



On Tuesday 11 January 2022, Corfe Mullen Town Council set its budget for the 2022/23 financial year and subsequently what it would request as its precept from Dorset Council, paid by those who pay Council Tax, to support that budget. It took 3 hours of intense, robust discussion and debate between Councillors before a budget was agreed, which sees an increase of £6,040 in the working and running costs, along with an exceptional and capital budget of £53,965.02, which was reduced by £34,500 during the meeting. These are one off items within the year which the Council feels are either required to meet its obligations or are for the benefit of the community. After calculating these figures in line with the Tax base set by Dorset Council, this leaves the Council with a deficit of £79,656.33.

At the end of the current financial year, it is predicted that the general fund held by the Council will be around £90,000, however, with average monthly running costs of £35,000, this alone is not enough to meet the financial obligation of the council to hold 3 months working costs in reserve, let alone meet the deficit for the forthcoming year.

The Council is currently holding £75,000 earmarked for the potential pavilion rebuild, along with £125,000 which is also earmarked, and has restrictions upon how it can be used under a section 106 agreement with a developer and Dorset Council. Corfe Mullen Town Council did consider using all or some of the £75,000 to meet the Exceptional and Capital costs but decided on balance that, in order to lessen a borrowing burden to taxpayers in the future, it was agreed to retain and protect that fund for its intended purpose.

The impact of these decisions means the Town Council will be raising its precept by £20.18 for the year, or £2.01 per month, for a Council Tax Band D property. Obviously, this will be less for Bands A, B and C properties and more for Bands E and higher, based on the percentage calculation. The percentage increase on the Corfe Mullen Town Council precept part of your Council Tax from the 2021/22 year to the 2022/23 year is 20.97%, which when considered as a percentage figure does appear high, but as stated it equates to the £2.01 per month, or 50p per week when considered in context.

Clearly the Town Council would prefer not to raise its precept, however, it is subject to the same financial pressures as all businesses and households in respect of rising utilities, fuel costs, and supplies, which has now put the Town Council in a position where the choice is to make cuts to the services it offers or raising the precept to meet the need, and as there have been many years where there have been no increases, it was decided that cutting services in 2022/23 would be detrimental to the village and its residents.

The Town Council maintains a number of services across the Parish which residents enjoy unfettered, such as the recreation ground facilities including the sports pitches and public toilets, play parks, two cemeteries, allotments and Springdale open space, whilst also supporting local organisations and charities who directly assist residents of Corfe Mullen. All that has been carried out over the years with the Town Council consistently using bulks of its reserves to protect residents from precept increases. However, in recent years it also has encountered a large rise in vandalism and fly tipping, all of which is very costly to deal with and put right so that all residents of Corfe Mullen can enjoy a beautiful and welcoming village for all. It is the pride for Corfe Mullen which the Town Council is determined to retain by continuing to provide excellent services to its community and it hopes that its residents understand the need to ask for an additional 50p per week to do so.

**Corfe Mullen Town Council**