

Press Release

Town Council increases precept to fund local services

As part of its budget setting for the 2016/17 financial year, Swanage Town Council has agreed to increase its share of council tax bills by 5%. This will result in an increase of a little under 60 pence per month in an average (Band D) bill.

During the debate, councillors voiced an intention to protect the local youth service in the face of the forthcoming withdrawal of funding for the town's Youth Centre by Dorset County Council. The Town Council has committed £20,000 during the 2016/17 financial year to support the Swanage and Purbeck Development Trust's bid to continue an open-access youth service and operate a Youth and Community Centre.

Looking to the future, Councillors are also keenly aware of the risk of further reductions to services provided by Dorset County Council which, in the face of a sharp reduction in central government funding, is planning to reduce its budget by many millions of pounds over the next three years.

The increase in precept will not only fund the continued delivery of high-quality services but will also underpin investment in the improvement of public facilities, including a refurbishment and upgrade of the Tourist Information Centre.

The Town Mayor, Councillor Steve Poultney, remarked: 'The Town Council is always reluctant to increase its share of the Council Tax and last year it was possible to freeze household bills. However, in the face of significant uncertainty over the future of local services currently being delivered by the County Council, and the continued pressure on Council resources due to the need to modernise its facilities, Councillors concluded that it was the only prudent option'. He continued 'Councillors believe that at a total cost of £2.80 per week for an average Band D property, its services continue to represent excellent value for money'.

Notes for editors:

The Town Council provides the following services and facilities in Swanage: allotments, beach, beach huts, boat park, car parks, cemeteries, children's play areas, parks and gardens, playing fields, skate park, public toilets, sports facilities, tourist information centre, Town Council help desk.

Average Band D bills will rise by £6.93 to £145.60 per annum. The Town Council receives no grant assistance from central government, and therefore has to be financially self-supporting. In addition to the Council Tax precept the Town Council's principal sources of income are car parking charges, beach hut rentals, investment and rental income.

Further information can be found online at www.swanage.gov.uk Any enquiries regarding the above should be e-mailed to Dr Martin Ayres, Town Clerk, via admin@swanage.gov.uk
Swanage Town Council, Town Hall, High Street, Swanage, Dorset BH19 2NZ