

## Haydon Wick Precept Statement

When the process started at the end of 2014 to consider the budget for the financial year 2015/16 the Councillors had two main objectives in mind namely to keep the precept for a Band D house at the same or similar level as previous years while improving services. Objectives which at first glance seemed to be incompatible.

Following a review of what is done, how it is achieved and building in the demands of the extended Parish as from 7<sup>th</sup> May 2015 a number of changes to the budgetary allocation to each Committee have been implemented and the employment of new staff undertaken. Despite the increase in staff numbers resulting in a substantial increase in associated costs the Councillors have managed to plan improved services and retain a precept level of £31.35 on a Band D house by careful financial management.

The creation of a three year plan assisted in ensuring that work and the associated budget was allocated to the correct Committee which in turn has eliminated any crossover of work and the potential for duplication of effort. These are administrative changes which will make the distribution of Committees' responsibilities and workload more logical while ensuring they do not affect the services provided. These changes can be seen on the precept spreadsheet by comparing the changes in Committee spend between the financial years 2014/15 and 2015/16.

As with all budgets the highest cost to any organisation is the cost of employing staff. Recognising that during 2014/15 there was a considerable amount of overtime being worked in the office the Councillors accepted the need to increase the staffing level. When further consideration was given to the expected increase in workload which would arise from the extended Parish in May 2015 this gave justification to employ a third person on a part-time basis.

Consideration was also given to the existing cost of employing an outside contractor for waste bin emptying with fairly substantial on-costs. As this contract was one of a 'job and finish' style it had the disadvantage of not providing a service throughout the working day. It was agreed to terminate the contract and to create an in-house team of two persons covering the same duties and giving a day long service provision for other work. The new team will provide a "nine to five" Monday to Friday service resulting in the ability to provide a good response to ad-hoc requests from members of the public to tackle fly-tipping, overgrown hedgerows and playground repairs, as well as the day to day duties of emptying waste bins and dog bins and routine maintenance around the Parish.

The capital cost arising from the creation and equipping of new staff has been covered by using reserves. The ongoing revenue costs of both the new administrative member of staff and the two Amenities Operatives will be covered from the small increase of 1.8% in the tax

base and savings arising from the cancellation of the contract to empty the dog and litter bins & the disposing of the waste.

As a modest contribution to the cost of operating the Council income from room hire and Haydon Living advertising continues and charges will be reviewed annually to generate additional income.

In future years the Councillors will endeavour to retain the precept at a reasonable level however, this will be dependent in part on the Council Tax Support Grant being maintained by the Government and passed to the Parish by Swindon Borough Council.