

The government accepts that councils with social care responsibilities need to raise more funding to meet the increase in demand for social care and an extra 2% levy is now allowed provided this is spent entirely on social care. (The chancellor announced this on 25 November last year).

Why are your costs going up when inflation is low/non-existent?

We have more people living longer (a good thing) and more becoming very frail and in need of care either in their own home, residential care or nursing care. The new National Living Wage will also increase the cost of social care services, our National Insurance tax has risen, other taxes such as carbon tax, landfill tax and insurance tax and some contractual costs have also risen where they are linked to a specific index.

Where will you make savings?

We are continuing our work to help people live independently at home to delay or avoid the need for more costly residential or nursing care. We are making more of our services available online which both saves money and allows people to contact us 24/7. We are making savings through better procurement from both the private and voluntary sector. Around 150 jobs will be cut (we have already taken out over 2,200 over the last five years).

What about the Young Persons Travel Pass (successor to the Freedom Pass)?

Apart from London, Kent is the only area in England with a bus pass for children 11 – 16 years old (in school years 7 – 11). Each pass (depending on usage) costs KCC around £600 but is sold to parents for just £250. (The charge to parents is reviewed each year and will change in line with bus fares).

The Young Person's Travel Pass allows free use of scheduled bus routes in Kent from the start of the school year in September to 31 July, from 06 00 – 19 00 Monday to Friday. Around 23,000 children hold a Young Persons Travel Pass.

The Young Persons Travel Pass is a discretionary service i.e. it is an optional service as opposed to concessionary bus passes for older people which is statutory.

The government says your spending power is the same and you say you have had a reduction.

The government actually acknowledges there will be a dip in funding 2016-17 and 2017-18, before it starts to rise in 2018-19 and fully recovers to current levels in 2019-20. The government's "spending power" assumes we will continue to raise council tax to the referendum limit and add a further 2% social care levy and that the number of houses paying council tax continues to rise. It takes no account of demographic changes such as the rise in the number of elderly and increase in school children or any increase in prices.

Why are you using reserves?

The Government announced the local government finance settlement just before Christmas and used a new distribution formula which has greatly disadvantaged county councils. There was no way we could have anticipated this change as the government is only now consulting on the new formula.

We had to publish our budget in early January to allow time for councillors to scrutinise and debate it. We had to set our budget by mid-February to give time for the district/borough councils to send out council tax bills in time for the new financial year. With so little time available we will be using some of our reserves to bridge our budget gap. These are our earmarked reserves such as the money set aside for of PFI school building contracts, replacement of vehicles and equipment etc.

Using reserves can only be done once so simply postpones the need to make long term savings.

KCC holds a low level of reserves relative to its size compared with our peer group authorities.

What about the money that was with the Icelandic Banks?

KCC had £50m on deposit in various Icelandic Banks and has now recovered this in full plus around £1.3m in interest payments. KCC is the only council that made a full recovery as other councils sold their rights at less than 100% of value. KCC had always said that the Icelandic Banks had good assets and that we would work for full recovery. This has paid off handsomely. The £50m is not new money so cannot bridge our budget gap but the £1.3m of interest is very welcome.

Are you outsourcing/privatising services?

We looked at outsourcing our back office services last year but the bidders could not match the level of savings our in house team could achieve. We will however continue to use the private and voluntary sector to deliver services where appropriate e.g. our youth services, domiciliary care, residential care, nursing care etc.

What's happening about streetlighting?

The costs of LED lighting have now made it cost effective to switch all KCC's streetlighting to LED which will save energy & maintenance costs, carbon tax and allow more controllable dimming of lights at night and non peak times. The switchover has begun and will cover the whole of Kent within two years. We estimate the investment made to install LED will be repaid within 7 to 8 years from the energy and other savings. The Highways, Transportation and Waste directorate have confirmed that the street lighting upgrade in Dover will commence in June 2016.

What about broadband?

KCC has just completed a programme to bring access to broadband to 91% of households in Kent. A further investment of £11.6m has been made (jointly funded by KCC and the government) to extend coverage to 95.7% of households. This programme started in January 2016 and will last approximately 18 months. If you go to www.kent.gov.uk and search for 'broadband' you can use your postcode or phone number to check what broadband services are available in your area.

The Prime Minister has made a commitment to extend coverage to 100% and we await details of how this will be done.

I get nothing for my council tax (rural area – no streetlights, pavements etc.)

You get around 300 services for your council tax many of which you only need in an emergency or would only miss if they disappeared. Your rubbish is recycled or buried/incinerated, children are educated, the elderly and disabled cared for, children protected from harm, a library service either in a building, a mobile or on-line, roads maintained, kept open in bad weather, births, deaths and marriages are registered, coroners courts run, children are fostered or adopted, footpaths kept open and much, much more.

Education**Kent Schools**

The percentage of Kent schools achieving "Good" or "Outstanding" OFSTED ratings is now 84% (up from 66% in 2010) and is expected to increase this year to 86%.

GCSE

Kent students receiving GSCE 5A*-C in 2015 was 57% (3% above national). We expect this to increase to 60% this year.

