

Statement from Longstanton Parish Council regarding the increase in Council Tax for Longstanton 2013

Last year the precept for Longstanton was £75,000; this year this has been increased to £140,000. We as a Council understand everyone's feelings of how unpalatable this is. Councillors are all rate payers also. The precept is the amount that is paid by ratepayers to fund activities of the Parish. Examples include salaries of staff, lighting, maintenance of all green spaces, sports fields, rent, rates legal fees.

This increase in the precept has come about for 2 reasons.

1. In May 2012 when this Council came into office it was realised the Pavilion had not been registered for VAT. LPC had taken over and run the Pavilion since Nov 2011. The resolution to close the Pavilion was taken in June 2012. After meeting HMRC the VAT due has been confirmed as £22,000, though the final amount has still to be decided due to a probable fine being imposed.
2. It is the duty of Parish Councils to hold a reserve account equal to the precept. This amount is to keep the council in good order and to be able to cope with any emergencies.
Over the past few years the Reserve account has been depleted and not replenished. When Council takes money from their reserve account there should always be a process put in place of how to replace these funds. This unfortunately has not happened and as a result the Reserve account has been used up.
At the meeting on 28th January it was agreed by Council that we would rebuild the Reserves over the next three years. This year we would add £25,000 to the Reserve account. This would mean that in 2014 and 2015 we would add an equal amount to get the Reserve back in the region of £85,000.

It was also agreed at the Finance Committee that we would continue to look for further savings from the current budget if the possibilities arise.

In order to ensure the finances of the Parish Council stay within budget the Finance Committee meets 2 weeks before the full Council meeting to review the finances. Their role is to ensure the budget is being adhered to, check invoices, payments and contracts against the budget figure and check and reconcile bank statements in conjunction with the clerk.

It is the duty of any Council to ensure good governance is carried out and it is with this in mind that we have put financial checks and measures in place through the finance committee. We will continue to uphold them and report back to Council regularly to show how this is being achieved. This Council will achieve its goal and will adhere to its financial regulations.

Longstanton Parish Council

April 2013