

Cinque Port Town of New Romney



Mrs C. Newcombe
Town Clerk
and
Responsible Financial Officer

Town Clerk's Office
Town Hall
New Romney
Kent TN28 8BT

Tel: New Romney 01797 362348

Ref: CN/3005

13th January 2025

Dear Councillor,

SUMMONS TO ATTEND AN ESPECIAL MEETING OF NEW ROMNEY TOWN COUNCIL, TO BE HELD IN THE ASSEMBLY ROOMS, NEW ROMNEY, ON MONDAY 20TH JANUARY 2025 AT 6.45PM.

You are hereby summoned to attend the above-mentioned meeting of New Romney Town Council to consider the under-mentioned business.

Yours sincerely,

C Newcombe

Mrs C Newcombe
Town Clerk & Responsible Financial Officer

Email: town.clerk@newromney-tc.gov.uk

Members of Public are welcome to join this meeting.

PLEASE NOTE: New Romney Assembly Rooms and New Romney Town Hall have restricted access for people with limited mobility; please enquire for details.

Anyone displaying any symptoms of Covid-19 should NOT attend the meeting.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AT TOWN COUNCIL MEETINGS

1. Who can participate in a New Romney Town Council meeting?

Members of the Public and Press may attend this Council meeting, except at such times as certain sensitive personal, legal or contractual matters may be considered in private and confidential session, when Members of the Public will be required to leave the meeting.

**ESPECIAL FULL COUNCIL MEETING
MONDAY 20TH JANUARY 2025 AT 6.45PM**

AGENDA

- 1. APOLOGIES:**
To receive the apologies of Councillors unable to attend and approve reasons for absence.

- 2. DISPENSATION TO PARTICIPATE:**
To receive and note any applications granted by the Town Clerk, on behalf of the Town Council, for dispensation to participate in Meetings of New Romney Town Council.

- 3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST:**
Councillors to declare any Disclosable Pecuniary Interests or Other Significant or Personal Interests they may have in items on the agenda this evening.

- 4. PRECEPT REQUIREMENT 2025-26 (Encs):**
To approve the New Romney Town Council Precept Requirement for 2025-26 and any other associated actions as may be required..

NB: Reports or notes of the Personnel Committee will be considered as Private & Confidential as they concern staff matters; and all legal or contractual information, documents, agreements or reports may be considered likewise. Other items may be considered as private and confidential if the Town Council deems that it is in the public interest to do so.

Town Clerk – 13th January 2025

New Romney Town Council

Especial Full Council Meeting 20th January 2025

Agenda Item 4: Precept 2025-26

Fees and charges for 2025-26 were considered and approved by the Finance and General Purposes Committee (See minutes of Finance & General Purposes Committee Budget Meeting held on Monday 9th December 2024, previously circulated to all Councillors).

The **Draft Budget for 2025-26** recommended by the Finance and General Purposes Committee for consideration by Full Council is as follows:

Committee	£
F&GP Committee	201,962.00
Personnel Committee	227,100.00
Planning Committee	250.00
Health & Wellbeing Committee	250.00
Total Budgetary Requirements for 2025-2026	429,562.00

2025-26 Budget Implications	£
Town Council Draft Budget Requirement	429,562.00
Draft Precept Requirement for Consideration	429,562.00

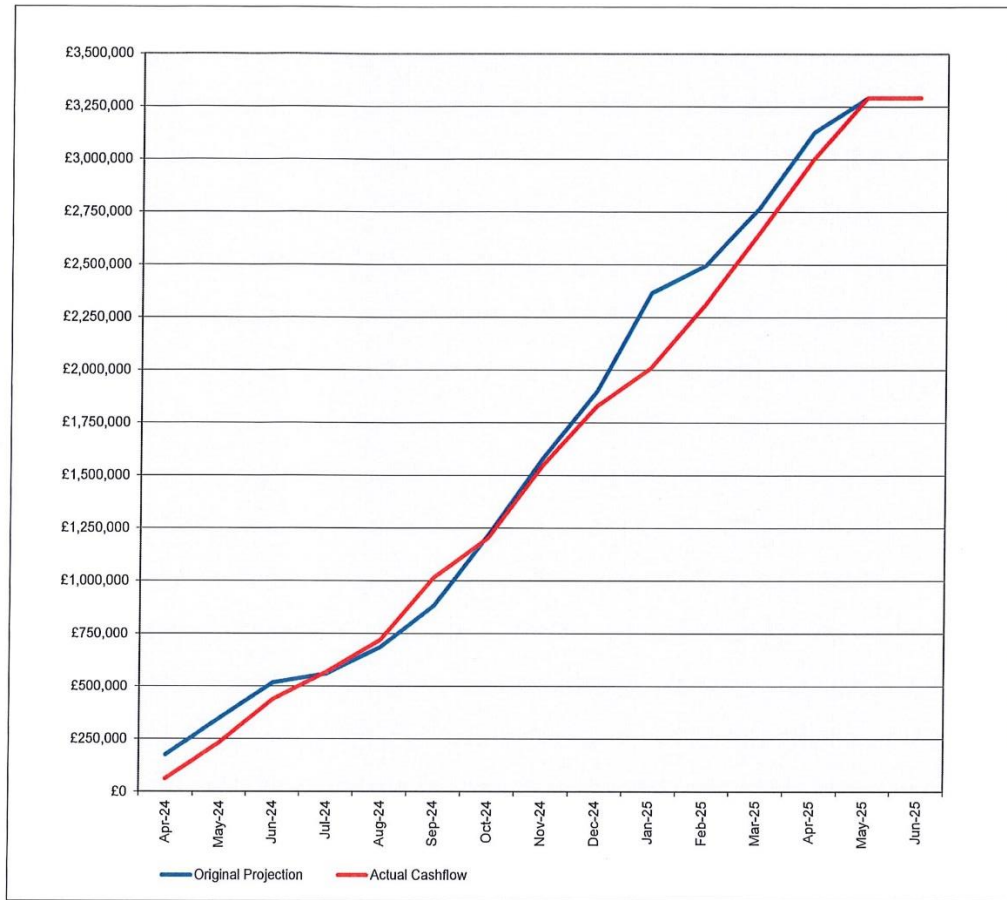
Capital Projects:

