

WESTFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

Westfield Parish Council is pleased to say that it has not increased its precept for 2013/14. Last year the precept was £170,818. For an average Band D household this equated to £96.79 per annum, or £8.07 per month. For 2013/14 the precept is **£152,064.94, which equates to the same Band D equivalent as last year (£96.79 per annum, or £8.07 per month).**

2013/14 sees a decrease in the tax base resulting from the Government's Local Council Tax Support Scheme, but a corresponding grant from B&NES to meet the cost of that decrease in tax base. 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 this year?

Westfield Parish Council faces the same inflationary increases in the cost of products and services as all organisations. We are fortunate however in that we are making savings wherever possible and in particular the voluntary reduction in working hours of staff and income from the sale of assets means that we are in a position where we can freeze the Band D equivalent this year, without an adverse impact on the services we provide.

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, 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.

The Parish Council provides a local voice on **planning applications, highways and environmental matters.**

Supporting **local organisations** is vital to help voluntary groups flourish in this area. This year the Parish Council grant funded the Carnival Association for the Carnival which runs through Westfield, the upkeep of the Churchyard at St Nicholas Church, Midsomer Norton and Radstock Silver Band to start a beginners group so that people who wish to learn an instrument may join; the Community Bus to continue to bring the play bus to Westfield, enabling local families with pre school children to benefit from free play opportunities and a place to meet up; PEOPLE to help with the core running costs to continue to provide a service to the local community and expand its activities to those socially and financially isolated and those who have barriers to opportunities; to the Westfield Allotment and Gardening Society (WAGS) for additional fencing around the allotment site to aid security; to SWAN Advice Network to provide a transport service to benefit Westfield residents; to Radstock Baptist Church towards upgrading its downstairs rooms to make them more accessible and suitable for events in the community; to WISH (Working in Support of Holidays for the disabled) towards coach hire and care for people with disabilities on holiday; and to the Radstock Scout Group to increase the car park and clear additional space.

How did the Parish Council perform in the last year?

2012/13 saw the purchase and planting of the new living Christmas Tree in Westfield, aided in part by very welcome donations from local businesses and the installation of electrics to enable it to be lit up over Christmas. The flagpole was installed and a time capsule which included significant items from

local groups and churches was buried in the same area of green space opposite the local shops at the top of Elm Tree Avenue.

The Westfield Fun Day, arranged by Luckington Carnival Club and hosted and supported by the Parish Council returned to Westhill Gardens Recreation Ground in June, with a very successful afternoon of entertainment.

The Parish Council continued to support the Winter Maintenance Programme in Westfield with the purchase of a second gritting machine to be operated by the small team of highly valued voluntary Snow Wardens.

The Parish Council financially supports the Community Plan for Westfield, which this year went from strength to strength. Led by the Westfield Questers, this voluntary group of representatives from the community are working to consult local people and consolidate a vision for the future of Westfield.

Partnership working with Norton Radstock College this year resulted in a logo competition and a logo for the new Parish Council. Norton Radstock Photographic students also kindly enhanced the Parish's new website which was launched earlier in the year, with professional style photos of the local councillors.

Finally, the Parish Council was delighted to be awarded Quality Status, an accreditation which demonstrates that we are properly and effectively managed, with members and officers upholding a high standard of conduct.

What is new for the next financial year?

Last year we built up healthy reserves due to stringent control on spending to enable the Council to invest in the community by improving services

An Annual Westfield Guide, to include a community directory for local residents and visitors is expected in the early part of the year. This will be delivered to all households in the Parish free of charge and given to visitors at local events.

The enhancement of public places with flowers and green spaces is high on the Parish Council's agenda and we have set aside budgetary provision for two wild flower beds in Westhill Gardens Recreation Ground, additional litter picking around the Parish and new flower planting in well used areas.

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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