

# WESTFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

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Chairman: Cllr G Fuller Parish Clerk: Mrs L J Welch FSLCC

## Spending in Westfield 2018/19

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This year, Westfield Parish Council has introduced a small increase in its precept (a levy on residential properties in the area) which will amount to a £1.39 increase per annum on the 2017/18 rate for a Band D equivalent home.

The increase in the total precept for Westfield is 1.13% from £181,953 to £184,000.

The purpose of this leaflet is to set out the main areas of our work and to highlight where the public money is spent within the Parish Council.

### *Why are we increasing the Band D Equivalent this year?*

Westfield Parish Council carefully monitors its expenditure and management costs, and this has enabled us to create healthy reserves which, together with good long term investments, have enabled us to ensure we foster a spirit of community in which residents can be justifiably proud.

However, changes in central government devolved funding to Local Authorities has led to severe reductions in B&NES', our Local Authority's, income and this in turn is reflected in their ability to support parish level activities. This tough financial outlook has required us to look closely at all aspects of our plans, and to incorporate funding for fundamental issues such as youth support, street scene maintenance etc. and some difficult decisions have needed to be made. These costs will continue to need to be reviewed over the next few years as the effects of the reduction in central government funding become more severe.



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However, despite this, the increase in our precept this year is still well below the nationally published rate of inflation and we hope that residents will understand the Parish Council's decision to impose a small increase of 1.41% for 2018/19.

### *What services does the Parish Council offer?*

- The Parish Council is a statutory consultee on **planning applications** and provides a local voice on **highways** and **environmental matters**.
- It is working towards a **Neighbourhood Plan** for Westfield, which, once approved by referendum this year, will direct future developments in the Parish.
- The Parish Council manages **sports and leisure facilities** at Norton Hill Recreation Ground and Westhill Recreation Ground.
- These facilities offer football pitches, a tennis court, play areas, BMX track, table tennis, boules, basketball and bowling (with one rink open to non-bowling club members).
- It encourages **community spirit** by funding events such as the Christmas Lights and the Switch-on event and the summer Fun Day.
- It supports the **parish environment** by funding the hanging baskets and the planting schemes in the decorative pit trucks around the parish as well as the raised beds at Jubilee Green shops.
- The Parish Council supports **local organisations** through grant funding.

- The Parish Council provides and, in partnership with community organisations, maintains three public access defibrillators in the parish.

### *How did the Parish Council perform in the last year?*

Throughout 2017 the Neighbourhood Plan Working Group worked hard to bring together the emerging Plan and to consult at the various stages. The group was delighted by the number of responses to the



Options Consultation in June/July and following the pre-submission consultation in October/November the Working Group is now working on final amendments before submitting the draft Plan for final consultation and examination. Following scrutiny by the independent inspector, residents can expect to be voting on approval of the Plan later this year.



Another project undertaken by the Parish Council this year was the creation of the



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Westfield Heritage Walks. There are three routes around the Parish of varying lengths and there are four boards at different points on the route giving information about the Parish's history. A downloadable flyer is available on the Parish Council website.

The Parish once again enjoyed a (rather wet) Fun Day at Westhill Recreation Ground and the return of the Fun Fair to Norton Hill Recreation Ground. Volunteers to join the organisers of the 8<sup>th</sup> annual Fun Day on 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2018 are very welcome.

We welcomed a new flowers contractor this year and were delighted with the beautiful, long-lasting baskets and flower displays. The Parish Council decided to invest in new automatic watering systems to the various baskets and planted areas and this made the contract much more appealing.



Meanwhile residents continued to present beautiful gardens for the annual Front Garden Competition in July which is kindly judged by horticulture specialists from Bath College and was won by two



residents in Waterside Road. In addition a special award was given to the residents of Rowan Court collectively for a beautiful group of gardens.

The Parish Council continued to support youth provision in the Parish and has seen B&NES' Youth Connect service take the activities offered in Westfield to a whole new level with young people having enjoyed first aid courses, cookery lessons, DJ workshops, rugby training and above all, a safe space to meet with other people of their own age.



The Parish Council takes the safety and well-being of its residents seriously so the decision was taken this year to purchase a further two defibrillators for the Parish. The new defibrillators at Mardons Club and the Fire Station join the defibrillator at Westfield Pharmacy which has been used on numerous occasions.

Finally, we rounded off 2017 with yet another enjoyable Christmas Lights switch-on event. A record number of residents joined Westfield Ladies Choir and the Silver Band singing carols, enjoying mulled wine and mince pies and seeing in the start of the festive season.

*What is new for 2018/19?*



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Next year the Parish Council plans to work closely with B&NES and Curo to enhance the maintenance of the grass areas. This is an issue that is often reported to the Parish Council and it is hoped that by working together the Parish will look tidier and even more appealing in 2018.

With the Neighbourhood Plan now approaching completion residents can expect a referendum in 2018 to approve the Plan which will then become part of Planning Policy for the Parish.

The Parish Council continues to fulfill an aspiration to provide more allotments in the Parish. Two sites are being considered and pursued and residents have been consulted. It is hoped that more volunteer snow wardens can be recruited to undertake gritting of public walkways in icy weather. On the subject of volunteers the Parish Council is launching its Inspirational Citizen Award which will be made an annual event to celebrate the unsung volunteer work going on in the Parish.

Lastly, the Parish Council will continue to provide the now-popular annual events such as the Fun Day and Christmas Lights Switch-on and plans are underway to add to the festive lights so that the



display of lights on lampposts stretch the length of the Parish for Christmas 2018.

Your Parish Council is working to provide the best possible environment and services for the people of Westfield. We positively encourage your views and suggestions for the future of our Parish. Residents are welcome to attend meetings of the Parish Council and you can view our 2018/19 budget at any time on our website.