There currently remains one on-going approved large-scale capital project, as detailed below:

Community Hall / Sports Pavilion / Annexe Project: This project is a large-scale project which is now in the build phase and approximately two-thirds of the way through the Design and Build Programme Schedule. To date, the project has remained within budget and in line with projected costs at each stage, with approximately £109,000.00 remaining within the contingency budget.

Please see below for the current funding status of the project:

APPENDIX F - PROJECT CASHFLOW



	Val Due Date	ORIGINAL PROJECTION					ACTUAL CASHFLOW / REVISED PROJECTION				
		Gross Projection	Retention	Nett	Previous	Monthly Payment	Gross value	Retention	Nett	Previous	Monthly Payment
1	15-Apr-24	£175,000	-£5,250	£169,750	£0	£169,750	£62,599	-£1,878	£60,721	£0	£60,721
2	13-May-24	£350,000	-£10,500	£339,500	£169,750	£169,750	£233,170	-£6,995	£226,175	£60,721	£165,454
3	13-Jun-24	£518,989	-£15,570	£503,419	£339,500	£163,919	£438,608	-£13,158	£425,450	£226,175	£199,275
4	15-Jul-24	£560,432	-£16,813	£543,619	£503,419	£40,200	£568,359	-£17,051	£551,308	£425,450	£125,858
5	13-Aug-24	£687,540	-£20,626	£666,914	£543,619	£123,295	£719,680	-£21,590	£698,090	£551,308	£146,782
6	13-Sep-24	£881,995	-£26,460	£855,535	£666,914	£188,621	£1,017,301	-£30,519	£986,782	£698,090	£288,692
7	14-Oct-24	£1,219,229	-£36,577	£1,182,652	£855,535	£327,117	£1,205,636	-£36,169	£1,169,467	£986,782	£182,685
8	13-Nov-24	£1,581,424	-£47,443	£1,533,981	£1,182,652	£351,329	£1,546,868	-£46,406	£1,500,462	£1,169,467	£330,996
9	13-Dec-24	£1,900,762	-£57,023	£1,843,739	£1,533,981	£309,758	£1,830,456	-£54,914	£1,775,542	£1,500,462	£275,079
10	13-Jan-25	£2,367,431	-£71,023	£2,296,408	£1,843,739	£452,669	£2,010,738	-£60,322	£1,950,416	£1,775,542	£174,874
11	13-Feb-25	£2,496,773	-£74,903	£2,421,870	£2,296,408	£125,462	£2,310,000	-£69,300	£2,240,700	£1,950,416	£290,284
12	13-Mar-25	£2,770,305	-£83,109	£2,687,196	£2,421,870	£265,326	£2,650,000	-£79,500	£2,570,500	£2,240,700	£329,800
13	14-Apr-25	£3,129,024	-£93,871	£3,035,153	£2,687,196	£347,957	£3,000,000	-£90,000	£2,910,000	£2,570,500	£339,500
14	13-May-25	£3,291,506	-£49,373	£3,242,133	£3,035,153	£206,980	£3,291,506	-£49,373	£3,242,133	£2,910,000	£332,133
15	13-Jun-25	£3,291,506	-£49,373	£3,242,133	£3,242,133	£0	£3,291,506	-£49,373	£3,242,133	£3,242,133	£0
16	14-Jul-25	£3,291,506	-£49,373	£3,242,133	£3,242,133	£0	£3,291,506	-£49,373	£3,242,133	£3,242,133	£0
17	05-May-26	£3,291,506	£0	£3,291,506	£3,242,133	£49,373	£3,339,072	£0	£3,339,072	£3,242,133	£96,939
TOTAL						£3,291,506					£3,339,072

Note: All figures are exclusive of VAT, which shall be charged at the prevailing rate where applicable

