

THE HADLOW DOWN PARISH COUNCIL AND YOUR COUNCIL TAX

I previously invited villagers to attend a preliminary budget meeting on 15th September 2009 in order to discuss if village groups had any budgetary requirements for the forthcoming financial year. Following on from this the Hadlow Down Parish Council have been discussing the needs of the village for the financial year 2010/11.

At their meeting on 1st December 2009 the Parish Council agreed to increase the precept (the amount they receive from the Council Tax paid by the villagers) from £17,997 to £21,222.

On behalf of the Parish Council I wanted to offer an explanation for this 18% rise, which although it sounds a lot will amount to an increase of £8.34 per annum for a band D household.

The Parish Council is conscious that we are in a recession and wanted to keep the increase as low as possible, however they also wanted to support and see the new Village Hall project move forward. They have therefore forecasted an expenditure of £3500 in order that the initial drawings and surveys for the building can be carried out. Of this £1500 will be taken from reserves and £2000 will be forecasted for in the precept. This will be the initial cost for the project however there will obviously be further considerable costs in order to complete the project. The Parish Council are committed to seeing this exciting project completed.

The New Village Hall Committee hope to hold events in 2010 to highlight their plans for the Village Hall and in order to encourage input from villagers.

The Parish Council will be taking a further £1873 from their reserves in order for sustainable lights to be placed in School Lane and for work to be carried out on the old Village Hall. It will take a few years for us to have a new Village Hall and in the meantime we need to take care of the old one. If you haven't yet seen the sustainable lights at the St Mark's Church, please have a look, they are the same as the lights that will be in School Lane.

It was originally suggested that £1000 be used from reserves to set up a website, this has been reduced to £200 which is included in the precept rather than taking it from reserves. The Parish Council are presently looking at what options are available to them, including whether it is feasible for them to use the Hadlow Down village website. We will keep you informed of developments with this through the Parish Council minutes.

At present I am in the process of being trained in order that I can expand my knowledge in the role of Clerk and ensure that I am fully qualified. This will eventually also help the Parish Council to become a "Quality Council", which is an award all councils are being encouraged to aspire to, I am aiming to finish this training in September and there will then no longer be this training cost as I will be qualified. The amount of my salary has however changed due to the increase in the volume of work being received. My hours are now 4 per month higher than forecasted for in the 2009/10 Precept.

If you have any questions on the Precept please do not hesitate to contact me on: 01435 860959 or by email on: hadlowdownnpc@btconnect.com.

As an early reminder the Parish Assembly will be held on Tuesday 20th April 2010 at 7pm at the Village Hall, where you are all most welcome to come along, listen to what the Parish Council has to say and make your comments to them.

Helen Simpson-Wells, Clerk to Hadlow Down Parish Council