

METHWOLD PARISH COUNCIL

Precept For 2013

The Parish Council precept is the amount of money to be raised in local tax that the Parish Council needs to run its affairs for the coming year. In effect it is the money that the parish spends on itself. In 2012 / 13 this was £31,000

Methwold's precept is high compared with many councils of a similar size. This is because it does more! (Yes I know that is hard to believe!) Many Parish Councils run a recreation ground, some have cemeteries to maintain, others have an adopted churchyard or a village hall to run, almost all have seats and playgrounds and a few run the street lighting. Methwold Parish Council does all of these things and more besides. Methwold also has three part-time employees; its clerk, a caretaker for the village hall and a village maintenance man.

One of the greatest single items of expenditure is the village hall as can be seen from the estimates of expenditure for 2012 (below). At present the cost of running the hall is approx' £10,000pa but against this about £5000 is coming in from lettings. In recent years the council has spent a lot of time and energy (and no little expense) in renovating the hall floor, replacing windows, putting in a screen between the hall & Fenton Room, redecorating, replacing old chairs & curtains etc, etc. however more still needs to be done. Bookings as a result have increased and it is hoped that the gap between income & expenditure can be further narrowed.

ITEMS	Percentage of Budget to nearest 0.5%
Salaries	35
Admin Costs (Incl' clerk's expenses, audit fees, insurances, election fees subscriptions and training)	17.5
Cemetery	5
Grass cutting	4.5
Street lighting	6.5
Churchyard	1
Seats, Notice boards etc	1
Village Improvements (includes dog bins)	8
Recreation Ground	1
Hall	21.5
TOTAL	100

These figures are based on the forecast for 2012 / 13. 1%= approx £310

The only other regular income that the council has is from the cemetery which at present is about £500 pa.

This year we have to ask for a 7.5% increase in the precept (approx £2,250) and it is not for any of the things that the council usually does! In November our Parish Clerk Jane Scarrott, resigned as Clerk to the Council. Jane has been an exceptional clerk and the parish owes her a great debt of gratitude for her service. Her resignation has left two large holes. The first is the loss of the service that she has given over the last ten years. The second hole is the fact that Jane gave this service without much of a pay rise over that period. Any qualified replacement, is going to cost the council considerably more than the salary paid over the last ten years. In addition, from 2015 the Council will be required by law to contribute to the Government's scheme whereby all employees will be entitled to a pension. As a result we have no option but to raise the required sum through local tax.

What does this mean - 7.5% sounds like a lot of money ? It actually means a rise of around £5 pa to the average household, or 41p per month, and it may be less if there is an increase in the number of households paying tax.