Other Projects: Any further “one-off” projects during 2025-26, including those identified within the NRTC Strategic Plan 2023-27, will need to be funded via grant funding, s106/CIL monies or from any Reserve Funds that have been put in place for the specified purposes. In my capacity as Proper Officer, and supported by the Council’s appointed Responsible Financial Officer, I would, as usual, re-iterate my advice that the Council does not make use of General Reserves to fund non-emergency projects, except whereby the ring-fenced sum (£30,000.00) previously identified for potentially supporting delivery of the Maude Community Centre (formally CHSPN) project may be required. The purpose of General Reserves being to provide funding in an emergency and at such time as there are no other Reserve Funds or other possible sources of funding available. It should be noted that it is necessary to endeavour to retain General Reserves in excess of the amount of 50% of the annual Council running costs (but not in excess of 12 months’ running costs) in order that the Town Council could continue to operate for a full six months in such emergency circumstance as may wipe out its available funds until such time as the next precept instalment is payable.

NRTC Reserves

Budget comparisons to date indicate that the Budget for 2024-25 may, in fact, not have been fully utilised by the end of the current financial year, resulting in a small underspend in the 2024-25 budget. This small underspend will be absorbed into General Reserves at year end, following which the Council may consider, if deemed appropriate, whether to vire any amount into other ring-fenced reserve Funds or whether to leave those funds in General Reserves.

Precept:

The above-detailed budget figures result in a **precept requirement of £429,562.00**, which is an **increase of £32,610.00** on last year’s precept, to be approved by Full Council.

In the main, over and above the inflationary increase in costs to the Council, this increase represents the impact of the recent increase in National Insurance Employer Contributions combined with the reduction in Contribution Thresholds, as well as a higher than anticipated national pay settlement, together with financial provision for an approved formal salaries review which is now underway and financial provision for projects identified within the approved Strategic Plan 2023-27.

The impact of the Town Council’s Precept requirement (being the amount that is required to meet the difference between budgeted income and expenditure) on local Council Tax payers, is calculated by dividing the Precept requirement by the average Band D Council Tax Base, as advised by Folkestone & Hythe District Council. The Tax Base is the total number of properties in New Romney from Band A to Band H averaged out to Band D equivalent properties.

The impact of this precept on local tax payers is, in ‘real terms’, a small increase of 5.1% on the average Band D Council Tax (based on 2025-26 provisional Tax Base figures supplied by the District Council).

NB: Whilst the revised Tax Base figures for 2025-26 are currently provisional, it is not possible to await confirmed figures as the District Council meeting at which the figures will be confirmed is not scheduled to take place until after the deadline of 31st January 2025 for submission of Precept Demands. However, the District Council view is generally that, at this stage, it would not be aware of any reason as to why they should be materially altered at that meeting.

The tables below show the impact of this year's changes in cost to local council tax payers.

Current Precept (2024-25)	£396,952.00	
Tax Base (Band D Equiv)	2,988.46	
Average Council Tax Charge for Town Council Element	£132.83	

Proposed Precept (2025-26)	£429,562.00	Precept Increase: 8.2%
Using Revised Tax Base (2025-26)	3,077.06	
Average Council Tax Charge for Town Council Element	£139.60	Real Terms to local Tax Payers: Average Band D Council Tax Increase = 5.1% (£6.77 per annum £0.56 per calendar month / £0.13 per week)

In real terms, the increase on the average Band D Property Council Tax Bill in the amount of £0.56 per calendar month represents less than one-fifth of the price of a single cup of coffee per month in an average local coffee chain.

With the above in mind, and noting that it is important that the aspirations of the Council for the Town are funded in order that they can be delivered, the Council should approve the budget and output precept requirement at the proposed level.

The routine press release identifying the NRTC Precept requirement and Council Tax increase for 2025-26 should highlight the strategic planning that has been undertaken by the Council and the necessity to fund such plans for the benefit of the Town and its community as well as the impact of financial matters outside of its control (ie changes to Employer NI Contributions and higher than anticipated National Pay Settlement)

It should be noted that it continues to remain possible that the Council Tax Capping regime may be applied in the near future. This will mean that if capping is applied and the Town Council precept requirement exceeds the capped increase, a referendum and all its associated costs would be triggered.

In my capacity as Proper Officer and supported by the Council's appointed Responsible Financial Officer, it is my recommendation, therefore, that the Council does, indeed, prepare itself adequately for the full impact of the financial challenges that lie ahead during the forthcoming financial year by setting a realistic budget and approving the associated precept demand, as detailed above.

In light of the above report, and having given due consideration to the wide range of financial issues relating to Town Council business, I would make the following recommendations:

Recommended Actions:

(i) Confirm and approve the Town Council net budget requirement for 2025-26 in the amount of £429,562.00

(ii) Confirm and approve a precept requirement for 2025-26 in the amount of £429,562.00

(iii) Authorise the Town Clerk and / or RFO to submit the formal precept demand to Folkestone and Hythe District Council by the due deadline and, in consultation with the Chairman of the Council, to issue an associated press release.

Town Clerk

13/01/2025

END