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RATES TO BE KEPT AT 9s. 2d. IN THE £ AFTER ALL Council's Way of Effecting a Saving of £4,000

TOWN WILL WANT MORE GOVERNMENT LOANS

By cutting £3,560 out of the estimates of expenditure and adding to this £420 from the balance in hand carried forward on the general accounts, Worthing Town Council has managed to retain its rate call at 9d. 2d. for the coming year.

There was much discussion before this was accomplished. It is achieved by adopting a suggestion that Government loans should be applied for to pay for certain schemes instead of paying out of revenue. In presenting the town's budget, Alderman Hawkins mentioned that:

The water rate is down 1d., and contributes 2d. to the rates. Electricity contributes 1d. 27 per cent of the County Council rates are paid by Worthing. There is a £70,000 increase in the rateable value of the borough.

Alderman Hawkins said that the continuous growth of the borough did undoubtedly necessitate additional expenditure, and he asked the various committees to scrutinise any expenditure in connection with services under their control, and hoped that each committee would do its utmost not to exceed its estimates for the coming year.

SMALL HOUSES NOT BENEFICIAL
It had been frequently suggested, he continued, that the increase in rateable value should provide sufficient income to meet additional expenditure. Provided, of course, that the hereditaments rated paid sufficient to the Rating Authority to cover all services rendered, the increase in rateable value is desirable.

Unfortunately, a large proportion of the increase in rateable value in the borough is in respect of small houses, which, from the financial aspect, are not beneficial to the Corporation.

For example, a small house with a rateable value of £20 pays £9 6s. 8d. per annum rates. If one child from that house attends an elementary school in the borough at the cost to the Corporation, after allowing for grants received from the National Exchequer, is approximately the same amount, so that the occupier contributes nothing for Public Health, Highways, Fire Brigade and other services rendered by the Corporation and County Council, the cost of which has to be met by occupiers of houses of a larger rateable value.

INCREASED EXPENDITURE

The total estimated income from all sources for the current year was £349,445 said Alderman Hawkins, while the probable income is £361,498—an increase of £12,053 over the estimate. The estimated income for the next financial year is £366,220. The estimated expenditure for the current year was £360,433, while the probable expenditure is £369,904—a reduction of £2,529. The estimated expenditure for the next financial year is £374,852.

Dealing with the estimates of the various committees, Alderman Hawkins first mentioned the Entertainments and Baths Committee. He said that owing to the fine weather experienced during the summer of 1933 the income from bandstand and chairs exceeded the estimate by £1,038, which had in the main resulted in a surplus of this committee at March 31, 1934, of £1,088, which had been carried forward to the credit of next year's estimates. This committee requires for the General Rate Fund £609, as compared with £2,525 for the current financial year—a decrease of £1,916 (approximately 1d. rate).

WEATHER AFFECTS REVENUE

On the Pier the probable total for the year amounted to £2,705, which is over £200 in excess of the previous year. The weather conditions experienced during last summer were helpful to outdoor entertainments, but considerably reduced the income from indoor entertainments; consequently the attendances in the Pavilion showed a considerable reduction.

The sum of £500 is again included for a contribution to the Reserve Fund. The probable General Rate contribution for the current financial year is £5,090—an increase of £1,455 over that of last year—approximately a 1d. rate. This committee's activities had the following result on the rate, compared with last year:—

	1933/4	1934/5
Bandstand, Baths, etc.	£2,525	£609
Pier	£2,635	£5,090
	£5,160	£5,699

PARADE AND PARKS WANT 1½d. RATE MORE

The amount required for the Parade, Parks and Allotments Committee is £19,112, compared with an estimate of £19,500—a saving of £388. The probable income is £21,664, compared with an estimate of £5,477—a surplus of £687. The estimated expenditure for the next financial year amounts to £23,103. The increase of £1,957 includes £600—one-third of the cost of the new bathhouse—and £915 for loan charges on the Goring sea defence. The committee asked for £14,098 as

compared with £11,214 last year—an increase of £2,884 (approximately a 1½d. rate).

The Fire Brigade, Licensing and Parking Places Committee asked for £2,257 from the General Rate Fund, compared with £2,817 for the current financial year—a decrease of £560 (approximately 1d. rate).

£4,893 MORE FOR PUBLIC HEALTH

The probable expenditure of the Public Health Committee for the current year is £37,668, compared with their estimate of £37,553—an increase over the estimate of £115. The probable income is £7,463 compared with an estimate of £6,738—an excess of £725. The estimated expenditure of this committee for next year is £42,446, compared with £37,553 for the current financial year (an increase of £4,893).

The probable expenditure of the Library, Museum and Art Gallery Committee is £5,019, compared with an estimate of £5,339—a saving of £320.

The estimated expenditure for Public Libraries for next year amounts to £5,345, compared with £4,248 for the current financial year—an increase of £1,097. The amount required from the General Rate Fund for this service is £4,700 as compared with £3,530 for the current year—an increase of £870 (approximately a 2-5th penny rate).

The Museum and Art Gallery ask for a rate from the General Rate Fund of £982, compared with £957 for the current year.

The chief item of increase is £745 for the provision of a branch library at Broadwater.

STREET LIGHTING IMPROVEMENTS

The Highways Committee's probable expenditure is £53,054, compared with an estimate of £57,377—a saving of £4,323. The probable income is £17,699, compared with an estimate of £20,633—a reduction of £2,934. The estimated expenditure of this committee for next year amounts to £59,345, compared with an estimate of £57,377 for the current financial year. The chief items of increase were £5,964, and included £2,259 for street improvements, and £2,240 for lighting.

The original estimate for public lighting improvements as recommended by the Lighting Sub-committee was £29,807, of which amount £3,913 has been included in the estimates of this committee.

