



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Town Council Sets Budget and Votes to Save Local Post Office

29 January 2018

Hailsham Town Council has set its budget for the next financial year (April 2018 to March 2019) and agreed a precept of £1,012,703. This means that the Town Council's share of council tax for a Band D property in Hailsham will be £138.55, an increase of £12.02 per household per year.

In making the recommendations for the budget, the Town Council aims to provide continuing security for essential services for residents and visitors alike with value for money improvements where possible.

The Town Council has taken some proactive decisions and has been faced with increasing costs for the services it maintains, including the town's street lights, cemetery, parks and open spaces, allotments and play areas.

During the debate which took place at the meeting of Full Council last Wednesday [24th January], members voiced an intention to protect the local Post Office, and town councillors have agreed in principle to allocate funds for the operational costs of the Post Office in the coming year's budget, should their application to take over the franchise be successful.

Furthermore, the Town Council has agreed to allocate around £23,000 of capital funds for the gradual and phased replacement of street lamps across the town with newer, brighter and low-cost LED bulbs over the coming two to three years.

Councillor Chriss Triandafyllou, chairman of the Finance, Budget, Resources & Staffing Committee, explained the rationale behind the decision: "Our budget for the forthcoming financial year has been carefully reviewed and we are looking to continue to make improvements across the board. The Town Council has a responsibility to ensure that local services are retained and supported."

"Aside from the need to factor into next year's budget the costs needed for the replacement of outdated street lamps, the potential takeover of the local Post Office franchise from Piper's News and other notable expenses, the increase in the precept comes as the Town Council raises concerns over the impact of legislation resulting from the gradual devolution of services from county and district authorities to town and parish councils."

"We have experienced a year-by-year reduction in the grant given by Wealden District Council and it seems almost certain that the Council Tax Support Grant will be reduced by 15% year on year until it is no longer available. All this coupled with rising costs and an urgent need to sustain and further develop growth in the community."

Town Mayor Councillor Nigel Coltman commented: "For Hailsham Town Council to provide the amount of support to the community that we do, we have to be financially responsible and strive to balance the budget to the best of our ability and with residents' quality of life in mind."

"In order for us to continue to provide valuable services, this increase in our share of the council tax bill is not only sensible, but vital. I understand raising taxes may be a sensitive issue, but we have to think about this in a logical fashion and do what is best for the town and the local community overall."

"We cannot take on these responsibilities without the funding and hopefully, people will see that whatever money is coming in will go out on essential maintenance and improvements."

If you require any further information on the Town Council budget for 2018/19 please contact John Harrison (Town Clerk) on 01323 841702 or by email: john.harrison@hailsham-tc.gov.uk.

Notes to Editors:

- Council taxpayers should be aware that only a small percentage of the council tax demand goes to Hailsham Town Council - the remaining percentage goes to Wealden District Council, East Sussex County Council, the Police Authority and the Fire Service for the services they provide.
- Locally, the Town Council is committed to supporting community-based initiatives including Environment Hailsham and grants to voluntary organisations, and throughout the next 12 months, will continue to work hard and drive forward initiatives to promote the town as a key location to live, work and visit, helping to boost the local economy.

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