

Chailey Parish Council
Commentary on the Budget and Council Tax Precept for 2017/18

Each year the Council spends money under a number of headings, for example on maintaining, protecting and running parish assets, including important buildings such as the Reading Room and the Windmill. It also makes grants and provides financial support to a number of parish organisations. It pays the costs of maintaining the Parish Office and of employing the Clerk. The Council estimates that it will spend £56,908 next year on these and other recurring items. This is a rise of about 3.8% over the budget set a year ago.

In addition to budgeting for costs which recur from year to year, the Council budgets in most years for the cost of exceptional or one-off items of expenditure. In 2015/16 the Council budgeted to meet about half a deficit of £25,000 that had been attributed to the Council in the Local Government Pension Fund. The Council is pleased to say that it was determined that none of the £25,000 was payable, thus releasing the money set aside to be used for other purposes. The second one-off item budgeted for in 2016/17 related to the Sports Pavilion in North Chailey. The Council has for some years held a reserve of £35,000 to meet the cost of refurbishing this important asset and it was hoped that the project would be completed in 2016/17. That has not proved to be possible, although a start has been made. It is now expected that the majority of the works will be carried out in the financial year 2017/18 using the unspent balance on the reserve of £31,000. A third one-off item of expenditure has been budgeted for in 2017/18. The Council is currently obtaining quotes for the cost of installing defibrillators at key locations around the Parish. A sum of £5,000 has been budgeted for the provision of these important life-saving devices.

The Council is therefore budgeting to spend a total of £92,908 in the next financial year. This cannot all be paid for from the amount raised by the Precept and the Council will use a significant part of its existing reserves to pay for the majority of the one-off items of expenditure. However, the Council has resolved that, because of the anticipated depletion of its reserves next year, an increase in the Precept is necessary to ensure that the expected day to day costs of running the Parish (after allowing for the small amount of income and grant received) can be met in full out of the amount raised by the Precept with a small surplus of about £2,500 being available to start the process of replenishing the reserves. Councillors have therefore agreed a sum of £42.31p to be paid next year by a household with a property in Band D for Council Tax purposes. This is an increase of 4% over the amount paid in 2016/17 and means that, for a household with a property in Band D, an additional annual amount of £1.63p will be payable. This equates to an additional 14p per month. The additional amount payable will be lower for properties in Council Tax Bands A to C and higher for those in Bands E and above.