

Broadclyst Parish Council

2015-16 Precept demand

The draft budget for 2015-16 as recommended by the Finance Committee and as supported by the Clerk's report had been published and circulated prior to the Full Council meeting on 1 December 2014.

Cllr Wollacott (Chair of Finance Committee) gave a report to Council and it was noted that it is estimated that the Council will end the financial year on budget despite a number of changes together with the challenges it has faced due to ongoing government and local government restructuring and cuts.

Cllr Wollacott explained that in setting the budget for 2015/16 the main increase to expenditure had been necessary to enable delivery of services which have fallen victim to County cuts and restructuring. Furthermore a new budget item had been included to reflect necessary changes in the operating structure of the Bowls Green.

Period of change

Broadclyst Parish Council has changed beyond all recognition from what it was 5 years ago. Back in 2009/10, Broadclyst parish council employed one part-time member of staff and the majority of its services were delivered by Principle Authorities.

Today the parish is home to one of the biggest growth areas outside London, employs 5 staff, has won over £80,000 in grants for play & sports equipment which is all up & running, has 3 major community projects running worth £28K, is writing its Neighbourhood Plan, it reviewing and updating its Emergency Plan and is looking to take on 3 different County-devolved services for its parishioners.

Additional budget items

The budget set for 2015/16 is a realistic budget which will enable Council to actively deliver provision in the parish which would otherwise no longer be provided by the Principle Authority in respect of Youth work, Lengthsman / rural road network services. Whilst it had been a tough decision to increase expenditure at Parish level, it must be recognised this has become necessary as a direct result of budget cuts and network management under Devon County Council's Tough Choices which were consulted on earlier this year.

Changes to Tax Base

It was reported that changes to the parish tax base following the forthcoming governance review to form the new parish of Cranbrook would have brought about an increase to the parish tax of approximately £20 per year per Band D equivalent property had the 2014/15 budget been repeated. In reality, the basic parish tax is likely to be in the region of £95 per year per band D equivalent property to reflect changes to the tax base, changes to the way in which the tax base is factored by the District Council and new budget items.

Axed services

It should be appreciated that to run the parish and pick up the provision of axed services by previous providers will cost less than £3 per band D equivalent property per month, and is made possible by the number of properties in the parish; it is likely that smaller towns and parishes will not be able to consider undertaking devolved services as to do so would be cost-prohibitive.

Cost to the Householder

The Council Tax demand is raised to fund 5 different authorities.

The breakdown from your bill is shown in the table below:

Authority	Increase	Amount of your bill
Devon County Council	2.0%	£1,161.27
Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue	2.0%	£78.42
Police & Crime Commissioner for D&C	2.0%	£169.47
East Devon District Council	0%	£121.78
Broadclyst Parish Council		£92.22
Overall:	4.8%	£1,623.16

The increase to the 15/16 Precept has had 2 main causes:

- taking on the provision of cut services (which includes financing our own Lengthsman, Road Warden scheme and Youth Club)
- changes to the tax base following the Cranbrook governance review

The Governance review was beyond this Council's control; it is going to happen and has caused the Parish Tax Base to drop from 1612 to 1263.

If Council had decided not to undertake to deliver cut service provision, what would the nett effect on the Council Tax bill if Broadclyst Parish Council's Precept had increased by the same 2% that the County, Fire and Police Precepts have all increased by?

Here's the maths; all figures based on a Band D property without any discounts:

Council Tax 15/16 bill minus Parish Precept	Parish Precept	Tax base	Parish Tax	Total Council Tax bill	Monthly amount	Weekly amount
£1530.94	£116,478.48 (15/16)	1263	£92.22	£1623.16	£135.26	£31.21
£1530.94	£75,546 (based on 14/15 figure +2%)	1263	£59.81	£1590.75	£132.56	£30.59

The following table shows the impact of the rise against the rest of the Council tax demand

	All other authorities total contribution	Broadclyst Parish Council	Bill total
2% increase	£1,530.94	£92.22	£1623.16
Actual increase	£1,530.94	£59.81	£1590.75
Difference:			£32.41

The actual extra cost per band D household per year of taking on devolved services is £32.41; an extra 62p per week.

Future

Accurate 5 year budget predictions are challenging at best due to there being:

- no guarantee that further services will not be devolved in the future
- little indication to the degree to which new builds in the West end of the parish will affect the Council's operational budget
- further changes to the parish tax base (increasing as build-outs continue in the Growth Point)

Summary

Broadclyst Parish Council took the decision that it was in the community's best interests to try to continue these services; this decision was debated at the Finance Committee meeting on 19th November and again at Full Council on 1st December , both of which were advertised public meetings, open to members of press and public.

It was not a decision which was taken lightly and the Council feels a prudent budget has been set which allows it to act in the best long-term interests of the community it represents.

Angie Hurren

Broadclyst Parish Clerk & Responsible Finance Officer

4th April 2015.