

**8 January 2024**

**Budget Report 2024-25 FINAL RESOLVED**

## **Contents**

1. GTC Priorities and Action Plan
2. Reserves/Working Capital
3. Unitary Council (WFC) Figures and Charges
4. Staff and Pensions (*Dept. 1 – Council and Dept. 2 Victoria Hall*)
5. Projects (*Dept. 1 – Council*)
6. Christmas Lights (*Dept. 1 – Council*)
7. Accountancy Service (*Dept. 1 – Council*)
8. Victoria Hall (*Dept. 2*)
9. Public Conveniences (*Dept. 4,5,6*)
10. Recreation Ground (*Dept. 7*)
11. Public Domain Maintenance (*Dept. 10*)
12. Public Works Loan Board
13. Surplus

### 1. Town Council Priorities and Action Plan

- a) The budget is set to fulfil the Town Council's Action Plan and Priorities.
- b) These were last resolved in December 2023.
- c) They are published at: [www.grangeoversandstowncouncil.gov.uk](http://www.grangeoversandstowncouncil.gov.uk)

### 2. Reserves/Working Capital

- a) The Reserves Policy was approved April 2021 and last reviewed in June 2023.
- b) It is published on the Town Council's website.
- c) At the June 2023 Town Council meeting, the reserves allocation at the opening of the new financial year 2022-23 was approved (C23/36) as below.
- d) Since then, in August 2023, Council resolved to add the earmarked Victoria Hall Support Group donation of £8,000 to the reserves. (C23/76).

Opening Reserves 2023 APPROVED June 2023	£
<b>General Reserve</b>	
Council	107,314
<b>Earmarked Reserve</b>	
Victoria Hall (includes £50k for boilers as quoted)	90,000
Public Conveniences	15,000
Recreation, Play and Culture	35,000
Allotments	12,000
Public Domain	10,000
Professional Fees	1,000
<b>Reserves per AGAR Box 7 March 2023</b>	<b>270,314</b>

### 3. Unitary Council Figures and Charges

#### a) Council Tax Base

This changes each year. It increases as houses are built and decreases when more residents claim discount or homes are empty.

The Council Tax base for 2023/24 was 2,171.08, an increase of 0.2.

Council Tax base for 2024-25 is 2,169.59 a decrease of 1.49 properties.

#### b) Council Tax Grant

This is given by the Unitary Council (WFC) to each parish to supplement the Precept. In 2023/24 Grange Town Council received £7,850.

WFC have advised that the Grant this year will be the same, but that this is the final year this grant will be given.

#### c) Street Lighting Charge

This is a charge from the Unitary Council to Grange residents.

In 2023/24 it was £18,811.87 (62% increase).

This is charged to Grange residents, and bills indicate that it goes to the Town Council but in fact this money is retained by WFC.

*Charge for 2024-25 to be announced.*

**4. Staff and Pensions (Dept. 1 – Council and Dept. 2 Victoria Hall)**

- a) Budget shows salaries, with NALC pay rise backdated to 1 April 2023, approved at December Full Council on recommendation of Staffing Committee.
- b) Salaries for Front-of-House are listed in Dept.2, Victoria Hall.
- c) Employers NI is included in salaries.
- d) Pension auto-enrolment commenced February 2017. The budget amount represents the costs as defined by the Local Government Pension Scheme.

**5. Projects (Department 1 – Council)**

- a) There is no Projects budget as costs must be planned and budgeted for – holding a contingency fund for unspecified use is not good practice.
- b) Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) payments from WFC and/or grant fundraising and/or donations could provide funding for projects.
- c) CIL payments to date total £617.25. This was spent on the purchase and installation of cycle racks outside the Library. Total cost of project was £1,405.

**6. Christmas Lights (Department 1 – Council)**

- a) This is the second year of a new 5-year contract with LITE Ltd. which ends after Christmas 2026.
- b) £4,751 (5-year term) per annum plus carriage and electricity charges.

**7. Accountancy Service Fees (Department 1 – Council)** - includes PAYE, payroll, pensions and VAT.

**8. Victoria Hall (Department 2)**

- a) Budget shows £12,000 for Maintenance, Repairs and Renewals, reduced from £18,000 in 2022.
- b) LOLER (The Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations 1998) inspections are done annually. This is for the stage scenery hoists and cost £1,365 plus VAT in July 2023.

**9. Public Conveniences (Departments 4,5,6)**

- a) This service is provided at a loss – costing £22,728 in 2022-23.
- b) SLDC (now WFC) devolved providing Public Conveniences to the Town Council in 2011 and an annual grant was given. This has now been phased out.
- c) Healthmatic clean and maintain the facilities on an annual rolling contract.
- d) The facilities are deteriorating and will need refurbishing in due course.
- e) Increasing the entrance fee is an option.

**10. Recreation Ground (Department 7)**

- a) The Recreation Ground is leased by GTC from WFC who gave up running the facility as it was not viable.
- b) In March 2016, a 2-year contract was agreed with Horton Landscapes to operate it. A further 5-year contract was agreed on 31 October 2017.
- c) This ended on 31 October 2022 and a further 2-year contract was agreed.
- d) Costs to GTC under this contract are infrastructure maintenance, WFC annual inspection fee and GTC monthly inspections.

**11. Public Domain Maintenance (Department 10)**

- a) Includes Ornamental Gardens wall-top planting (resolved October 2016).
- b) Includes Lengthsman services and a skip for the Lengthsman. The budget is increased for 2024-25 to bring Lengthsman hourly rate up to same level as Front-of-House Staff.

**12. Public Works Loan Board** - this loan, for the refurbishment of the public conveniences, was paid off in January 2023.

**13. Surplus** - any budget surplus mitigates against the loss of WFC grants towards running of Ornamental Garden public conveniences and Victoria Hall and/or capital replacement costs. The Town Council Finance Risk Assessment (approved annually in October) states that funds should be set aside annually towards capital replacement costs of assets.

**ENDS**