

SADBERGE PARISH COUNCIL

COMMENTARY ON THE ACCOUNTS AND ANNUAL RETURN **FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31-MAR-2010**

Bank reconciliation

Please see note 6 to the accounts.

Variation in the Precept

The table below gives the precepts and grants for the eight years from 2003-04 to 2010-11.

	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11
Precept	£2,000	£1,600	£2,000	£1,500	£1,500	£1,500	£1,500	£1,500
Grant	£1,215	£1,251	£1,276	£1,314	£1,353	£1,387	£1,415	£1,415

Up to 2009-10, the grant from Darlington Borough Council showed a small but steady year-on-year increase, basically to cover inflation.

At times, the precept has been more variable. Sadberge Parish Council's total budget is not very large, and a single significant item in the budget for a given year – e.g. 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. However, the precept has recently been constant for several years.

Change in Total Other Receipts

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

The Other Receipts for 2009-10 were 24.4% lower than in 2008-09. The main reasons for the difference were:-

- The 2008-09 figure includes Calor Village of the Year prizes amounting to £2,500. There were no such prizes in 2009-10.
- The 2008-09 figure includes an O2 "It's Your Community" grant of £585 for the Sadberge Energy Saving Project. There was no equivalent grant in 2009-10.
- In 2008-09, donations towards the costs of the Sadberge Summer Festival amounted to £900. In 2009-10 the donations towards the Festival amounted to £770. The level of donations fluctuates from year to year depending on the amounts raised by the two village pubs and any amounts donated by individual residents..
- In 2008-09, the income generated by the Village Festival amounted to £134. In 2009-10 the festival income was £486. The increase was mainly because there were more 'income generating' activities – e.g. a hoopla stall and a children's tombola – in the 2009 festival.
- The 2009-10 figure includes a VAT reclaim of £347. No VAT was reclaimed in 2008-09.

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Change in Total Other Costs

The Other Costs in 2009-10 were 31.4% lower than in 2008-09. The main reasons for the difference were:-

- Meeting room hire increased by 11.1%, from £222 (2008-09) to £246 (2009-10). This was partly due to a change in the way that the Village Hall calculates its room hire charges.
- Printing costs increased from £83 in 2008-09 to £145 in 2009-10. The printing costs fluctuate depending on the number of newsletters and flyers that the Parish Council produces. This, in turn, depends on the number and type of issues arising during each year. In 2009-10 the issues covered by newsletters and flyers included proposals for two wind farms near Sadberge and a proposed development at the edge of Darlington that is likely to increase the volume of traffic passing through Sadberge.
- The 2008-09 figure includes £528 of expenditure on the Sadberge Energy Saving Project. There was no such expenditure in 2009-10.
- The 2008-09 figure includes expenditure of £170 on the Sadberge Parish Plan. There was no such expenditure in 2009-10.
- Expenditure on the Village Festival decreased from £1,534 in 2008-09 to £971 in 2009-10, partly because the 2009 festival did not include a parade, so there was no need for a road closure.
- The cost of setting up and maintaining the village gardens decreased from £137 in 2008-09 to £53 in 2009-10, mainly because the 2008-09 expenditure included the costs of setting up a new village garden.
- 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. There was no equivalent expenditure in 2009-10.
- 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.
- One-off payments in 2009-10 included £159 for a storage cabinet for Parish Council records, £120 for three Parish Council mailboxes, £110 for a display map of the footpaths around Sadberge and £25 for entering Sadberge into the 2010 Northumbria in Bloom competition.

Balance Carried Forward

As was explained in the commentary to the Parish Council's last Annual Return, during 2008-09 the Parish Council received Calor Village of the Year prizes amounting to £2,500. At its meeting on 16-Dec-2008 the Council decided to set aside the sum of £3,000 to fund a project to commemorate Sadberge's success in the 2008 Calor Village of the Year competition. The intention was to spend this money during the 2009-10 financial year, but it took longer than expected to investigate the various ideas, partly because the Borough Council's Highways Department was not happy with the idea of the Parish Council buying and installing its own speed-sensing "slow down" sign to address the issue of traffic speeding through the village. The current allocation of the fund is given on the next page. (The Council is aware that the sum of the allocations exceeds the £3,000 that has been set aside.)

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<u>Item</u>	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Current status</u>
Northumbria in Bloom costs	£150	Still to be finalised.
Community Speed Watch costs	£250	Being investigated.
Chainsaw carvings on the village green	£1,250	Order placed.
Flower basket stands for the village green	£320	Invoice received.
Community compost facility	£300	Under construction.
New notice board for the village green	£1,200	Being investigated.

Total	£3,470	

The donations received towards the costs of the 2009 Village Festival exceeded the net costs of organising the festival. The Parish Council decided to set aside the surplus donations – amounting to £285 – to fund future Village Festivals.

Excluding the £3,000 set aside for the project to commemorate Sadberge's success in the 2008 Calor Village of the Year competition and the £285 set aside to fund future Village Festivals, the general reserve carried forward at the end of 2009-10 was £1,815, which is 1.11 times the precept for 2010-11.

Risk Assessment

The Council reviewed its risk assessment on 2nd February 2010 and agreed some minor changes.

On 28th July 2009, Councillors carried out an inspection tour of the Council's land and property, and action was subsequently taken to address a number of issues that were identified during the tour. See the enclosed copy of the inspection checklist.

Review of the Effectiveness of the Internal Audit System

On 12th January 2010 the Parish Council carried out a review of its internal audit system and agreed that the existing arrangements are appropriate and satisfactory.

Asset & Investment Register

The Register of Assets was updated on 10th April 2010 and the updated register was approved by the Parish Council on 14th June 2010. A copy is enclosed.

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20th July 2010