

**March 2017**

Dear Residents

## **WALTON COMMUNITY COUNCIL PRECEPT 2017/2018**

Thank you for sharing your concerns with me, as it is always helpful when residents contact members of the Community Council. We also encourage everyone in Walton to comment favourably or otherwise about the projects and services that the Council delivers to residents, as feedback is always important.

If you have read my article in the Spring 'Walton Matters' newsletter, you will know that we have been building the financial resources and delivery capabilities of the Council progressively over recent years to enable more projects and services to be provided for the benefit of our residents.

You may be aware that all our Parish Councillors are volunteers, the majority with day jobs, and at WCC we pride ourselves for being a progressive council with a common goal to protect and enhance our residents' experience of living and working in the parish. This ambition does of course require investment and therefore since 2010/2011 we have gradually increased the precept from £20,000 to the current level. It is also worth noting that as MKC continues its year on year severe budget cuts, your Community Council may consider it necessary to increase the budget still further to fill important gaps in the services delivered to the community. MKC have made it clear that non-statutory services such as the upkeep of civic amenities, environmental maintenance, play park maintenance and cleansing will be downgraded or in some cases, simply stopped. Walton Community Council has had to make a difficult choice, to either ignore the situation and allow our environment to degenerate or take action to protect it. We believe that on balance most residents would support our prudent and proactive approach to carry out the latter.

In 2010/2011 we had just one part-time employee "the Clerk", but at that time the Council provided only the bare minimum of services to residents. Following our unanimous decision to strive to do more, the annual budget has been steadily increased. It is also a fact of life that if we want to do more, we have to grow the size of the team to ensure that new projects and services can be delivered to the required standard. In addition, an appropriate level of administrative and governance support is necessary to ensure that WCC can meet its own targets and its legal obligations as a local government organisation. Therefore, today the team comprises a full-time Parish Manager, 3 part-time employees and the services of a part-time project manager known as the Project Officer. We have made provision for 1 additional full time equivalent in our 2017/2018 budget to

ensure sufficient resources are available to deliver all projects and services, importantly including actions set out in our recently adopted Walton Neighbourhood Plan.

To be clear, the Council could have decreased the precept by cutting staff, projects or services, or just kept it flat for another year. But none of these options would have enabled the Council to continue to expand the range of projects and services that will benefit our whole community, whilst also building the reserves necessary to protect residents from further MKC cuts that are expected in the near future.

To conclude the latest precept increase may appear large in percentage terms but represents approximately an extra 49p per week for a band D property in Walton. If you would like to discuss the matter further, please do not hesitate to ask further questions of either myself or Lesley our Parish Manager. Alternatively, if you would prefer, we could meet and discuss face to face at the Walton Community Council offices at a mutually convenient date and time.

Kind Regards

Councillor Terry Reynolds

Chair | Walton Community Council

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**WALTON COMMUNITY COUNCIL**

Striving to improve our community

[www.WaltonCommunityCouncil.gov.uk](http://www.WaltonCommunityCouncil.gov.uk)

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