



Finance Report

As in the previous financial year the Council has experienced a number of changes to Councillors and staff in the 12 months ending 31st March 2025, but we now have in place a new Town Clerk and a separate Responsible Financial Officer, we also have a full complement of Councillors. Despite these comings and goings and some serious financial upheaval much has been achieved during the year, most notably the completion of the Boardwalk maintenance project.

The year-end figures at the 31st March 2025 are not available as I write this note but we expect to finish the year with reserves at around £420,000, down some £80,000 on the previous year. This is due to having to settle back payments of VAT, a related shortfall in parking income and the recruitment of an additional member to our ground staff team. Savings have been made, for example, by not proceeding with the planned water bailiff. This current year has shown us the benefits of planning our finances to cover the unexpected! Of this £420,000 a sum of £125,000 will directly support the 2025/6 budget, £133,000 to our General Reserve (recommended for all Town/Parish Councils), £55,000 to cover our pre-paid burial liability, £55,000 towards future expansion of our cemeteries, £12,000 to re-launch rafts off the Esplanade beach, and £40,000 towards re-laying the entrance road to Firs Road cemetery.

The budget has been agreed for 2025/6 which gives us a precept increase of 4.23%. The detailed budget contains a range of works to continue to maintain and improve local facilities and services in the short term whilst providing for longer term projects, for example, the multi-use building at the Glebe.

Some of the short term projects are the completion of pedestrian safety at the oyster beds in Coast Road, completion of the "Coastguard Compound" in Coast Road, maintenance to our play equipment at West Mersea Park plus additional equipment, repairs and refurbishment of Fairhaven toilets and Coast Road toilets, improvements to our cemeteries at Firs Road, Barfield Road and Feldy View, French drains at the Youth Field to elevate the wet and muddy conditions, VE80 celebrations, improvements to our Sensory Garden, vehicle activation sign (to deter speeding) and lots more.

Provision is also included in the budget to increase our reserves for current earmarked liabilities/projects and to allow for new longer-term projects e.g. re-laying our tennis courts.

All your Councillors and members of staff look forward to a very busy year ahead.

Cllr. Bob Jenkins
Chair Finance and Strategy Committee
West Mersea Town Council