

SADBERGE PARISH COUNCIL

COMMENTARY ON THE ACCOUNTS AND ANNUAL RETURN **FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31-MAR-2009**

Bank reconciliation

Please see note 8 to the accounts.

Variation in the Precept

The table below gives the precepts and grants for the eight years from 2000-01 to 2008-09.

	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10
Precept	£1,500	£2,000	£1,600	£2,000	£1,500	£1,500	£1,500	£1,500
Grant	£1,180	£1,215	£1,251	£1,276	£1,314	£1,353	£1,387	£1,415

The grant from Darlington Borough Council has shown a small but steady year-on-year increase, basically to cover inflation.

The precept has been more variable. Sadberge Parish Council's total budget not very large, and a single significant item in the budget for a given year --- such as, for example, the replacement of the railings around part of the village green --- can make a comparatively large percentage difference to the Parish Council's funding requirement for that year. Since the grant is effectively constant, any variation in the funding requirement tends to make an even larger percentage change to the precept.

The precept for 2008-09 was the same as the previous year, and the Council has set the same precept again for 2009-10. However, the precepts shown in the Annual Return are distorted by the fact that the precept for 2008-09 was paid early on the last day of the 2007-08 financial year.

Change in Total Other Receipts

The Other Receipts tend to include a number of one-off receipts.

The Other Receipts for 2008-09 were only 6.6% higher than in 2007-08. However, the composition of the two figures was significantly different. In particular:-

- The 2008-09 grant from Darlington Borough Council was paid early on the last day of the 2007-08 financial year. Therefore, the Other Receipts figure for 2007-08 includes Darlington Borough Council grants amounting to £2,802, while the figure for 2008-09 does not include any such grants.
- The Other Receipts figure for 2007-08 includes a Calor Village of the Year prize of £500, while the figure for 2008-09 includes Calor Village of the Year prizes amounting to £2,500.
- The Other Receipts figure for 2007-08 includes Village Festival donations amounting to £500, while the figure for 2008-09 includes Village Festival donations amounting to £900.
- The Other Receipts figure for 2008-09 includes an "It's Your Community" grant of £585 towards the Sadberge Energy Saving Project.

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Increase in Other Payments

The Other Payments in 2008-09 were 47% higher than in 2007-08. The main reasons for the difference were:-

- The external audit fee increased from £58.75 (2007-08) to £141 (2008-09).
- Meeting room hire increased from £115 (2007-08) to £222 (2008-09), mainly due to an increase in the number of meetings.
- The 2008-09 figure includes £528 of expenditure on the Sadberge Energy Saving Project .
- In 2008-09 the Council made a one-off payment of £650 for a new kerb to protect the edge of part of the village green.
- Other one-off payments in 2008-09 included £128 for a party to mark the retirement of the village Postmaster and his wife and £122 of travel and subsistence costs for the Council's representatives at the Calor National Village of the Year Awards Luncheon.

Balance Carried Forward

During 2008-09 the Council received Calor Village of the Year prizes amounting to £2,500. These were, for obvious reasons, not included in the Council's budget for the year.

At its meeting on 16-Dec-2008, the Council decided to set aside the sum of £3,000 to fund a project to recognise Sadberge's success in the 2008 Calor Village of the Year competition. A number of ideas have been put forward regarding what could be done with this project (including, for example, chainsaw carvings on the village green and/or speed-sensing "slow down" signs on particular roads through the village) and local residents have been consulted about these ideas. The aim is to complete the expenditure on the project by the end of the 2009-10 financial year.

Excluding the £3,000 set aside for the project to commemorate Sadberge's success in the 2008 Calor Village of the Year competition, the general reserve carried forward at the end of 2008-09 was £1,753, which is 1.17 times the precept for 2009-10.

Risk Assessment

The Council reviewed its risk assessment on 12th August 2008 and agreed that it was satisfactory in its current form.

On 8th July 2008, Councillors carried out an inspection tour of the Council's land and property (using an inspection checklist prepared by the Clerk) and action was subsequently taken to address a number of issues that were identified during the tour. See the enclosed copy of the completed checklist.

Review of the Effectiveness of the Internal Audit System

As reported in the commentary on the 2007-08 Annual Return, on 3rd June 2008 the Council reviewed the effectiveness of its internal audit arrangements and approved a new set of Internal Audit Terms of Reference.

The Council carried out another review of its internal audit system on 12th August 2008 and agreed that the existing arrangements are appropriate and satisfactory.

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Asset & Investment Register

At its meeting on 19th May 2009, the Council approved a Register of Assets. A copy is enclosed.

Alastair Mackenzie
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30th July 2009