HIGHWAYS UP BY £6,118

The amount required by this committee from the General Rate Fund is £40,539, compared with £34,421—an increase of £6,118 (approximately a 3d. rate).

Owing to the increased rent of 8d. per week in respect of houses built under the 1924 Act, to be paid by the tenants, the Housing and Town Planning Committee requires only £774 from the General Rate Fund, compared with £1,786 for the current financial year—a decrease of £1,012 (approximately 1d. rate). The total cost to the rates for the next financial year for housing purposes is £2,796 (approximately a rate of 1.4d. in the £).

£981 MORE FOR SALARIES

The probable expenditure of the Finance and Law Committee is £36,827, compared with an estimate of £36,392—an excess expenditure of £435. The probable income is £16,173, which is less than the estimate of £16,290 by £207. The estimated expenditure for next year is £38,281. The chief items of increase total £2,931, including £981 for salaries, New Assembly Hall, propn. of fees on discarded scheme £850, library forecourt £400, purchase of Downland (one-third) £330, aerodrome (additional loans and interest) £370.

The amount required from the General Rate Fund for this committee is £22,350 compared with £19,704 for the current financial year—an increase of £2,646 (approximately a rate of 1½d. in the £).

EDUCATION COSTS 1d. LESS

The Education Committee asked for the product of a 15d. rate, estimated to produce £30,000, as compared with a 15½d. rate, estimated to produce £29,682—a reduction of 1d. in the £. No definite estimate has been made in respect of

restoring "cuts" from teachers' salaries, but if the Government decide to reinstate the "cuts," the surplus is sufficiently large to meet the Corporation's contribution.

WATER RATE TO BE REDUCED

The recommendation of the Water Committee is to reduce the Water Rate chargeable to consumers in the borough and in the rural area by 1d. in the £, and still make a contribution to the rate of 2d. in the £.

"The rate of 8d. in the £ on gross estimated rental is extremely low," he added. "It is not always appreciated by the ratepayers the very low charges made for water by this Corporation."

"Take for instance, a small house which is assessed for water at £25. The amount payable next year will be 16s. 8d. per annum, which is less than 4d. per week. Assuming that there are four persons residing in that house, the charge per person for water is under 1d. per week."

ELECTRICITY AIDS RATES

Included in the estimated income for next year is a contribution from the Electricity Undertaking of £2,000 (1d. rate).

The estimated requirements of the various committees for next year amount to £159,768 as compared with £142,488 for the current year and £137,882 for last year. The increase of next year over this year is no less than £17,272. By precepting on the General Rate for an amount of £108,500, necessitating a rate of 9½d. for Council purposes, together with the contributions from the trading undertakings already referred to, and the Exchequer grants to be received, the estimated surplus of this fund at March 31, 1935, is £5,924, compared with a probable surplus at March 31, 1934, of £5,986.

£70,000 INCREASE IN RATEABLE VALUE

The figures as set out on the loose sheet, Alderman Hawkins continued, allowing for the amounts payable to the County Council and the Assessment Committee, showed a rate of 9s. 4d. in the £, estimated to produce £224,000. If the committee's requirements remain the same, the estimated surplus on this account at the end of March, 1935, is £2,444, compared with a probable surplus at March 31, 1934, of £5,414.

The probable rateable value at April 1, 1934, is £569,562, which shows an increase of £70,116 over last year. The quinquennial re-valuation of the borough has added £31,512 to the rateable value, chiefly in respect of assessments on public utility undertakings.

The estimated amounts payable to the County Council for the ensuing year are: General County purposes, £28,000; higher education, £29,000; police, £12,000—a total of £119,000. The amount payable by the County Rate payable by the Borough of Worthing for the ensuing year is 27 per cent.

The Council then discussed the various items on the estimate.

CRITICISM OF ENTERTAINMENTS

Councillor Major-General Vaughan, speaking on the Pier Pavilion accounts, said there appeared to be an extraordinary discrepancy. The sum of £2,489 was spent on the Municipal Orchestra, and the return was only £564. It appeared to be a matter that called for serious attention by the committee.

Alderman Frost replied that £564 did not fully represent the entire return on the orchestra, but only the week-day performance returns. On top of that were Sunday concerts and other items.

Councillor Budd, commenting upon the increased call on the General Rate for the Pavilion entertainments, said that if this had been a private concern there would have been a meeting to find a reason for the increase. The committee should go into the question on the enormous amount that was being taken from the General Rate. There was very bad management somewhere with regard to entertainments.

Alderman Barber replied that an examination of the accounts would reveal that the Corporation was repaying a certain amount of the capital expenditure each year, and that figure was £4,132. "It seems rather a pity," he added, "that statements should be made which will give the ratepayers a wrong impression."

Alderman Frost said that the Municipal Pier was an attempt to provide an amenity for a health resort, and they expected to pay something for it. "We made the mistake of altering the type of music at the Pavilion," he said, "and the result has been reflected in the smaller number of season tickets sold."

"PAY-AS-YOU-GO" POLICY

"We are losing more this year than we have ever lost before," said Councillor Mason. "No one has given a satisfactory answer to Councillor Budd's point. He has asked why the rate call of this committee is to rise from £4,741 to £5,533, and no one has satisfied him."

The Mayor—The feature I don't like is that there is a wrong balance on the revenue account.

Councillor Chambers, speaking on the estimates of the Parade and Parks Committee, said this was certainly not the time to add further burdens on the ratepayers. He objected to the principle of the present generation paying for things that would be of equal benefit to later generations. It was quite possible for the Corporation to borrow money, and when, as now, it could be borrowed at 3 per cent. It was a 30-year proposition to produce £29,682—a reduction of 1d. in the £. No definite estimate has been made in respect of

Continued on page 15.