

Westfield Parish Council

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Chairman: Cllr G Fuller Parish Clerk: Ms L J Close FSLCC

Precept Explanation Leaflet 2021/22

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

The precept is the levy raised by the Parish Council to fund its planned expenditure for the year. The Council deliberated hard over funding its budget in this exceptional year. Many families are struggling financially as a result of the coronavirus pandemic and the Council wanted to strike the balance between easing the tax burden for the uncertain year ahead and protecting its reserves in the face of future financial burdens which would avoid steep tax rises in future.

Conscientious monitoring of income and expenditure over the years has enabled Westfield Parish Council to create a stable financial base from which it can work towards delivering projects for the community.

We are aware that our unitary authority, Bath and North East Somerset Council, has faced some severe challenges to its finances over recent years and in 2020 in particular with the effect of the COVID pandemic. This has and will continue to impact the services in Westfield and with continued careful control of its finances the Parish Council can continue to support and mitigate this impact as much as possible.

What services does the Parish Council offer?

- The Parish Council is a statutory consultee on **planning applications** and provides a local voice on **highways** and **environmental matters**.
- It has a **Neighbourhood Plan** which directs future developments in the Parish ensuring the standards of development as well as affording the Parish a 25% portion of the community infrastructure levy which it uses to fund projects for the benefit of Westfield.
- It funds **youth services** in the Parish as part of a wider Cluster Group.
- It manages **sports and leisure facilities** at Norton Hill and Westhill Recreation Grounds on behalf of two Miners'



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Established 2011

Welfare Trusts as well as maintaining a few smaller areas of land.

- Our **recreation ground facilities** offer football pitches, a tennis court, play areas, a BMX track, gym equipment, a fitness track, table tennis, boules and basketball.



- It encourages **community spirit** by funding events such as the Christmas Lights Switch-on event, the summer Fun Day, the Front Garden competition and the Inspirational Citizen award.
- It supports the **parish environment** by funding the hanging baskets and the planting schemes in the decorative pit trucks and raised beds around the parish, as well as additions to the parish such as the Heritage Walking trails and campaigning to keep footpaths clear.
- The Parish Council supports **local organisations** through grant funding and makes provision in its budget to **support St Nicholas Churchyard** which is used and appreciated by many residents of Westfield.
- The Parish Council provides and, in partnership with community organisations, maintains six **public access defibrillators** in the parish.



How did the Parish Council perform in the last year?

2020 saw plans for many events and projects somewhat thwarted but the big success of the year was the installation of a **fitness track** around the outside of Westhill Recreation ground complemented by 12 pieces of **outdoor gym equipment**. This was the Parish Council's largest project to date and was generously funded by grants from Big Local and B&NES section106.



Although it was not possible for the annual Christmas Lights switch-on event to go ahead, we were still able to enjoy a fresh new set of **festive lights** on lamposts the length of the parish thanks to a new 5-year contract.



A new set of **benches and picnic tables** were installed at Westhill Recreation ground following the success of the ones at Norton Hill the previous year, again funded by a section 106 allocation.



Plans for a **pavilion** at Westhill Recreation Ground had to be paused as so many grant funding pots closed during the pandemic, however, the Parish Council is delighted to have secured from B&NES, via section 106, the funds to re-allocate the **footpath status** from the old to the new path that links Pit Lane to Shakespeare Road, paving the way for more **efficient clearing of vegetation** each year and, we hope, **adequate lighting** along the length of the path.

Youth Services continued despite the challenges of lockdown. The Parish Council, as part of the Youth Cluster, was pleased to continue to support the provision financially.

The Parish Council continued to support local organisations with **grant donations** as well as a grant given by the Parish Council Chairman from his Chair's Allowance to Teddy Bear Nursery for the provision of Christmas goods parcels.



The third annual **Inspirational Citizen Award** was awarded to Terracycle recycling champion, Catherine Cooper, for providing a facility for residents of Westfield and beyond to recycle items that are not able to be collected by the local authority.

Our freedoms may have been restricted in 2020 but the spring / summer weather was undeniably beautiful and we were delighted to be able to go ahead with the annual **Front Garden competition**

judged by our very own flowers contractor and with prizes generously donated by Thomsons Hardware in Radstock.

This year we used our quarterly newsletter, **The Westfield Warbler**, to offer a free advert to any business based in and serving Westfield as a way of helping to boost business following the Spring/Summer lockdown. It was a bumper edition and we are grateful to B&NES Cllr Robin Moss for using Ward Councillor Initiative funds to part fund this.



Website accessibility is ever more important as we rely on the internet for communication. 2020 saw a lot of background work on a new website which meets accessibility requirements for local councils and it is expected to go live shortly.

The **Green and Open Spaces working group** continues to work on projects emanating from our work on the Neighbourhood Plan and welcomes any new members. The Parish Council would be delighted to hear from anyone that might have ideas or expertise in this area.

What is new for 2021/22

The COVID pandemic took over a lot of things in 2020 but one thing that remains critical is the climate emergency facing our planet. Westfield Parish Council has formed a **Climate Emergency Working Group** and welcomes any new members who have an interest in this area and would like to share ideas or get involved. You do not have to be on the Parish Council to join the working group.

The Westfield Green and Open Spaces Working Group continues to work on projects to bring to fruition the **aspirations of our Neighbourhood Plan** and welcomes new members and ideas. Current projects include the creation of a **nature trail** and the installation of **lighting along the Pit Path** from Shakespeare Road.

The Parish Council continues to budget cautiously and to ensure it has contingency reserves to maintain a healthy financial balance of providing for the community whilst anticipating future demands on its resources. We positively encourage your views and suggestions for the future of our Parish. Residents are welcome to attend meetings of the Parish Council and you can view our 2021/22 budget at any time on our [website](#).

Frequently Asked Questions

How is the Parish Council funded?

The Parish Council raises a precept based on its budgeted spending for the year. The precept is added to your Council Tax bill and is shown alongside other additions such as Police & Fire and Social Care. In addition to the precept the Council seeks funding in the form of grants for some of its projects.

How much does the average household pay towards the Parish Council?

The precept total is apportioned per household according to Council Tax band and is presented in terms of a Band D equivalent. The 2021-22 precept of £207,650 will cost a band D household £110.62 per year or £2.13 per week. This is an increase of 2p per week from last year.

How is the Parish Council run?

The Parish Council is made up of 11 Councillors elected by the people of Westfield every four years. The Parish Council employs three part time members of staff to administer the work of the Council. Details of the Councillors and contact details for the office can be found on our website and in the back of each edition of our quarterly newsletter, The Westfield Warbler.

The Parish Council is governed by statute such as the Localism Act 2011. We are members of the National Association of Local Council (NALC) who advise on updates to the law and changes in legislation such as GDPR and website accessibility.

