

Council Tax Shock!

IF YOU HAVE read your Council Tax bill, you may have got something of a shock. If you haven't, this isn't a late April Fool! The Parish Council has doubled its precept for 2018-19.

This represents an increase of £14.24 per household for Band A properties in the parish, and £21.36 for Band D properties. (In mitigation, the level is still not particularly high when compared with other parishes.) As a result, the Council's income has increased from £9823.50 for 2017-18 to £19480.32 for 2018-19.



"Why?" THREE MAIN REASONS acted together. These are as follow.

* **CUTS MADE ELSEWHERE:** THERE ARE ALREADY several areas where the Parish Council has moved to fill the gaps left by cuts made by other bodies. For example, the Parish Council pays a regular amount to Durham County Council for two bins in the parish. Another example is cuts made to the local authority grant provided to the Community Centre and withdrawal of all maintenance services to the building.

* **THE THREAT OF CAPPING:** SINCE 2013, HIGHER-TIER local authorities, such as Durham County Council, have had to hold a referendum on increases in their tax above a certain percentage (generally between about 2% and 5%). So far, parish councils have been spared this, but it is quite likely that this will not be the case for much longer. The question, "Why not have a referendum if you want to put the precept up by more?" may be asked. The problem with this is cost. It is estimated that to hold a referendum exclusively in Kimblesworth and Plawsworth parish would cost about £7000, or about £8.30 per household.

* **EXPENSIVE PROBLEMS:** IN ADDITION, YOUR parish councillors have listened to local people's concerns and are aware of a number of issues which will cost money to solve. In particular, a shortage of parking, the presence of obstructions and concerns over road safety have been brought to their attention. Other issues raised by local residents include a lack of play facilities for children in Nettlesworth, speeding traffic and a lack of public Christmas decorations.

HOWEVER, THE INCREASE is still not enough to resolve all of these issues entirely. Because of this, Councillors are anxious to get right what your money is spent on.

Your Opinion Counts

WE WANT TO know what you think about which projects are needed most. Here, we give some potential projects and their approximate expected cost.

* **INCREASED PARKING PROVISION** There are parts of the villages where parking is scarce and where vehicles are parked causes difficulties both for motorists and pedestrians. Three possible sites for additional parking include, on the right of the turning into Tanmeads opposite the shops, the green area in the centre of The Crescent and inside the turning from B6312 towards Kimblesworth. The cost for each of these projects would range between £6000 and £30,000.

* **SPEEDING IS ANOTHER** problem, particularly along the B6312 through Nettlesworth. The Parish Council could spend some of its precept on a movable speed visor, which would cost: around £1200 per year to purchase and maintain.

* **PLAY EQUIPMENT IS** thought by quite a few to be inadequate in Nettlesworth, particularly when Kimblesworth's facilities are more comprehensive. Improvements in the Nettlesworth play area would cost up to around £40,000

* **CHRISTMAS DECORATIONS AND/OR** a Christmas tree have both been asked for by a few residents. These would cost up to around £1500 a year.

TO GIVE YOUR view, you can write to the Clerk, (details overleaf), email the Council (kpparishcouncil@gmail.com), visit the website (www.kpparishcouncil.co.uk), or attend a meeting of the Council at Nettlesworth Community Centre (see over).



Above: Parking has led to problems for drivers and also pedestrians.

Above right: Residents are concerned about speeding.

Below right: Some residents have asked for Christmas decorations.

Below: Kimblesworth's play area is better equipped but not as well used as Nettlesworth's.



Village Green Update



AT THE END of 2015 an application was made to develop the green area between Sycamore Road and Hawthorn Close. This application was withdrawn by the developer, Gleeson Homes, following the November 2015 planning committee meeting. While the Committee appeared minded to approve the application, it required allotment access the developer seemed unwilling to give.

IN 2016, THERE was interest in applying for the land to have Village Green Status, so what happened next, why and what should be done going forward?

REGRETTABLY THE APPLICATION has not been made to date. The main reason was that in spite of a high level of interest by some local people, only nine statements were returned. For the application to be taken seriously, at least around fifteen would be needed. As the statement forms were very lengthy, and had many questions which were difficult for the uninitiated to answer, this could have put

some interested people off making a statement.

FORTUNATELY THERE IS now another deterrent in place to would-be developers of the land. The owner of the allotment land to the west of the site, Mr William Reed, obtained an easement allowing private pedestrian access to the allotments from Hawthorn Close. This was granted on 29th September, 2016. Given that Gleeson Homes, specialises in "building homes on land no one else wants to buy", but would not alter its plans to allow this access to the allotments, it seems unlikely that another developer would be interested in the site now that the easement exists.

It's Not Dead Yet!

THAT SAID, IF people feel strongly about it, the application could still be made if further statements were given as evidence. However, to make it more likely to achieve sufficient numbers, those who filled statements originally would need to re-sign their statements with a current date.

THE COUNCIL THANKS everyone who took the trouble to fill in statements to support an application. If there is anyone who feels strongly enough to ensure that the application can be made, they are invited to contact the Council, or Daniel Inman (see bottom left on this page).

What's on at the Community Centre

Group	Day/Time	Contact	
Appalachian Clog Dancing	Mondays, 7.15pm - 9.15pm	Carol	0191 4153506
Bingo	Mon. 1-2pm; Wed. 1pm-3pm	Lisa	07581 330224
Cafe/Luncheon Club	Mondays, 12pm - 2pm	Lillian	07506 457744
Carer/Toddler Group	Thursdays 9.30am - 11.30am	The Centre c/o	0191 3711278
Carpet Bowls	Mon. and Thur. 6.30pm-8.30pm	The Centre c/o	0191 3711278
Dog Obedience Training	Tuesdays, 6.30pm - 9.30pm	Jenny	07738 470262
Dog Show Training	Wednesdays, 7.30pm - 9.30pm	Lorraine	0191 3711523
Durham Musical Theatre	Thursdays, 7.15pm - 9.30pm	The Centre c/o	0191 3711278
Parish Council	2 nd Thurs. of month* at 7pm	The Clerk	01388 715264
Slimming World	Wednesdays 5.30pm & 7.30pm	Susan	07469841060
Circuit Training/Zumba	Wed. and Fri. 10am - 11am	Jane	07930 321434

*The Parish Council does not meet in August

Calling all green fingered villagers!

THE ROYAL HORTICULTURAL Society is running a scheme called, "It's Your Neighbourhood" whereby local people in our villages can join forces to "green-up" our local area. This would hopefully create a prettier, greener environment for us to live and work in, a sense of pride and community in our area, increase local recycling and decrease anti-social behaviour.

If anyone would like more information on "It's Your Neighbourhood" or would be interested in forming a RHS gardening group, please email Lauren Anders at cllrleanders@gmail.com.

The Food Bank is open at the  Community Centre during Cafe hours on Monday. At other times, please telephone 07835 565393.

THIS EDITION was published by Daniel Inman. Tel. (0191) 3711278.

Kimblesworth and Plawsworth Parish Councillors

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