Schools in category

We expect to reduce the number of Kent schools in category to no more than 6 this year.

Cllr Ridings took questions from the floor.

A question about the breakdown of GCSE results between grammar schools and academies was asked. Cllr Ridings did not have this information.

There was concern that the new footpath from Elmwood Park that comes out onto For Tree Hill is not guarded. The path slopes down to the road and children could run straight out onto the road with no barrier to stop them. Cllr Ridings said he would ask KHS to look into this. **Action Cllr Ridings**

5. SPEAKER

Mr Nick Woodland gave a talk about local historical events including The Murderer from Marshborough.

The Chairman thanked Mr Woodland for his interesting talk.

6. KALC COMMUNITY AWARDS SCHEME 2016

Presentation of the 2016 KALC Community Award for Woodnesborough.

The Kent Association of Local Councils Award is to acknowledge and give recognition to those that have made a significant contribution to their local community. The Scheme is supported by the High Sheriff of Kent, Chairman of Kent County Council and Mayor of Medway Council.

The Chairman explained that this year the award was going to someone that had work tirelessly to ensure the New Hall was built, he had project managed the build and ensured that the project came in on budget and to a very high specification. The award was given to Steve Hoskins.

7. INTRODUCTION TO THE NEW VILLAGE HALL

The Chairman explained that the Hall project was nearing completion, there were a few things that still need completing, the Carpark marking, acoustic corrections and signage from The Street would all be completed by the Parish Council.

The meeting broke for refreshments and to give everyone the chance to look around the new village hall. 8.30pm

The meeting reconvened at 8.50pm

8. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

My report this evening is rather shorter than in previous years. It's not that Parish Council business has diminished but many items are of a routine nature and would become rather boring. As you already know a lot of time has been spent on the new village hall spanning some 5 years. But it has been well worth it

THE COUNCIL

There has been one change in the Council following the our meeting on 27th April, when Steve Hoskins advised that he wished to retire as a Parish Councillor. This, following completion of phase 2 of the building of the new village hall in February. The meeting thanked Steve for his time and expertise in over-seeing the project.

There is now a vacancy. Anybody interested is serving on the Parish Council should speak to our Clerk, Mrs Sarah Wells.

POLICE

Unfortunately we no longer have a Police Community Support Officer attending our meeting. Nor do we receive a detailed report of any crime in our village. At a recent Parish Council meeting we were advised by an "email report" that crime was very low in our village. However, a parishioner present reported that an attempted break-in had been made to his premises and also there had been at other such crimes in the local neighbourhood.

Perhaps it's time to resurrect Neighbourhood Watch in the village?

HIGHWAYS

A complaint was received from a resident in Sandwich Road concerning speeding past his house in the 30mph section. This was reported to the Police and a speed check was made when a few drivers were stopped and reminded of the limit.

Cllr Linda Butcher reported that HGV's were trying to use the lane between Beacon Lane and Marshborough Road as directed by their Sat Nav's which is totally unsuitable. A request was made to

Kent Highways for a sign at both ends of the lane prohibiting HGV's but was declined. This is an example of where Sat-Nav's for HGV's need up dating on a nationwide scale.

Cllr Steve Hoskins, on behalf of the residents in Beacon Lane and the Woodash cross roads reported to Kent Highways the practice of surplus water being discharged from the reservoir on Beacon Hill by Southern Water which then flows into the road and causes flooding. Some action was taken to clean drains but we have yet to see if this cures the flooding.

Following a complaint about the condition of Selson Road, soon saw it re-surfaced.

The foot bridge on footpath E220 adjacent to Firtree Hill has been repaired.

The continued deterioration of The Charity public house was brought to the attention of the DDC Building Control Dept, but unless it becomes a danger then it appears nothing can be done.

PLANNING

During the past year 25 planning applications have been commented on, 9 of these were variations to the houses being built at the old Hammill Brick site. This did raise concern by the Parish Council, that in some cases a new application should be submitted to DDC and this was brought to the attention of our District Councillors. The other 16 applications ranged from house alternations, new barn, and conversion of unused farm buildings to holiday accommodation and transmitting aerials.

COMMUNICATIONS WITH NEW RESIDENTS

A request from Rev David Ridley of the Eastry and Woodnesborough Benefice for a grant of £216 towards the funding of new style Welcome Packs was granted. The existing packs in our village, which contain details of this Parish Council, are delivered to new residents moving into village when we are made aware. These are always well received.

I'm sorry to report that Su Atkinson, our Environment Engineer, was taken ill during last year but is making a slow recovery. Fortunately her husband, Bob stepped in and now looks after our village – keeping it tidy. Thank you Bob and we wish Su a speedy recovery.

Following the retirement of Pip Russell from the District Council we were pleased to welcome Cllr M.J. Holloway to our meetings when possible. My thanks to both of our District Councillors Bernard Butcher and MJ Holloway for their support.

My thanks yet again to Ken & Linda for the lovely flower bed at the top of Fir Tree Hill. Further, they quickly planted out the flower bed near the main door of the hall for the Opening Day. Thanks also to Su and Monika for the small flower bed beneath the Woodnesborough sign on Sandwich Road.

