

Rowlands Castle Parish Council

11 The Green, Rowlands Castle PO9 6BW

Email: clerk@rowlandscastlepc.org.uk Tel: 02392 413044 Website: www.rowlandscastlepc.org.uk

PRESS RELEASE on 7 February 2017

Precept Increase for Rowlands Castle Parish

Rowlands Castle Parish Council took the decision on Monday evening (6 February) to increase its precept by £30,000 for the next financial year starting on 1 April 2017.

The precept is the Parish Council's share of the Council Tax. The Council is responsible for providing a range of services and facilities in the Parish. Councillors have decided that additional funds are needed to finance a number of schemes that will benefit the community.

Chris Stanley, Chairman of the Parish Council, said "The Council has deliberated carefully over this decision, recognising the need for financial prudence whilst ensuring that we respond to some of the issues raised by local people."

"We wish to tackle some urgent traffic management and pedestrian safety issues highlighted in a recent review by residents – primarily safeguarding our children around St Johns School but also considering traffic management elsewhere in the Parish. We also need to cover the legal and maintenance costs of potentially taking over responsibility for the Durrants Road allotments area and other sites within the Parish from other authorities. We have final payments to make following completion of our much-praised Recreation Ground Pavilion and, importantly, make sure that we have sufficient funding in place if residents of the Parish decide that we should either write a Neighbourhood Plan or update our Parish Plan."

"The Parish Council has not sought an increase in its precept in the past two financial years. Our decision tonight will mean that a Band D household will pay approximately £23 per annum more to finance the work of the Parish Council in the coming year, enabling specific projects to be either completed or started."

PRESS RELEASE ENDS

Notes: Projects for which funding is included in the 2017/18 Parish Council budget are:

Traffic safety: £9,000. With the help of many local volunteers, the Parish Council conducted a Parish-wide Survey of traffic issues in 2016 which made several recommendations.

The Parish Council wishes to take some of these forward and can take advantage of Hampshire County Council's new Community Funded initiative. This allows local communities to fund straight forward / minor traffic management and pedestrian safety measures. The County Council has significantly reduced its own budget for traffic management safety work so the Parish Council needs to raise funds itself if it is to action some of the Survey's recommendations.

Completion of Rowlands Castle Recreation Ground Pavilion project: £9,000. The Council has to pay for outstanding repairs as well as the final settlement to the contractor.

The Neighbourhood Plan project is estimated to cost £16,000 over 2 years – this is in addition to funding available from other sources. This is an important project which would enable the Parish to shape future building development in Rowlands Castle. Without this Plan, the Parish would lose the right to statutory input in the planning process. Allowance for this year's contribution of £8,000 towards the cost of producing the Plan is included in the budget. Should the community choose not to proceed with the Plan, then the Council must consider updating its Parish Plan which expires in 2018.

Asset transfers from local authorities: an allowance of £4,000 to cover the costs of taking on responsibility for the Durrants Road allotments, Whichers Gate Common and Links Close car park.