



**Website:** [www.whitwickpc.org.uk](http://www.whitwickpc.org.uk)

March 2018

## **PARISH FACTSHEET – BUDGET, FINANCE AND PRECEPT**

**Whitwick Parish Council has gradually undertaken increased responsibilities that have been transferred from the District Council on a phased basis since its creation in 2011.**

All of the operations of the parish council are open and transparent and enquiries are welcomed and responded to in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (although subject to the restrictions of the Data Protection Act 1998). Questions from members of the public are encouraged and details of all meetings are displayed in the parish, on the website and on Facebook. Every meeting has a specific agenda item to invite public questions and answers will either be given then (if the information is known) or investigated further and reported back as soon as possible. Enquiries are also welcome at the Community Office which is normally open 3 days per week.

### **Budget setting**

The budget process is a continual cycle of forecasting, assessing, reporting, comparing to the forecast, revising plans and forward planning. During October the current half-yearly situation (April to September) is assessed and reviewed. During November a draft budget is prepared to forecast what the financial balance may be at 31 March, to make provision for any known changes that affect income/expenditure the following year (or beyond) and to see what budget commitment might be required after 31 March. In December this draft can be revised according to parish council plans and aims for Whitwick.

### **Finance**

The financial year runs from 1 April – 31 March. Financial decisions are made during the monthly council or (bi-monthly) committee meetings, all of which are open to the public to attend. Income/expenditure reports with cashbook printouts are normally published with all agendas each month (and available on the website).

### **Precept**

Whitwick Parish Council sets a precept which is a tax paid by all properties in the parish for the services provided to you. The Precept is collected on our behalf by North West Leicestershire District Council. In December, the parish council is provisionally notified how many Band D properties there may be in the parish for the following year. When the parish council confirms the final budget plan, normally in January, the calculations are then confirmed on what Precept the council requires to fulfil its budget plan. Before February the notification is sent to North West Leicestershire District Council who then collect this amount from local residents from the following April, in accordance with the general council tax details sent to residents.

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## **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

- 1. How many councils serve the Parish?** *Three – Whitwick Parish Council, North West Leicestershire District Council and Leicestershire County Council.*
- 2. What does Whitwick Parish Council provide?** *It owns and manages Whitwick Park (with playgrounds, bowls green, tennis courts, skate park, adult and junior outdoor keep fit equipment, benches, public bins and noticeboards) and other Open Spaces including two allotment sites, maintains and manages Park Hall (available to hire), Bowls Pavilion and former Railway Station (leased to local groups), represents local views on planning matters, consultations and environmental matters regarding the Green Wedge, opens the Community Office 3 times per week to provide information, police beat surgeries, photocopying/business services.*
- 3. What does the parish council not provide?** *Many statutory services are provided by either the District Council like housing, leisure centres, refuse collection, conservation, cemeteries, devising the Local Plan, other planning/licensing control and enforcement or the County Council like highways, libraries, museums and leisure, education and young people, adult social care.*
- 4. What does it cost to run the council for a year?** *For the last complete financial year to 31 March 2017 income was £33,501.03, expenditure was £200,445.44 and the Precept was £184,634.*
- 5. Who pays the Precept?** *All households that are situated within the parish of Whitwick.*
- 6. Who checks the financial processes?** *The Responsible Finance Officer undertakes checks in the office, parish councillors at meetings or by calling at the Community Office, nominated councillors undertake additional scrutiny of statements and transaction records, Internal Auditor (appointed by the parish council but undertaking regulated checks), External Auditor (formerly appointed by the Audit Commission).*
- 7. How are decisions made?** *At parish council meetings, taking into account council policy and what your parish councillors consider to be in the public interest. Suggestions and ideas of local residents are welcomed either by submitting views to the council (by phone, letter, email or visit to the community office/parish councillor) or by attending council meetings and talking to councillors before the meeting or speaking publicly if you wish.*
- 8. Why do you need reserves?** *Councils historically build up reserves to ensure they are able to meet the statutory services they need to deliver. There are often two types of reserves: general reserves and earmarked reserves (set aside for a specific purpose). As a new council established only in 2011 without any prior reserves, Whitwick Parish Council did not benefit from a £25,000 grant that was later made available by the government. Whitwick Parish Council has increased its responsibilities for land and buildings quite quickly in a relatively short period. Over recent years it aimed to achieve a level of 'free' reserves of 50% of the annual expenditure by 2018/19, in accordance with the policy.*
- 9. What does the Parish Council cost me?**  
*In 2016/17 a Band D resident paid £1.34 per week (£70.07)  
In 2017/18 a Band D resident paid £1.37 per week (£72.17 per year).  
In 2018/19 a Band D resident will pay £2.06 per week (£107.53 per year).*

NB In addition to paying for the parish council, your council tax includes charges for the District Council, the County Council, local policing and fire services. More information is available from the District Council website at:

[https://www.nwleics.gov.uk/files/documents/your\\_guide\\_to\\_council\\_tax\\_201819/NWLDC%20Council%20Tax%20leaflet%202018\\_19.pdf](https://www.nwleics.gov.uk/files/documents/your_guide_to_council_tax_201819/NWLDC%20Council%20Tax%20leaflet%202018_19.pdf)

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