

Marston Sicca Parish Council

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Reg. Office:

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2020/21 ANNUAL GOVERNANCE REPORT / FINANCIAL COMMENTS

1. Overview of events.

Like so many local authorities Marston Sicca has had to continually review method of operation whilst dealing with the challenges of Covid. New rules were applied to enable a safe and compliant method of conducting Parish Council meetings remotely which although presenting some initial teething problems, worked very well. To ensure key issues were able to continue, Delegation of powers to the clerk were approved at the start of the first lock down.

The impact of Covid was quite severe on some of the parish electors resulting in the Parish Council deploying a range of initiatives to help support residents during the pandemic. Specific projects were organised including a foods hare operation (managed by volunteers) and a community centre was adopted through the Meon Vale Sports Pavilion to act as a food hub during the crisis.

The Parish Council recognised the growing issues of some its residents and with the cooperation of Quinton Parish Council (prompted by the needs of Meon Vale which falls within the two Parishes), created a community centre in the Sports Pavilion within Meon Vale. As a result of the assistance from the owner (St. Modwen), local supermarkets, local businesses and craftsmen, the facility was transformed into a café without too much financial burden on the Parish Council.

The Parish Council continued to be mindful of speeding through the village and pressed on to secure the S106 monies assigned to the village for speed calming measures. With various discussions and review of design options, two build outs were finally erected in March 2021 using all funds from the S106 agreement with no further funding required from the Parish Council (the scheme costing £40k).

The village newsletter has continued to improve with increased revenue from advertisers. Looking to appeal to a wider sector of residents, various topics and items of interest as well as news updates are included each month. The continuing expansion of Meon Vale

however, has increased costs of print which we are endeavouring to offset by quality advertising revenue.

The continuing development of the Neighbourhood Plan has seen an increased pace despite the lack of residents serving on the committee. The first draft has been completed.

The issues with Lagan Homes have continued with ongoing problems relating to the Open Space to the rear of Perry Orchard. Non-compliance to conditions and poor execution of planting to the open space have been the ongoing topic of discussion with the developer and SDC over the past year. Transfer documents are finally with the Parish Councils solicitor but will not be concluded until the issues with the open space are resolved.

2. Finance

The Precept was raised from £17,500 to £21,500.

to reflect the financial commitments of the council including new play equipment, remedial work to the open space, footpaths, increase in electoral register reflecting Meon Vale and other items planned for the coming year.

Financial transactions relating to the Community Centre are managed to ensure they are transparent as a specific project and are combined with fund raising initiatives to minimise costs to the Parish Councils (grants and funding for specific purchase are noted).

Close- scrutiny on tenders has been effective with costs for ground maintenance kept relatively close to 2019/20 levels with continued contributions made by SDC.

Insurance premium may rise slightly due to the capped agreement coming to an end in June. It is the aim of the council to secure a further 3-year agreement to attract a lower premium by extending the term. There will be extra costs however, as a result of insuring assets in the Community Centre and newly installed play equipment to the rear of Barley Fields.

Rules on Cheque signatures continue to be deployed to ensure no conflict of interest arises. This includes Councillors not being permitted to sign if a councillor or spouse is paid to undertake work on behalf of Parish Council.

EXTRAORDINARY INCOME:

1. £15,340 for Community Centre (emanating from SDC, Clifford Chambers Charities, and Waitrose
2. £3973 Community Funds (food share) from Waitrose, WCC, Sino Trading & CCC/

EXTRAORDINARY EXPENSES:

1. £16,656 – Wyre Lane resurfacing
2. £9822 – Deposit for play equipment to the rear of Barley Fields
3. £1998 – Community Funds (food share)
4. £3139 – Community Centre

Debbie Woodliffe. Clerk/RFO