

Westfield Parish Council

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

Precept Leaflet 2023/24

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. Every year for the past three years has felt like an exceptional year, requiring deep and careful deliberation on each item of our budget.

We created the budget in the context of soaring inflation and a cost-of-living crisis which is life changing for many of us. The Parish Council's priority has been to easing the tax burden without jeopardising the recreational facilities in the Parish.

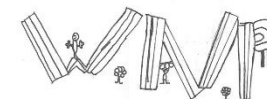
Conscientious monitoring of income and expenditure over the years has enabled Westfield Parish Council to create a stable financial base, from which to deliver projects for the community.

We are aware that our unitary authority, Bath and North East Somerset Council, has faced some severe challenges to its finances over recent years. 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?

- We are a statutory consultee on **planning applications** and provides a local voice on **highways** and **environmental matters**.
- We have a **Neighbourhood Plan** which directs future developments in the Parish ensuring the standards of development as well as providing the Parish with a 25% portion of the community infrastructure levy, which it uses to fund projects for the benefit of Westfield. The Neighbourhood Plan is due for Review in the year ahead and if anyone would like to become involved in this process you will be very welcome.
- We fund **youth services** in the Parish.
- We manage **sports and leisure facilities** at Norton Hill and Westhill Recreation Grounds on behalf of two Miners' Welfare Trusts.
- 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.



- Public open space at **Waterside Valley** is a new feature this year and we are committed to managing this land for its bio diversity and accessibility.
- We encourage **community spirit** by funding events such as the Christmas Lights Switch-on, Christmas Decorations Award, the Front Garden competition and the Inspirational Citizen award.
- We support 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.
- We support **local organisations** through grant funding and make provision in our budget to **support St Nicholas Churchyard** which is used and appreciated by many residents of Westfield.
- In partnership with community organisations, we provide and maintain six **public access defibrillators** in the parish.

How did the Parish Council perform in the last year?

Waterside Valley has been a key focus this year, with a summer of consultations which have shaped our Management Plan. Accessibility and bio diversity are important features, encompassing paths, entrances, signage and grass cutting. Funding opportunities have been investigated in detail, with huge thanks to B&NES and Somer Valley Rediscovered for including Waterside Valley in their successful WECA bid, securing some £100,000 for Waterside Valley.

New play equipment continues to replace old and this year, thanks to grants from Awards for All and Sperring Charity, we have commissioned new swings at Norton Hill Play Area. These take the form of a 'you and me' swing which allows adults to sit opposite their toddler and a five-way swing.

A new brick planter at Wesley Avenue was commissioned to replace the rotting wooden one. This will continue to hold a hanging basket tree, with shrubs in the planters underneath.

The ever-popular **Christmas Lights Switch On** event goes from strength to strength. This year, three new lampposts were commissioned to extend the lights display down to Bath College on the A367.

Youth Services continued to thrive and the Parish Council was pleased to continue to support the provision financially.

We continued to support local organisations with **grant donations**, including Bath Area Play Project which provides a Play Day in Westfield during the summer, Midsomer Norton Dial-a-Ride, Midsomer Norton and Radstock Silver Band, Radstock Museum, small Stuff Baby Bank, Swallow, Swan Advice Network, Trinity Girls Brigade, Trinity Methodist Church, West of England Rural Network, Westfield Allotment and Garden Society, Westfield Voices, 1st Radstock Scout Group.

The fifth annual **Inspirational Citizen Award** was awarded to Racael and Eddie Liddiard for all the work they did to make the lives of their neighbours so much easier in times of need.



The annual **Front Garden competition** was won by Mr and Mrs Holcombe of Waterside Road for their strikingly beautiful front garden. The winner of the special Jubilee prize went to Ms Helen Moon for her bright red, white and blue display and the Container prize went to a beautiful hanging basket display in Highfields.

The **Christmas Decorations** award 2022 went to Mr & Mrs Holcombe at Waterside Road. The garden and their house were an absolute riot of colour, and the judges were particularly impressed by their attention to detail.

Winter maintenance of the pavements is as important as ever and our heartfelt thanks to the unsung heroes who voluntarily go out in the severest of weather to grit some of the pavements in the parish. Thank you for looking after our community. If you can join this lovely group of people and give a few hours in the cold weather, please contact the Parish Council office – council@westfieldparishcouncil.co.uk

What is new for 2023/24

Plans are being made to start increasing the bio diversity at **Waterside Valley** with some scrub clearance and grass cutting. We hope too that we can go out to tender for some accessible pathways.

The Parish Council is looking to move **office** to Norton Hill Recreation Ground. Fully funded from reserves, this should reduce the Parish Council's outgoings significantly.

The Parish Council is working with Westfield Sports and Community Centre to create changing rooms at Westhill Recreation Ground.

We continue to budget cautiously and to ensure we have 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 2023/24 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. We also receive Community Infrastructure payments.

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 2023/24 precept of £225,148 will cost a band D household £117.66 per year or £2.26 per week. This is an increase of 5p 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.