Thanks to the 2 teams of helpers who on different days planted out the hedges around the site. Some of the mini trees were provided by the Woodland Trust.

Now, this Parish Council could not function so smoothly, perhaps not at all, without Mrs Sarah Wells. Sarah does an enormous amount of work behind the scenes having attended a number of additional meetings of the Village Hall Working Group at very short notice. On behalf of my colleagues I say "Thank You" Sarah.

Thanks to the Beaconeers who organised the Beacon Torch and refreshments on 21st of last month to celebrate the Queen's 90th birthday. It was a great evening for the village.

Finally, thanks to all of my colleagues for their support over the past year.

David H-Woodward

**2015/16 Finance Statement – Unaudited Accounts
Receipts and Payments**

	Actual 2014/15	2015/16 Budget	Accounts to 31-03-16
RECEIPTS			
Carried Forward	22,941.48	38,302.58	38,302.58
Precept	15,000.00	15,269.83	15,269.83
Council Tax Support Grant	832.95	563.12	563.12
VAT	139.89	371.00	281.41
Interest	82.81	80.00	63.98
Other	644.10	0.00	154.70
Fund Raising New Community hall	9,675.00	0.00	1,250.00
Sale of Village Hall		200,000.00	205,000.00
Public Works Loan		75,000.00	84,970.25
Grant for Village Hall			5,000.00
Section 106 Money - Hammill			37,500.00
	49,316.23	329,586.53	388,355.87
PAYMENTS			
Salaries	Actual 2014/15	2015/16 Budget	Accounts to 31-03-16
Clerk	3,232.47	3,285.00	3,448.81
Environment Engineer	1,272.96	1,300.00	1,271.52
Employer Pension Contribution	463.93	560.00	543.50
	4,969.36	5,145.00	5,263.83
Admin Costs	256.75	500.00	381.10
Petty Cash	85.49	100.00	48.49
Alto Card		0.00	106.16
Insurance	361.86	400.00	364.51
Village Hall Insurance	748.20	1,200.00	960.70
Village Hall - Maintenance/Repairs	624.00	200.00	0.00
Audit Fees	100.00	250.00	215.00
Annual Meeting	24.21	0.00	13.14
Village Green	1,200.00	0.00	0.00
Safety Inspection/Maintenance	45.00	186.00	155.00
Councillors Expenses	0.00	250.00	0.00
Training	0.00	250.00	0.00
Church Yard Grant LGA 1972 Sect	750.00	750.00	750.00
Grants	0.00	200.00	0.00
Section 137	0.00	200.00	0.00
Equip Handyman	0.00	50.00	16.66
Flower Beds	17.85	50.00	79.20
Membership	368.47	400.00	339.85
VAT	281.41	0.00	2,512.70
Contingency	45.35	3,072.53	20.00
2015 Election Costs	0.00	950.00	1,106.74
Reserves	0.00	8,433.00	0.00
New Village Hall	1,135.70		
Build Costs		285,000.00	276,255.36
Car Park			8,080.00
Legal and Professional fees		12,000.00	10,058.66
Contingency		10,000.00	272.00
	11,013.65	329,586.53	306,999.10

Reconciliation 2016/17**Bank Reconciliation Mar 2016**

Current Account	60.00		
Reserve Account	69,607.90		
Reserve Account - Comm hall	104.76	Open Bal	38,302.58
Unity Bank	13,548.10	Receipts	350,053.29
			-
Alto Card Balance	393.84	Payments	306,999.10
Petty Cash	1.67		81,356.77 C/F
	83,716.27		
Unpresented Cheques	-2,359.50		
	81,356.77		

Fund Allocations to Carry Forward 2016/17**Village Hall Project**

Final Project costs	£29,913.16	
Ring fenced to pay of PWL	£37,500	
		£67,413.16

Parish Council General Funds

Bank	£13,548.10	
Alto Card Balance	£393.84	
Petty Cash in Hand	£1.67	
		<u>£13,943.61</u>
		<u>£81,356.77</u>

The Clerk went through the figures and answered questions

9. REPORTS**District Councillors**

Cllr Bernard Butcher gave a report including information on DDC funding, the Call for Brown field sites currently being undertaken, and planning devolution.

Cllr Paul Carter gave a report including information on The St James development in Dover, shared energy scheme and expanding leisure facilities in the district.

The Chairman asked from questions from the floor.

A blocked dyke that runs from Woodash to Ringelmere was reported, some discussion took place on the causes of flooding, as it is not always KHS problem but can be caused by a number of factors, field run off due to the lack of field margins, large expanses of concrete from driveways and roads etc.

It was agreed the Clerk should report the blocked dyke to Kent Highways Services.

Action Parish Council

Mr Richard Ovenden addressed the meeting on behalf of the Village hall Trustees, he thanked the Parish Council for the work involved in getting a new village hall and told those present that the Village Hall Committee AGM will take place on Tue 17th May and that everyone is welcome.

The meeting closed at 9.31pm