** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Staff Costs | £8,697.58 | 29.2% |
| Grounds Maintenance | £4,754.40 | 15.2% |
| Playground Reserve | £4,368.00 | 14.7% |
| Burial Ground Remedial | £2,520.00 | 8.5% |
| Grants | £2,260.00 | 7.6% |

**Top 5 Payees:**

1. Clerk: £7,923.60 (26.6% of total)
2. Green Scythe: £4,754.40 (16.0%)
3. Reids: £4,368.00 (14.7%)
4. Martin Pauling: £2,150.00 (7.2%)
5. St Nicholas Church: £1,400.00 (4.7%)

**Community Support Through Grants:**

* St Nicholas Church (Parish Magazine & Church Yard Maintenance): £1,400.00
* Islip Village Hall (Film Nights, Toddler Group, Hall Hire): £860.00
* Total grants awarded: £2,260.00

**Notable One-Time Expenditures:**

* Play equipment repairs: £4,368.00
* Burial ground remedial work: £2,520.00
* Insurance annual premium: £1,256.38

**BUDGET PERFORMANCE**

The council spent £29,792.92 of its total allocated budget of £65,915.00, representing a 45.2% utilisation rate. This demonstrates fiscal restraint while still delivering essential services.

**Categories with High Budget Utilisation:**

* Subscriptions: 105.8% of budget (£528.99 against £500.00)
* Insurance: 93.1% of budget (£1,256.38 against £1,350.00)
* Staff Costs: 91.6% of budget (£8,697.58 against £9,500.00)
* Website: 88.8% of budget (£488.62 against £550.00)
* Burial Ground Remedial: 88.0% of budget (£2,520.00 against £2,864.00)

**Categories with Moderate to Low Utilisation:**

* Burial Ground Maintenance: 73.3% of budget (£1,100.00 against £1,500.00)
* Grounds Maintenance: 53.8% of budget (£4,754.40 against £8,845.00)
* Dog Bin Maintenance: 40.1% of budget (£741.32 against £1,850.00)
* Playground: 18.2% of reserves (£4,848.00 against £26,676.00 of allocated reserves)

**PRIORITIES FOR 2025-26**

1. **Financial Recovery and Stability:**
	* Recover outstanding rental income from Swan car park
	* Complete asset rental value review to increase non-precept income
	* Review budget allocation to better align with actual spending patterns
	* Develop strategies to address the current deficit
2. **Community Facilities Enhancement:**
	* Continue planned investment in playground facilities
	* Maintain burial ground improvements
	* Support community organizations through grants
3. **Environmental Stewardship:**
	* Continue biodiversity initiatives like "No Mow May"
	* Ensure environmental considerations in planning responses
4. **Community Engagement:**
	* Maintain regular communications through the parish newsletter
	* Engage residents on important planning and development issues
	* Hold public meetings on major issues affecting the community

*Note: While the figures presented in this report are correct as of this meeting, please be advised that the year-end finances will be formally approved at the June meeting of the parish council.*

*For more detailed information, please visit the Parish Council website or contact the Parish Clerk.*