

## FEBRUARY 2020

### PARISH PRECEPT 2020/21

At January's meeting, the Parish Council agreed its Precept for the coming financial year. The Precept is the "proportion" of your Council Tax which is managed by the Parish Council and represents a small proportion of your overall Council Tax charge. For 2020/2021 our Tax Base figure decreases from 260.97 to 256.77. This is because the number "taxable" properties in the Parish has decreased as a result of the number of properties that are either exempt from Council Tax or those that get a discount.

In order to meet community needs in our Budget, it was agreed that the Precept amount from the District Council needed to increase from £24,390.00 to £26,877.00 this year to finance projects and to meet some services that we now have to undertake such as verge cutting, which were previously covered by the other authorities. This increase on Band D properties will change from £93.46 to around £104.67, this is an increase of £11.21 per annum. To break it down, for us to deliver parish services the Parish proportion of the Council Tax will cost you £2 a week.

The increase this year should allow us to:

- continue putting aside some funds towards the new pavilion
- maintain and improve the allotment site
- continue with the village ground maintenance
- to maintain the recreation ground
- supply new play equipment for the play area and maintain the existing equipment; and
- provide increased funding of £900 towards the maintenance of the churchyard

### WINTER GRITTING/GRIT BINS AND ROADSIDE SALT

During the next couple of months, we may experience icy conditions and possibly snow. Somerset County Council are responsible for carrying out the gritting of main roads. They will be operating 23 gritting lorries, running out of 5 depots across the county. A map of the gritting network will be published on the Travel Somerset website where it can be viewed in greater detail at [www.travelsomerset.co.uk/gritting](http://www.travelsomerset.co.uk/gritting) or, you can follow @TravelSomerset on Twitter for winter weather updates and gritting decisions.

Remember...

- Only the busiest roads are salted, most are not - drive safely.
- In icy conditions braking distances can increase tenfold.
- Regularly check your tyre treads throughout the season.
- It takes time for salt to become effective.
- Rain can wash salt off roads.
- In very low temperatures even salting does not prevent icing.
- Extra caution is needed when driving in bad weather.

The parish council have provided a number of grit bins around the village. These are so you can grit roads mainly at junctions where it proves difficult/dangerous to enter or exit. The grit is not there for your own personal use i.e. paths leading up to your property.

When using the grit please make sure you distribute it sparingly as this ensures maximum efficiency. If large amounts of grit are put down in one area this also causes a slip hazard! If the grit bin near you is empty, please report it to the Parish Clerk. Contact details are at the bottom of this newsletter.

Pavements - There is no law stopping you from clearing snow and ice on the pavement outside your home or from public spaces. It's unlikely you'll be sued or held legally responsible for any injuries sustained if you have cleared it carefully. Follow the Snow Code when clearing snow and ice safely.

- If you clear snow and ice yourself, be careful and do it thoroughly - don't make the pathways more dangerous by causing them to refreeze.
- Clear the snow or ice early in the day and use salt or sand – not water
- Take care where you move the snow

- Offer to clear your neighbour's path. Please consider whether you have elderly residents living near you - do they need your help?

For further information on the Snow Code please go to <https://www.gov.uk/clear-snow-road-path-cycleway>.

## **RECREATION GROUND**

Great News!

South Somerset District Council have awarded the Parish Council funding of £8,850 under s106 from the development in East Stoke towards new play equipment. The funding is split; £5,610 towards new equipment and £3,240 towards ongoing maintenance of equipped play. This means we can now order the new equipment and hopefully we will have in place well before the summer!

Since the last report in the magazine, the three huts on the recreation ground have now been demolished – an end of an era! - and we are in discussion with the National Trust on what can be done with the concrete bases that are left.

As you are aware, the National Trust gave their approval for us to move the new pavilion nearer to the car park after the Tree Officer at SSDC disagreed with the new building going on the site of the old hut amongst the Cedar trees. The Parish Council have since decided on a bespoke ready-made building and have received several quotations. The National Trust have approved the design, so our next step is to get a detailed drawing of the building from the supplier and a new location plan before submitting a new planning application.

## **ALLOTMENTS**

Just a reminder for allotment holders – we will be holding an allotment holders meeting on Saturday 29<sup>th</sup> February 2020 at 10am in the village hall. The annual rents will be collected and there will be an opportunity to discuss any ideas or issues.

## **ELECTRICITY AND GAS TOP UPS**

British Gas top ups for electricity and gas are no longer available at the Co-Op opposite Stanchester School. This service is AVAILABLE at Norton Post Office.

However, if you use this payment method, please note that the Post Office closes on Saturday afternoons from 12 Noon and all day on Sundays. It opens at 9am each morning, is closed between 1pm and 2pm each weekday and closes at 5.30pm in the afternoon (except Wednesday at 4.30pm).

## **CRIME & ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR**

There has been an increase in organised criminal networks involved in exporting illegal drugs out of cities into small towns/villages. You may have heard the term 'County Lines' and it has been found that this is happening in surrounding villages. Drug dealers are exploiting children and vulnerable adults to move and store drugs and money, and they will often use coercion, incentives i.e. the latest mobile phone, intimidation, violence and weapons.

Please keep a look out for any strange vehicles in the village, anyone approaching children or vulnerable adults. Report it to the police immediately.

**For any advice and further/up-to-date information on incidents please go to the website: [www.police.uk](http://www.police.uk). If you are a witness to or the victim of a crime then it is imperative that you report it to the police immediately whether it is during the day or at night. When reporting an incident please telephone either 101 for non-emergencies or 999 for emergencies only.**

## **PARISH COUNCIL MEETINGS**

Parish Council meetings are held on the third Monday of every month in the Village Hall except for August and December. Parish Council meetings are open to the press and public so residents are welcome to come along and listen to what we have to say. There is also a short public session at the beginning of every meeting.

The next Parish Council meeting will be held on Monday, 17<sup>th</sup> February 2020 at 7.15pm.

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**Come to the Meeting**

**on**

**Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> February**

**at 7.15pm**

**in the Village Hall**

to discuss the VE Day Village Celebrations

The Parish Council need volunteers to help prepare for the event

and to help on the day

Come along to find out what it is all about

All are welcome