

WEST SWINDON PARISH COUNCIL

West Swindon Parish Council Precept 2020- 21

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Parish Councils set a precept for collection in the Council tax on an annual basis. In 2018, the West Swindon Parish Council set a precept amount in the Council Tax at £93.11 for a Band D equivalent household. In 2019, the Parish Council set the precept amount for a Band D equivalent household at £94.97, this gave an overall precept budget of **£848,215.06**.
- 1.2 In 2020, the Parish Council has been informed that the estimated Council Tax Base is 8931.4 - see **Appendix A** attached. This represents no change to the tax base. It also indicates that there will be Council Tax Support grant totalling £22,053. On the basis of this information, it is proposed to set the 2020/21 precept at a Band D equivalent of **£97.82**, this represents a **3% increase** and will give an overall precept budget of **£873,661.50**

2. Budget Summary

- 2.1. The precept budget expenditure for 2020-2021 is attached as **Appendix B**.
- 2.2 For 2020-21, a number of budget lines have been reduced including the tall shrub team reducing to working with the Parish for six months rather than the full year. There is no provision for a repeat of any enhancement to street cleaning such as the hit squad. With the addition of income from Council Tax Support Grant in 2020-21, a 'special projects' budget will be created to allow for any new projects during the course of the next financial year.

3. How the precept is spent:

- 3.1 The main income source for the West Swindon Parish Council is from the Precept.
- 3.2 The Parish Council directly employs two staff and has an office base in the West Swindon Library which is also the venue for its public meetings.
- 3.3 The Parish Council has allocated funds to community events and grants to local organisations. In 2019-20 it has funded children and youth projects in Toothill, improvements to community buildings in Toothill and Freshbrook and Safe Drive Stay Alive programme. Grant funding also includes a grant to the West Swindon Library for 16 extra staffed opening hours each week to support access to library-based groups and services for local residents.

- 3.4 The main area of expenditure for the Parish Council now and in the future, is the ongoing maintenance of parks, open spaces, play areas and general street cleaning duties such as litter bin renewal and emptying, removal of fly tipping and graffiti, and, regular maintenance and inspection of play areas. This general expenditure represents 57% of the annual budget. As in previous years, the Parish Council will be funding an enhanced service to lower tall hedges and shrubbery during the Autumn/Winter period. Work continues to review the provision of these services on a value for money basis. Local environmental projects such as wildflower meadows, pond renewal and planting will continue to be funded.
- 3.5 In addition to general maintenance, the Parish Council has combined budgets for play refurbishment in order to commission the refurbishment of seven play areas across West Swindon. These are
- Bloomsbury Park, Freshbrook
 - The Chesters, Westlea
 - The Holbeins, Grange Park
 - Nine Elms Park
 - Shelfinch, Toothill
 - Tumpy Field, Shaw Ridge
 - Uxbridge Road, Freshbrook

Refurbishments will take place in 2020. Additionally, the Parish Council has ongoing plans to secure external funding to enable the installation of a BMX track in West Swindon.

- 3.6 The Parish Council has been supporting neighbourhood improvements with new noticeboards, bins, and, additional street columns. It has planned investment in former (now redundant) play area sites and will continue this programme in 2020.
- 3.7 The Parish Council will continue to encourage and support volunteering and has set aside a budget in 2020-21 for neighbourhood projects funded by grants linked to volunteer hours.

4. Recommendations

- 4.1. It is recommended that the Councils review the budget allocations proposed.
- 4.2. It is recommended that this Committee agrees to adopt the proposed budget (**Appendix B**) and thereby sets the Precept for 2020-2021.

Paula Harrison
Parish Manager