



Background & Rationale for Proposed Increase in the Parish Element of 2024/2025 Council Tax

Last year services to the Village were provided without requesting any increase to the “Precept” (the proportion of Braintree Council tax that is paid to provide services for the Village and its residents).

This was, despite, as we all know the continual inflationary increases in fuel, energy (gas and electricity), services in general, in addition to the significant population increase of the Village. Due to these ongoing factors and other unforeseen events (e.g. vandalism in the public conveniences, Village Hall boiler failure etc), the Villages overall operating costs and necessary expenditure has risen significantly. To meet these challenges and continue to provide services to the Village it has been necessary to utilise all financial reserves.

The Parish Council on behalf of the Village has only, 3-ways to raise revenue.

- Hire of the Village Hall
- Grants and donations.
- The Precept

Whilst the Village Hall has not had heating, due to the boiler failing earlier this year, income has been somewhat limited.

Grants are only available to enable specific “projects” to be funded for the Village e.g. improvements to playgrounds etc. Grants cannot be used to support the day-to-day running of the Village.

The Parish Council are also required to maintain a working reserve to meet unforeseen events such as those above. So, the reserve served its purpose but is now severely depleted. This leaves very little margin to allow for future unforeseen events and also the urgent need to bring the reserves up to a ‘fit for purpose’ level.

As the Precept remains the main source of operational revenue for the Village and with consideration to the above, it is with great reluctance that an increase to the Precept is necessary. To this end an increase to the current Precept has been requested from Braintree Council for this coming financial year.

The per household Precept cost is a value that is calculated using a tax base figure provided by Braintree District Council. This is based upon the average number of Band ‘D’ houses within the Village. Dividing this figure into the Precept, gives a figure per household. Unless exempt, all households pay that calculated figure.

Note: The Braintree Local Plan together with the Earls Colne Neighbourhood Plan (if accepted) will provide some added protection from expansion to the number of new properties that can be built within the Village. This means that the number of homes providing the basis for the Precept should remain fairly static for the next few years.