

From: clerk@haltwhistle town council.org
Sent: 23 October 2025 13:25
To: greenheadparish@gmail.com
Subject: RE: JBC Budget questions

Hi Susan,

Thank you for your email, I'll forward this on to the JBC, but in the meantime I wanted to respond to some of your points directly.

We completely understand that the proposed levy increase will come as a shock, particularly in the current climate where all councils are already facing tough financial pressures. Rising costs across the board, particularly for staffing, utilities and maintenance have made this year's budget especially difficult, and the Burial Committee recognises that we'll need to take some decisive steps to get things back on a sustainable footing.

Contractor costs have risen substantially, largely due to the inclusion of both David Benson's landscaping work and the use of a second, ad-hoc grave digger. David is now working 8 hours per week during the summer and 4 hours per week over the winter. The grave digging costs are charged at a fixed rate of £300 per grave. Although burial fees were raised to help meet this, the Committee has proposed a further increase of £200 per burial when we review fees for April 2027, to better reflect the true cost.

Greenhead maintenance has been raised by both yourself and Cllr Maxted, and your concerns have been passed on to Sean. We're aware of the issues and are aiming to ensure standards improve next year, I would appreciate if you continued to let me know as I don't go out to Greenhead often.

With regard to the water rates, the increase is due to a combination of factors: significantly drier weather this year compared to last, increased utility rates, and greater use of polytunnels. To manage this, the JBC is implementing a 20% increase in allotment rents, and will be writing to plot holders encouraging the use of water butts. A new rule will also limit covered planting (e.g. greenhouses and polytunnels) to no more than 20% of the total plot area.

Kind Regards,

Ms Emma Ackroyd
Clerk to Haltwhistle Town Council
Tanglewood Cottage
Pennine Road
Halton-lea-gate
CA8 7AB

07818915171

www.northumberlandparishes.uk/haltwhistle

From: greenheadparish@gmail.com <greenheadparish@gmail.com>
Sent: 22 October 2025 10:04
To: clerk@haltwhistlecouncil.org
Subject: JBC Budget questions

Good Morning Emma

Thank you for sending the figures over for the budget levy for 26-27. Greenhead and Plenmeller meet in November and may have some questions. If you could respond before the meetings I will be able to address them! There will be grave concern over the negative balance forecast and the 20% increase asked of councils.

The main problem area seems to be in the contractor costs which appear to jump from around £2k to £15k! I notice the projected figures include winter hours. Back in 2023, the committee agreed that David Benson would work 4 hours per week from April to October and the occasional hours over the winter not exceeding 4 per week. Unfortunately, this ended up as 4 hours per week every week. I know he was on £25 per hour back then which gives an annual amount of £5200. How on earth has this got to £15100? And this year Greenhead was not kept up to scratch in a timely manner so what are they all doing? If you could explain the contractor's figures it would be much appreciated.

Water rates seem to have gone up – is this just due to national increases?

Regards
Susan

Mrs Susan Saunders MAAT CiLCA
Clerk to Greenhead Parish Council
Scotchcoulthard
Haltwhistle
Northumberland
NE49 9NH

Tel: 01434 344470
Website: www.northumberlandparishes.uk/greenhead