

## Chairmans Report – December 2022

First of all thank you all for turning out on such a cold evening. Hopefully the newly installed boiler and radiators will be keeping the hall warm.

The main focus of tonight's meeting is the setting of the budget which in turn will set next year's precept request. The Parish Council have a moral duty to ensure there is sufficient funds to provide the services for next year, it is a fine line to tread however the Parish Council costs for services have also increased. We invited the public to join the budget setting meeting on the 15<sup>th</sup> November – this was an opportunity to see the background of how the precept figure is achieved – sadly no member of the public joined.

Social Media is an explosive tool – it spreads information which is an excellent way to communicate however when the information is misinterpreted or incorrect it can also cause disharmony.

Over the past six months we have had a substantial increase in FOI's into the council – there is a cost to every one of these requests which comes out of the precept, up to £450 a time.

The current vacancy saw a small number of residents call for an election. The new councillor will only be in post from January to April – 4 months.

Tomorrow morning the Parish Council will be notified if an election is to be run on the 12<sup>th</sup> January. The cost of the election is estimated at £3,000 which we currently have in reserves however if an election is called, some of the precept money will immediately have to be assigned to replace the used up election reserve, this will come out of next year's budget.

There is a small minority of individuals who appear to be confused about grants and precept.

The grant money has to be used within the specific guidelines of the allocation. It cannot be used to subsidise the precept. Grant funding is for new facilities not repairs or general maintenance.

The Parish Council have reserves which is earmarked for projects, this runs alongside the five year plan. These reserves are flexible to be able to assist with match funding for more grants. Dodderhill Parish Council have had in excess of £200 thousand pound in grant funding this year to benefit the community. It is very satisfying to see some of our biggest critics with family members enjoying the very same facilities that they were publicly against.

The new year will see some exciting changes for the village The recreational area will be moved across to Field in Trust, which will add another level of security against development, The Village hall has an array of new ventures waiting to get started, community support days & the baby bank. The refurbished hall will have the ability to run a café for the recreational area, indoor and outdoor cinema facilities and a Community Library – all courtesy of grant money.

Although our Open Space and Community hall is within Wychbold, the Parish extends to a much wider area and it is important that this is kept in the forefront of our minds – these parishioners also contribute to the precept.

I would like to finish off with a thank you to everyone who has contributed to a successful year and wish you all a happy Christmas and a Healthy 2023.