

PRECEPT 2015/16 WESTFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

Once again, Westfield Parish Council is pleased to say that it has not increased its Band D equivalent on the precept and therefore residents of Westfield living in an 'average' band D property will pay the same rate on the Parish Council precept in 2015/16 as they have for the past three years. This amounts to £96.79 per annum for a Band D equivalent, equating to a total precept for Westfield in 2015/16 of £171,810.

The purpose of this leaflet is to set out the main areas of our work and to highlight where the public money is spent within the Parish Council.

How and why are we freezing the Band D Equivalent again this year?

Westfield Parish Council faces the same inflationary increases in the cost of products and services as all organisations. However, we are fortunate in that the increase in the number of new properties in Westfield, together with careful monitoring of our expenditure has put us in a position where we can freeze the Band D equivalent again this year (2015/16).

We are conscious though that there is unlikely to be a similar increase in new homes in Westfield next year and this combined with a predicted reduction in Bath and North East Somerset Council's Local Council Tax Support Scheme grant, will probably mean an increase in the precept in 2016/17. We will endeavour to keep this to a minimum.

Exactly what services does the Parish Council offer?

The Parish Council manages **sports and leisure facilities** at Norton Hill Recreation Ground and Westhill Recreation Ground. These facilities offer football pitches, a tennis court, play areas, BMX track, table tennis, boules, basket ball and bowling (with one rink open to non bowling club members). It manages the emptying of most of the dog bins in the parish and maintains some of the benches.

It supports the **parish environment** by funding the Christmas Lights, the hanging baskets and the planting schemes in the decorative pit trucks around the parish and the curved end of the raised flower bed outside the Westfield Methodist Church. And it supports **local organisations** through grant funding.

The Parish Council provides a local voice on **planning applications, highways and environmental matters**. It works with Bath and North East Somerset towards a Placemaking Plan and Neighbourhood Plan for Westfield.

How did the Parish Council perform in the last year?

June 2014 saw the Open Day at Norton Hill Recreation Ground to celebrate the installation of new tarmac on the site of the former tennis court along with a boules court, all weather table tennis table and basket ball hoop. These new facilities were warmly welcomed and were funded by the Police Commissioner's Community grant, Norton Hill Miners' Welfare Trust and Westfield Parish Council. The summer months however saw an unprecedented rise in anti social behaviour and vandalism at the site, prompting the Parish Council to look at the installation of CCTV.

After 25 years a fun fair returned to Westfield and set up at Norton Hill Recreation Ground, where it was very much appreciated by local residents. The Fun Day continued at Westhill Recreation Ground where it was better attended than ever.

The Parish Council's quarterly newsletter, the Westfield Warbler was increased with an extra page, enabling more local groups to contribute.

This summer saw the first Front Garden Competition in Westfield with a stunning display winning first prize. Two new hanging basket trees went up, and our new Flowers Contractor did a wonderful job this year with flower displays in Westfield. A new clatterbridge was installed at Westhill Recreation Ground, thanks to local contractors working adjacent to the site.

The Parish Council was appointed the Local Trusted Organisation, to act as 'banker' for the Big Local Funds for Westfield and Radstock. This post will bring in some income to the Parish Council and will assist its involvement in the work of the Big Local.

From an internal perspective the Parish Council conducted an in depth review of its payments system and implemented a move to electronic payments.

In November the Christmas Lights switch on event grew ever more popular with the addition of Father Christmas. The first Christmas Craft Fair organised by local residents at Westhill Club was welcomed and we hope this will become an annual event. Finally, a noticeboard was installed outside the local shops, funded from the BANES Ward Councillors Initiative Fund.

What is new for the next financial year?

Improvements to the hanging basket trees' watering systems are planned for next year to enable these features to continue without undue financial strain. Whilst the Front Garden Competition will continue, for the first time we would also like Westfield to also be represented in 'South West In Bloom' via the 'Its Your Neighbourhood Scheme' whereby local groups put in applications for the work they do in the Parish. We are delighted that Westfield Allotments and Gardening Society, Fosse Way School and St Peters Church have all expressed an interest in this next year.

Due to the sudden rise in anti social behavior and vandalism, applications have been made for grant funding of CCTV at Norton Hill Recreation Ground, monitored 24/7 at the Control Room in Bath.

The Parish Council is going out for quotes for more paths and hard standing around the time capsule outside the local shops, which should improve conditions underfoot at the annual Christmas Lights Switch on event. More Christmas Lights on lamp posts are being considered for next year, hopefully with sponsorship from local businesses. We hope that the Westfield Snow Wardens' Scheme will continue to flourish whereby local volunteers undertake to grit some key footpaths in the Parish.

The Parish Council is considering new entrance signs to the Parish, preferably funded from s.106 payments which are made by developers to BANES.

Your Parish Council is working to provide the best possible environment and services for the people of Westfield. We positively encourage your views and suggestions for the future of our Parish.

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