

Charlwood Parish Council

Charlwood Parish Council sets Council Tax for 2017-18

Once again it has proved to be particularly difficult to set a realistic council tax for the next financial year. With both Surrey County Council and Mole Valley District Council having severe budget constraints with cut backs in the government rate support grant, this is likely to result in further cuts to services such as highways & footpath maintenance, traffic calming, and litter management in our community. In addition, the play equipment in both Charlwood and Hookwood recreational areas are now well over 10 years old and require a significant level of maintenance to keep them in a good state of repair. The Parish Council have therefore taken the decision to undertake where necessary many of these essential tasks in order to maintain the high standard that we require for our communities and have set the precept accordingly.

At their January meeting, the Parish Council set the rate precept at £63,575 for the next financial year (2017-18) so that the necessary maintenance and new work can be carried out. With a slightly larger tax base of 1020.7, this represents a council tax of £63.30p for a band 'D' property.

In determining the precept a number of factors were taken into account.

- It is anticipated that Mole Valley District Council will increase the concurrent spending payment by 21% for this financial year. The concurrent spending payment supports parish councils who have the responsibility for maintaining recreation grounds. Charlwood Parish Council has 2 such recreation grounds to maintain. The concurrent spending payment covers approximately 2/3rd of the expenditure.
- For expenditure associated with administration, an allowance has been made to cover the additional work carried out by the clerk and for the professional fees associated with new audit regulations, HMRC and VAT recovery.
- Although the threat of an additional runway at Gatwick has receded with the announcement of a 3rd runway at Heathrow, it has not totally gone away. The Council have therefore included £2,000 in the budget, as well as allocating a further £6,500 in its reserves to support possible further action against a second runway.
- An increased level of maintenance is required for our play equipment in both the Withey and the Millennium Field which are now over 10 years old. A significant level of maintenance is associated with the wooden upright posts which are slowly rotting at ground level and have to be replaced periodically.
- With cutbacks in the county/district budgets for footpath and verge maintenance, the associated maintenance work on our parish footpaths falls to the parish council. £5,000 has been included for care of verges and hedges around the parish including Rosemary Lane, Black Ditch and rights of way footpaths such as those leading to Glovers Wood etc.

Whilst the Parish Council regrets having to increase the rate precept, it should be noted that the total precept only represents around 2% of the total council tax.

M Needham – Chairman

P Barclay – Clerk to the council