

Your comments re: proposed increase in Harborough Magna Parish Council Precept:

Village Matters Harborough Magna Parish Council

October 2009

Better Communications

Welcome to the first edition of a newsletter from your Parish Council which we hope will give you more information on our work. On your behalf we work with Rugby BC and Warwickshire CC and other public bodies such as the police and health service on traffic, environmental issues, planning applications, verge cutting and wider community and village issues.

We also seek grants to help with general improvement to our Parish. Currently for example we are seeking a grant for a verge hardening scheme outside Primrose Court in Meadow Way. The scheme will improve access to Primrose Court for residents and visitors and make it easier to walk along Meadow Way.

New Website

We are also hoping to develop a new website for the village, displaying information on Parish Council meetings and plans together with social and family activities. We hope that other groups that have done much good work for the Parish such as the Harborough Magna 2000 and Footpaths Groups and the Church, will consider providing information on their activities.

FUNDING

Through your Council tax every household in the Parish makes a contribution to fund the work of the Parish Council – this is called the Parish Precept. In the year to March 2010 the Precept funding for the Parish Council was £4,299. For a 'Band C' property this equated to a Council Tax charge of £20.85p this year.

Unfortunately this level of funding is no longer enough to meet our costs – nor does it provide any surplus to put towards grants for village improvements. The Parish Council is going to discuss raising the Precept at its next meeting and wants to hear your views on this.

Your Name

Address

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Please return to:
Parish Clerk, Holly Barn, Main Street, Harborough Magna
or any Parish Councillor, by 5th November 2009

Harborough Magna Parish Council

See inside – to see how your money is spent and proposed increase

How is the Precept of £4,299, spent?

You may be surprised to learn that the Parish Council is responsible for payment of the bills listed below:

- Electricity bills for our street lighting currently about **£1,200** a year – more than a quarter of our total budget.
- Maintenance of the street lights is over **£700 a year**
- Insurance policies, covering public liability, property damage to street lights, bus shelter and playground equipment. These are almost **£1400 a year.**
- The Parish Clerk, our only employee, whose official title is Clerk to the Parish Council and Responsible Finance Officer. We are paying the required hourly rate of £8.26 but because the Precept has not kept pace with inflation since 1999 we are unable to afford to pay for the actual amount of hours worked to fulfil the increasing responsibility of the role.
- Audit fees to meet Audit Commission standards – currently **£250 a year.**
- The cost of an election for Parish Councillors – the last election cost **£750**

Other payments include stationery, phone calls, postage, hire of premises for Parish Council meetings and training. We also make a small payment to help support the maintenance of the churchyard and the "Round the Revel" magazine which keeps people informed about village events including Parish Council meetings. When all of these bills have been met, what is left over can be spent on developments and improvements in the Parish.

What Developments and Improvements ?

The Parish Plan, which you can see on the Rugby Borough Council website, is the main basis for these. It told the Parish Council what you, the Parishioners, identified and wanted. Requests and suggestions made at Parish Council meetings have also been included. The most requested development was the implementation of traffic calming measures.

Fortunately, Warwickshire County Council agreed to pay for this. We do apply for grants wherever we can. But grants do not cover the whole cost. They usually fund about 70% and the rest has to come from our Precept.

Recent improvements have included:

- A street light installed on The Green to provide greater security, to help prevent theft from and of cars and to let night time drivers know they are entering a built up area where there may be pedestrians – you!
- Wooden bollards erected to preserve grass verges from being damaged by vehicles
- Installation of litter and dog poop bins
- A new pavement opposite the Old Village Hall to keep people safe on the increasingly busy B4112

What now – proposed increase?

In 1995 – 1996 Harborough Magna Parish Council's Precept was around 4.8% of our overall Council Tax bill. In 2009 – 2010 it was 2.1%. All the things we have to pay for have all gone up and some, such as electricity, have doubled. This was raised as a severe concern at the last Parish Council meeting when, without exception, we agreed that we should apply to Rugby Borough Council for an increase in the Precept

We have been looking at our budget and think that **we need an average increase of about 25p a week for each household in the village – around £12 a year.** For smaller properties the increase may be lower and for larger properties the increase would be higher – actual rates would depend on your Council Tax banding.

This proposal and its benefits will be discussed at the next Parish Council Meeting on Monday 9 November at Early Birds Nursery, between 7pm and 8pm. After this we shall continue with the normal business of the Parish Council meeting. Please come along and give us your views at the meeting or you can complete and return the form overleaf.