

A CLERK'S EYE VIEW...What you should know about #3.....

THE PRECEPT

A parish (or town) council (*I refer to parish council throughout*) gets its funding by receiving a small amount of the local council tax and is called the precept.

A parish council, through its financial assessment and projects planned, forecasts the amount of precept it requires for the following year and submits a request for this funding from the local borough (or district) council.

Council tax-payers cannot refuse to pay it, and the billing authority cannot refuse to levy it. It is the only source of tax revenue available to parish councils. In Amber Valley there are 31 Parish Councils and they received a portion of the total 3% allocated to parish councils from the levied Council Tax in 2021-22.

Historically, civil (as opposed to church) parish councils were established in 1894 under the new Local Government Act and were able to raise a 'rate' linked to their then duties under the Poor Laws. Rates were levied on non-domestic and domestic property until 1990, when the rates were replaced by the Community Charge and the National Non-Domestic Rate. Since then, parishes have precepted on domestic property only, via the Community Charge and then the council tax.

Although some parish councils have the capacity to deliver more major public services, and receive extra funding to do this, the majority concern themselves with local environmental, community and amenity issues.

Parish councils are required to appoint Proper Officers to take responsibility for the various matters the council handles. Normally, parish councils simply appoint a clerk who is Proper Officer for everything (*they aren't all called Jackie Weaver!*). In addition, there is the role of Responsible Financial Officer (RFO - another statutory requirement) and in the majority of parish councils, the clerk is also appointed to be the RFO.

Holbrook Parish Council's precept is spent across a range of activities, facilities and undertakings and these include the Clerk/RFO and the Parish Warden (often called parish groundsmen in many parishes (*and they do not have to be men!*)). These are the only two staff of the Parish Council (all the Councillors are volunteers).

As well as general maintenance and equipment for work in the parish, (which includes litter picking, grass cutting, verge/hedge strimming, leaf dispersal and minor works to footpath signs etc where/when necessary if not done by AVBC), funds have been spent on, or are ringfenced for; the playing field, Gorse Piece and Sand Hollows and their associated maintenance (including tree work); future provision for the Village Hall, contributions (whether ad hoc or regular) towards maintenance of the church clock; cleaning of the war memorial when required, the Holbrook Friendship Group, Rainbows Hospice for Children and Young People, the Drop Inn Youth Centre, Derbyshire Children's Holiday Centre and the Arkwright Village Hall. Purchases made this year include a new picnic table and bench for Gorse Piece Nature Reserve; the Mellors Lane Playground – a major investment in new equipment – the funds for which had to be built up over a number of years; the defibrillator and subsequent training session; a Remembrance Day Wreath and a contribution to the Parish Christmas Tree and Lights.

I hope this helps in knowing where your precept goes!

Siobhan Burton
Clerk/RFO