

COUNCIL TAX INCREASE AND PARISH EXPENDITURE

Many will have noticed on their Council Tax bill that the Standlake Parish Council charge has increased significantly and the councillors feel an explanation is necessary.

For the past 3 years our Precept has remained at £21,000 and it includes a total £8000 of reserves, £3000 of which is set aside to fund community projects; it is from these reserves that funds must come if there is any exceptional expenditure. Last year, the council granted £1800 to the Village Hall towards the resurfacing of the Hall car park and it also was obliged to carry out some major repairs in the Rack End children's playground – some £1650 over and above the budgeted maintenance figure.

In December, when setting our funding requirements (the Precept) from WODC for the coming financial year, the councillors decided to fully restore the reserves by increasing the Precept to £25000: the result is the percentage increase you see on your Council Tax bills. To put this in perspective, this amounts to an increase of approximately £7 per household.

Please understand that the councillors are very aware that any increase in tax is a sensitive matter and there was much discussion before the increase was agreed. Hopefully residents will understand that, because we do not have any source of money other than the Precept, any large community expenditure, such as occurred this past year, needs to be recovered and the only way to do this is via Council Tax.

With the cuts to local government grants imposed by Central Government resulting in Oxfordshire County Council drastically reducing services, such as grass cutting, footpath maintenance etc., parishes are increasingly being asked to carry out more tasks. In the future it may well be that we will have to undertake even more to satisfy resident's requirements in keeping the village as they would like it and this, of course, will cost money.

PARISH EXPENDITURE

A brief description of where we will spend your money in 2017/18 is shown below:

General Admin: clerk salary, office expenses, insurance, communications etc	£8365
Loan Repayment: loan for car park at the church NB it is not the 'Church' car park, but a car park provided for all the village – particularly for the school	£4286
Grants/Donations: Vhall car park/litter bin, misc. charities, churchyard upkeep	£2000
Parks/Open Spaces: Grass cutting, The Butts/Hornsway, tree/ditch maintenance Playground maintenance – Rack End and Windrush Way	£8540
Total	£23191

To get the full picture of the council's income and expenditure for the last 5 years please visit the website at <http://www.standlakepc.org.uk/parishcouncil.html>

David Bevan

Clerk to Standlake Parish Council