

Westfield Parish Council

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Chairman: Cllr P Wilkinson Parish Clerk: Ms L J Close FSLCC

Precept Leaflet 2024/25

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 four years has felt like an exceptional year, requiring deep and careful deliberation on each item of our budget.

Again, we have created the budget amidst the uncertainty and hardship of the cost-of-living crisis. The Parish Council's priority remains the easing the tax burden without jeopardising the recreational facilities in the Parish.

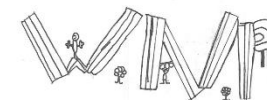
Conscientious monitoring of income and expenditure over the years has enabled Westfield Parish Council to create a stable financial base, from which to deliver projects for the community.

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 under review this year and we are looking at keeping it useful and relevant.
- 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** increased this year and we are committed to managing this land for its bio diversity and accessibility.



- We provide two **allotment** sites at Waterford Park and Larch Court, both of which are managed by the Westfield Allotment and Garden Society (WAGS)
- 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. This year also saw a Coronation Celebration and Community Bulb Planting.
- 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 seven **public access defibrillators** in the parish. Our thanks to Waterside Carnival Club for funding two new defibrillators this year – one was installed outside Westhill Club and the other replaced the aging defib at Elm Tree Avenue.
- We enhance **communication** in the Parish with the Westfield Warbler and our Facebook and Instagram pages.

How did the Parish Council perform in the last year?

Speeding on the A367 continues to be an issue and we are working with the Police and B&NES to fund and install two speed indicator devices.

Waterside Valley saw the installation of dog bins and welcomed events such as Bat Walks and Green Social Prescribing. We continue to work towards grass cutting and scrub clearance with grateful thanks to Somer Valley Rediscovered for all their support.

The ever-popular **Christmas Lights Switch On** event goes from strength to strength.

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 Citizens Advice Bureau, Dial-a-Ride, HeartTalks, Jesters Carnival Club, MSNRSB, Prattens Bowls Club, Radstock Baptist Church, Smal Stuff Baby Bank, SWAN, Trinity Girls Brigade, Westhill Club, Westfield Primary School and Westfield Voices. This year we have arranged a Grants presentation evening to celebrate the work of these organisations in our community along with the presentation of the South West In Bloom Awards in our parish.

The seventh annual **Inspirational Citizen Award** was awarded to Mrs Marion Harrington for her tireless campaign to keep vital public transport in the parish.

The annual **Front Garden competition** is now in its ninth and was won by Mr and Mrs Morgan of Waterford for their front garden bursting with colour with many plants grown from seed. The winning container was a stunning display by Kay Pera of Magnolia Road. As an extra this year we awarded a



cup for the garden at Fosse Way School, managed beautifully by a former student of the school.

The **Christmas Decorations** award 2023 went to Mr Kevin Rabbitts of Ruskin Road.

The Parish Council welcomed the installation of a **silhouette of a miner** next to the coal truck planter at the top of Elm Tree Avenue. Funded and installed by the Somerset District Miners' Trust, this is an imaginative way of preserving this important aspect of our heritage.

Dogs on Leads was a key message to all visiting our recreation grounds this year and the message remains important as ever. Over the summer holidays we invested in a Park Attendant who spoke with those exercising their dogs and encouraged them to use Waterside Valley for off lead exercise and keep dogs on leads in the recreation grounds.

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 2025/26

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

We are working towards the renovation of the brick footbridge at the Radstock end of Waterside Valley and a new footbridge at the opposite end of join Waterside Valley and Haydon Batch. The process is long but we are addressing each step of the process.

Scrub and grassland management at Waterside Valley are works in progress and we are working with Somer Valley Rediscovered to make sure we undertake both to encourage bio diversity.

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 2024/25 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 Services. 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 2024/25 precept of £240,802 will cost a band D household £124.92 per year. This is an increase of £7.26 per year 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. We currently have one vacancy on the Parish Council. If you are interested, please contact the Parish Clerk.

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.

