

The Precept Explained

Councils across the UK are faced with severe funding pressure and budgetary shortfalls and, as a result no longer make regular funding to parish councils. To mitigate against this, your Parish Council feels it is prudent to increase the local Precept. By the time of publication, your Parish Councillors will have debated how much to increase this by at the January parish council meeting.

What is a Precept? The Precept is the primary source of income for most parish councils. They do not receive any direct funding from Central Government. It represents a small proportion each household's council tax payment – between 3 and 4%. The funding helps to pay for the running of the parish council and the services it provides. In addition, parish councils seek grant funding for some projects.

What does Parish Council provide? Here are some of the key activities/outgoings:

- Maintenance of and insurance premiums for parish council owned land and assets: 8 hectares of SSSI and Common at Monkwood Green and associated equipment to manage the grassland, bins, phone booths and defibrillators, bus shelters, noticeboards, benches and public liability).
- Membership of the Lengthsman Scheme. This is where the parish pays a contribution towards hire of a contractor who attends to general roadside matters across the parish, cleaning signs, keeping visibility splays clear, clearing drain tops and gullies etc.
- Contribution towards maintenance of Public Rights of Way and the provision and maintenance of associated infrastructure in the parish.
- Provision and maintenance of public defibrillator[s] in the Parish.
- A statutory consultee on planning applications and a local voice on highways and environmental matters.

How is the Precept raised? Worcestershire Council collects your Council Tax on behalf of themselves, Police, Fire, Adult Social Care, and the Parish Councils in their district.

How is it calculated? At its meeting in January each year, your Parish Council sets the Precept for the following financial year. Discussions consider all projected income, grants, and outgoings expected in the financial year. The Precept is the balancing amount the Parish Council requires to deliver its services in the next financial year. This year, the Parish Council has considered the fact that we may need to pay for additional services once the process of Devolution (the merging of County and District Councils) is known in 2027/2028.

How much does the average household pay for the Precept?

- The precept is apportioned per household according to Council Tax Band
- The parish council precept for 2025-26 was £22,000 - around 3.2% of each household's total council tax bill (depending on council tax band).
- The 2025-26 precept of £73 per annum cost a band D household £1.40 per week.
- **In 2026-27 this will be increased to £86 per annum costing a band D household £1.65 per week.**

Increases are never welcome, but we took the following points into consideration:

- Historically, this parish council has raised the precept by the minimal possible amount each year. Between 2015 and 2025 the average increase each year was £2.20 per household, (or 4p per week) with no increase at all during 2020.

- The risk that Devolution outcomes will force Parish Councils to foot the bill for certain services previously paid for by the County and District Councils. These include a much larger contribution towards the Lengthsman Scheme, wider responsibility for gully cleaning, hedge cutting, and ditch clearing. It is also looking likely that parish councils will become responsible for arranging contractors to mow all roadside verges at least twice a year. If we do take on that responsibility, our biodiversity commitment will require that grass and arisings are actually removed from site and disposed of after mowing, to allow a wider range of grasses and flowers to flourish as they once did.
- The possibility that Parish Council will no longer receive a grant from the County and District Councillor Divisional Funding (discretionary grants that our higher tier councillors make to parish council projects). This often amounts to up to £500-£600 per year.
- Inflationary pressure on the cost of labour and raw materials, which impact our capital spending and maintenance work.
- The need to build up a protected fund for unforeseen repairs and renewals and the need to build up a fund for litigation (the process of resolving legal disputes through the court). In recent years, the parish council has twice had to appoint legal advice to clarify and advise in relation to accident claims and land ownership.
- Your Parish Clerk is available 24hr a day in an emergency and many of you have made use of that service over the years, as flood water rise or electricity goes off for example. Parish Councils can often help by letting the right people know what is going on and making sure that resident information is taken into account.

Overall, the Parish Council believes that this is a prudent increase given the current economic environment. Conscientious monitoring of income and expenditure over the years has enabled our Parish Council to create a stable financial base of £25,000 from which to deliver services and projects for the community.

If you have any questions or would like further information, please contact the Clerk:

Mrs Lisa Stevens

parishclerk@grimley-pc.gov.uk

parishclerk@severnstokeandcroomedabitot-pc.gov.uk

07950256363 / 01905 820956

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