



What is a Precept?

The Precept is a tax that Parish Council's charge their local electors to meet their budget requirements. Parish Councils do not receive any direct funding from central government and rely on their Precept plus any other income they generate from services or facilities they provide. The Parish Council Precept is part of the Council Tax and is collected from local electors via their Council Tax payments.

How is it Calculated?

The Precept requirement is the difference between the Parish Council's estimated income and its anticipated spending requirements for the financial year (its budget). The financial year runs from 1st April to 31st March. The Parish Council needs to agree a budget before it can set its Precept and both must be agreed by the full Parish Council. When calculating the Precept, the Parish Council takes into consideration:

- current year's spending levels - for ongoing services for which it is responsible e.g. recreation facilities, lighting, cemeteries, insurance, grounds maintenance and costs of running the Parish Office etc
- costs of any additional spending plans or projects
- provision for contingencies and reserves
- levels of anticipated income – from services for which it is responsible e.g. allotment fees, burial fees, grants

Currently there is no cap on the amount that Parish Councils can raise via their precept (District Councils and County Councils are capped). This is under consideration but for now Central Government expects Parish Councils to demonstrate restraint.

Desford Parish Council has had to increase its precept this year as it has had many additional expenses to contend with. The cost of Electricity and Insurance have increased substantially, and the Council had to utilise reserves to pay to fight Davidsons appeal.

In addition, we have had to consider the increasing costs of Parish Building and grounds Maintenance. For example, the Parish council maintains spaces such as Kirkby Road Recreational Grounds but do not charge Sport in Desford for use of the changing rooms or the pitches and therefore do not earn an income from the site. The playground areas in Kirkby Road Recreation Ground, Pickards Park and Botcheston are required to be monitored and maintained in line with Health and Safety Legislation but are free to use by the community. To replace a net in the children's play area to the acceptable standard recently cost £1307. And to replace play area standard bark in Botcheston is also costing a little under £1000. There were recently works required to Botcheston Village Hall gable ends at £1570 but the Parish Council do not earn any income from Botcheston Village Hall as this is run independently for the good of the community. This year we have had a huge increase in resident requests for tree and hedge maintenance. We have had vandalism to deal with specifically to our newly installed bus stops plus vandals also destroyed park benches. There has been increase in pest activity requiring immediate attention at several of our sites.

The Parish Council also creates the Neighbourhood plan and works for the community with regards to planning and planning applications and other proposals that affect the community.



Tax base and Band D equivalent.

For the new financial year, the Parish Council has increased the precept by 14% and in real monetary terms this equates to an actual increase of £1.02 per month or a yearly increase of £12.30.

The information regarding the budget and reasoning behind the precept increase were detailed in the Full Council minutes in January and these are published on our website. Any member of the public is free to attend the Full Council meeting when the precept is discussed and agreed by Councillors and members of the public are always invited to attend via the Parish website and on various notice boards around the parish three working days prior to the meeting, these notices make it clear via an agenda item heading that we will be discussing the precept.

Part of the Precept Calculation is the 'Band D equivalent'. Band D is the middle band of Council Tax and is supposed to represent the amount of Council Tax paid on an average property in the area. The Band D equivalent provides a measure which allows precepts among councils of different sizes to be compared. The estimated number of Band D equivalent properties in the tax base is notified to the Parish Council by HBBC prior to the Precept setting exercise. The required Precept is divided by the number of houses in the tax base to get the Band D equivalent

Once a Precept has been approved by the Parish Council, they inform HBBC, and it is then added to the residents Council Tax bills. HBBC pay the Precept to the Parish Council in two instalments (Apr and Sept).

Unlike district and county councils, parishes receive no funding from central government, relying solely on what residents pay via their Precept charge, plus any other income they generate from services or facilities they provide. Thus, the increased cost of running things, made up of wages, materials and energy also must fall on residents.

The budget is set by the Parish Council at its Full Council meeting in January for the following financial year and it is at this time that Parish Councillors consider financing future and any ongoing projects. The budgeting process is taken very seriously by the Parish Council. Consideration of the budget for the next financial year starts in October of the previous year. The Clerk/Responsible Finance Officer produces a draft budget, following detailed discussions with the Chair of Resources. The Chair of Resources & the Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer, will then draw together a combined budget. This is subject to further discussion at meetings involving all Parish Councillors before it is brought for approval to the Full Council meeting in January of the previous financial year. The budget will include projected earned income, grant income, other income and payments from reserves. The Precept will be the balancing amount that the Parish Council requires to deliver its work in the next financial year.

Councillors went through every budget line carefully, pruning where it was sensible to do so, in order that front line services that our residents really appreciate were protected

After a long and careful budgeting process the precept represents the specific amount of council tax requested from the borough council, that the parish council believes it will need to spend on projects and the building and grounds maintenance of the parish.



The primary objectives for this increase include replacing outdated play equipment, ensuring the ongoing repair and maintenance of all play areas, and replacing reserves utilised in the recent fight against the Davidston planning appeal. Additionally, the increased precept aims to sustain a high standard of grounds maintenance service, demonstrating the council's commitment to providing a safe and enjoyable environment for the community.

We understand that any increase in precept can impact on households, who are currently finding life difficult in this current economic climate, and we want to assure you that these decisions were made with careful consideration.

Some of the key activities of the Parish Council are outlined below:

- We encourage community spirit by supporting Desford in Bloom and Heritage Events and Heritage Family History Group and the Barns Charity.
- We are a statutory consultee on planning applications and provide a local voice on highways and environmental matters.
- We support local organisations through grant funding and other support including provision of meeting space and publicity.
- We help to provide affordable meeting space at Desford Village Hall and Botcheston Village Hall
- We also maintain the Wheel, the War Memorial and more recently the Coal truck installation.
- We provide and maintain four public access defibrillators in the Parish.
- We provide bus shelters and noticeboards in the Parish.
- We provide allotments.
- We provide and maintain Hunts Lane cemetery and its building
- We maintain the Strict Baptist graveyard
- We provide and have responsibility for maintaining and improving Kirkby Road Recreation Ground, Pickards Play Area and Botcheston Play area