

Proposal from the Neighbourhood Plan Working Party for the Parish Council to obtain quotes for a Village Transport Statement and a Settlement Character Appraisal. The Parish Council are being asked to budget £8,000 - £9,000 + VAT

The following report was received from the Neighbour Plan Working Group

**“Westbury sub–Mendip Parish Council statement of need
Supporting the community to develop effective response to Roughmoor Lane
development proposals.**

The Church Commissioners propose to develop land south of Roughmoor Lane for housing. Significant elements of the village community are concerned that this development will result in too many houses, will not provide sufficiently for pedestrian safety on and across the A371 and will not respect the rural village character in its layout and design. Some would like to stop the development completely. The Parish Council needs to reflect this range of views and help prepare robust evidence to use during the planning process.

The Parish Council set up a Neighbourhood Plan Working Group (NPWG) that in the long term will develop a Neighbourhood Plan for the village. In the short term it will coordinate community consultation on major development proposals and advise the parish council on how best to respond. The NPWG has been meeting regularly since August 2022.

Following community consultations in 2022 and further discussion since, the NPWG has identified key elements of a response to the development that address the range of views in the village whilst also being of material relevance to any forthcoming planning application. These elements include road safety and over-development impacting on settlement character. The NPWG advise that the council should commission specialists or “expert witnesses” to consider all relevant facts in the form of a Village Transport Statement and a Settlement Character Appraisal. We should seek to develop alternative proposals for the layout and design of the green field site.

The Village Transport Statement would consider actual and forecast traffic levels in relation to the capacity of the A371 and the direct impact of the Roughmoor Lane development. It would also look at how safe pedestrian access to the core of the village can be delivered and the degree to which the development should support the sustainability of the village in transport terms (public transport, public parking, and off-road multi-user routes)

The settlement character appraisal would identify key elements that contribute to the existing character of the village as a gateway village to the Mendip Hills AONB. These include the close presence of the countryside, the importance of local ecology, dark skies, listed buildings, building design, heights and density. These elements can then be prioritised and an evidence-based approach produced to protect or enhance the most valuable aspects of village character. The report will be written using established guidelines for such appraisals and can then be presented as material evidence in any planning process.

The final element would be to develop some alternative proposals for development of the site in the light of input from both the transport statement and settlement character appraisal, and other considerations. The proposal is to use an available resource from University of the West of England graduates and postgraduates in architecture and planning to work up some proposals to inform the consultation process of any planning application.

Estimated costs for each of the two main reports are circa £3- 3,500 each with circa £1,000 to fund out of pocket expense for UWE graduates and postgraduates. A budget of £8,000 - £9,000 would be required to be expended over the months April – August 2023.”

Budgeting for an extra £8,000 expenditure

These figures are estimated as they change following every meeting and the figures have been calculated using the following formula

2 Reports costing £3,500 + VAT =	£8,400
Students' expenses =	£1,000
Total require	£9,400

Amount in the bank as at 31 st March 2023 -	£20,581.81
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Precept due at the end of April -	£12,595.00
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Total Monies available	£33,176.81
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Expenditure already budgeted	£20,855.00
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Costs of Dog Waste Bins currently being bought £1,000.00, (although this is already budgeted under village maintenance which has an amount of £1500.00 against it.)

Costs for reports and expenses	£9,400.00
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Amount left	£1,921.81
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NB: The following items within the budget could be used to cover the extra £9,400 requested not in the budget (copy of budget below)

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| • Election Expenses | £1500.00 |
| • Neighbourhood Plan | £1500.00 |
| • Projects | £1800.00 |
| • SID | £2000.00 |
| • Legal Costs | £2000.00 |
| • Grants | £3000.00 |

If the above budget items are not used to cover the costs, the money will come out of the reserves reducing it to about **£1,921.81**. This is the beginning of the financial year and it is unknown what other expenses may be incurred during the next twelve months and the Parish Council will have to say no to some of those requests.

The amount being requested is about 80% of the precept for 2023-2024.

If large costs are incurred this financial year the reserves will become severely depleted and for 2024/2025 the precept will need to be raised dramatically probably doubling this year's making an increase of 80 – 90%

Would residents consider fundraising themselves to cover the costs?

Westbury Sub Mendip Parish Council Budget 2023/24			
		2022-2023	2023-2024
			5% increase
			in the precept
Receipts			
Precept	£	11995.00	12594.75
Marquee Hire	£	100.00	50.00
Bank Interest	£	2.00	5.00
VAT Refund	£	250.00	600.00
Amount from reserve account	£		7605.25
Total Income	£	12347.00	20855.00
Payments			
Clerks Salary	£	4033.00	4557.00
HMRC	£	100.00	100.00
Home working allowance	£		78.00
Clerks Training	£	150.00	150.00
Councillors Training	£	150.00	150.00
Clerks Expenses	£	150.00	150.00
Web Management	£	750.00	400.00
ICO	£	35.00	0.00
Internet Security	£	90.00	0.00
Insurance	£	400.00	500.00
Grants	£	3000.00	3000.00
Subscriptions	£	350.00	350.00
Audit Fees	£	250.00	190.00
Election Expenses	£	2000.00	1500.00
Hall Hire	£	250.00	240.00
Zoom Costs	£	175.00	140.00
Village Maintenance	£	1000.00	1500.00
Neighbourhood Plan	£		1500.00
Defibrillator	£	2200.00	550.00
Projects	£		1800.00
Legal Costs	£	4000.00	2000.00
SID	£	4000.00	2000.00
Total Payments		23083.00	20855.00
Total Payments		23083.00	20855.00
Total Receipts		12347.00	20855.00
Balance		-10736.00	0.00

