

# Haxey Parish Council, Newsletter, December 2013

Parish Clerk - Deb Hotson

Email: [haxeypc@live.co.uk](mailto:haxeypc@live.co.uk)

Postal Address: Haxey Memorial Hall, High Street, Haxey, DN9 2HH

Telephone: 01652 618306 / 0784 220 1877

Website: [www.haxeyparish.org.uk](http://www.haxeyparish.org.uk)

**The Chairman and Members of Haxey Parish Council wish all Residents of the Parish a Happy Christmas and a Prosperous New Year.**

## **Doncaster Road – surface dressing**

Severn/Trent Water Authority has indicated that following lengthy discussions with landowners and North Lincolnshire Council (NLC) they have reconsidered their arrangements in relation to their Westwoodside Flood Alleviation scheme. A customer update notification will be issued in due course from the Water Authority and they have indicated that work is not now likely to commence on Doncaster Road until early summer 2014. Unfortunately, due to this delay the surface dressing of Doncaster Road will not be carried out by NLC until the sewerage works in the road have been completed.

## **Financial update**

As is the usual practice at the latter part of the year, Haxey Parish Council has been considering its budget for the next financial year, taking into account the financing of administration and ongoing commitments and projects and the consequent effect on the precept demand from the Principal Authority. In mid November the Council's Responsible Financial Officer (RFO), the Clerk, worked with the Parish Council Financial Committee, providing a spreadsheet detailing the actual spend for 12/13, the actual spend to date from 01/04/13, the estimated spend up to and including 31/03/14, together with an estimated spend for the financial year 2014/15. The RFO went through each item explaining the projected costs and the estimated income.

Following the previous 4 years of maintaining the precept, the Parish Council is coming to a stage in its projected finances when the precept will have to be increased to accommodate the activities undertaken by the council for future years; however, for the 14/15 precept the Financial Committee initially proposed that the Parish Council request a precept fixed as the previous financial year of £35,000. The income from rental of Parish-owned land, which is currently being reviewed by Grice and Hunter, was also discussed and again the Committee left open the option of increases in land rent to ensure that there were sufficient funding reserves available to the Council in future years. The Committee concluded that the funding reserves held by the Council had depleted over the last few years due to the various projects and grants made and that 2014/15 was probably the last year when the precept could be held at current levels.

In summary, whilst the Council had maintained the precept at its current levels for the past 4 years, due to increased project and grant activity this has resulted in its reserve funding declining. As a result of Government policy and Principal Authority financial decisions last year, Parish Councils that did not increase their precept were devolved the full funding amount with no deduction made for Council Tax Benefit and this added to the pressure for maintenance of the precept level. A decision on this year's settlement is awaited; however, it is expected that the same policy as last year with regard to devolving the precept will apply. There is currently considerable disquiet at the policy of not devolving the full amount of precept to Town and Parish Councils at local and national level and consultations are likely to continue well into the New Year. Once the Principal Authority's policy has been decided the Parish Council will need to make a final decision on Haxey's precept for the coming year, currently a recommendation from the Financial Committee to freeze the precept for a fifth consecutive year.

The RFO advised the Financial Committee that any recommendation could not be put to Full Council until further correspondence is received from North Lincolnshire Council regarding the grant implications which were to be set by the local authority at their meeting scheduled for 10 December 2013.