

Great Ashby Community Council

Budget Precept 2017/18

The Community Council was formed in May 2011, since that date, the newly elected members have been gaining experience in the control and administration of a large parish council.

The Community Council obtains its funding by levying a precept on North Herts District Council which is the council tax authority.

Great Ashby Community Council has been working to improve the appearance of the community and lobbying both the District and County Councils to deal with inadequacies in our area.

Work we have supported or undertaken include:

- The planting and maintenance of key roundabouts
- Planting of daffodils which has enhanced the appearance of our roads and verges.
- We have lobbied for safety improvements such as double yellow lines to prevent hazardous parking, the provision of a school crossing patrol and speed indicators on our roads.
- We have purchased specialist play equipment and bought additional benches and litter bins for the District Park.
- The provision of the Christmas tree and lights outside the Community Centre

This year, 2016/17, we have made a commitment to provide substantial financial support to our greatest resource, the Community Centre, which has enabled the installation of artificial grass behind the Centre which will benefit hiring groups to use this land 365 days a year, particularly the local preschool.

In 2017/18 and beyond we are budgeting to support the Community Centre with expenditure which cannot be met from its own resources.

The majority of the parishes in North Herts are responsible for the provision and running costs of their own village hall. In essence, the Community Centre is our village hall and the Community Council intends to see that it is well equipped and able to support the needs of all those in the community who wish to use it. The Community Centre is well managed and supported by the District but is unable to finance significant replacement costs which arise through constant usage.

The Community Council is in the process of investigating the provision of allotment gardens and a village green on land under the pylons off Mendip Way. We have commissioned a design study for this development but have put the project on hold pending the outcome of NHDC's Local Plan which is proposing the development of two areas of land (GA1 & GA2) adjacent to our parish boundary but accessible through Great Ashby. The cost of the allotment provision is substantial and it is hoped that the cost could be partially offset by grants and contributions from developers, should planning permission be granted.

Residents will have seen that the District Council is recommending the closure of a number of play areas in Great Ashby because of the need to make budgetary savings. Other parishes are responsible for their own play areas whereas Great Ashby, as a new development, has a large number of play areas supplied and installed by the various developers. The repair and maintenance costs have been assumed by the District Council. There is the possibility that the Community Council could take over some of this responsibility but the costs would need to come from our funds.

Until now Great Ashby Community Council has set the lowest precept in the district. In 2016/17 this amounted to £8.97 per annum for an average Band D property. Although our precept for 2017/18 is large in percentage terms, at £19.98 per annum for an average Band D property, it is small in comparison to the majority of other parishes in the district.

Your Community Council will use its budget to improve facilities for Great Ashby for the benefit of residents in Great Ashby.

The budget for 2017/18 has been set as follows:-

Community Centre - £10,000
Community Events & Grants - £2000
Landscaping & grounds maintenance - £7,000
Office supplies & equipment - £1000
Play areas - £10,000
Salaries & expenses - £7,500
Subscriptions & training - £1800
Other - £4000

£10,000 is being held in reserve pending a decision regarding the future of the allotment project