



Churt Parish Council Special Newsletter March 2020

Council Tax 2020/21 .

Parish precept increase explained

I am sure that you will all have noticed a 24.2% increase in the Parish precept portion of your Council tax bill. It is with very great regret that we have been forced to make this increase, the explanation of which is as follows.

1. For the past two years, we have kept the parish precept artificially low using our reserves to balance the books. This is no longer sustainable and we cannot use any more. We need to keep something back for the payment of unforeseen costs. For instance a large cedar tree on the recreation ground blew down during Storm Ciara. It has cost over £3000.00 to remove and to repair the damage caused. We are hopeful that the bulk of this will be recovered from our insurers, but that is not guaranteed. In the meantime we have had to pay the bill.
2. We have a one off capital cost of some £10,000 this coming financial year for the replacement of the tiles on the pavilion roof which have failed. Under the terms of the warranty, we are liable for 50% of the labour costs as the failure has occurred after 15 years. There is no cost for the replacement tiles. We thoroughly investigated all options, including a loan from the Public Works Loan Board, which would have been repayable over a 20 year term. Following careful consideration and on the advice of our accountant, we calculated that it would be cheaper for the tax payer for us to fund this ourselves with a modest contribution from our dwindling reserves and some from the precept. This problem has been well publicised and as a result we have received donations of £1500.00 towards the repair.
3. For many years, Waverley Borough Council has been paying us and other Parish Councils a compensatory grant towards the cost of our provision of recreational facilities. This has been cut back considerably over the past

- few years and next year will be our last as it is being phased out. We consider this to be grossly unfair and have made representations to Waverley but to no avail. We had a severe cut in this grant again this year.
4. We have historically received a council tax support grant from Waverley and in common with all other Parish Councils this has been stopped with immediate effect.

I can assure you that a great deal of soul searching went into the setting of our budget and we do endeavour to manage our expenditure prudently. The Parish Councillors themselves are unpaid, claim little or no expenses and carry out their duties in their own time.

In realistic terms, this 24.2% increase equates to just over £9000.00 and there will still be a budget deficit of £5000.00 for which we anticipate finding from savings.

We do our utmost to provide a good, efficient and cost effective service to all in an effort to keep our lovely village a wonderful place to live and we shall continue to do so.

David Crossley. Chairman