

South Cerney Parish Council Precept (Council Tax) 2015 – 2016

South Cerney Parish Council has taken the unprecedented action of increasing the Annual Parish Council Precept by more than 13%. In real terms this will mean an increase just over 12p per week for a Band D dwelling. The reasons are as follows:-

1. South Cerney is now of comparable size to most of the Market Towns in the Cotswolds. It also has the largest industrial site other than Cirencester in the area. However, there is no direct financial benefit to the community as all business rate taxes are paid to the County Council. The current precepts of the Market Towns are between 50% and 100% greater than that of South Cerney.
2. The new Youth and Community Centre about to be built will be a considerable asset to all sections of the local residents. Redrow, the developers of The Mallards, are financing the construction works but not the contents or equipment. Parish Council will be seeking grant funding for the sports equipment but will need to contribute towards the furnishings and fittings of the café etc.
3. Maurice McKee, our long-serving Parish Clerk, retires in April 2015. His successor will need more time than the current 20 hours a week to carry out the duties. Most market towns employ full time clerks and assistants.
4. In May of this year several experienced Parish Councillors are standing down taking with them a huge amount of knowledge, experience and available time. It may be that the new Council will need professional consultants in the short term. The current Council has an obligation to ensure that the new Council is adequately funded to carry out its duties.
5. Village maintenance and flood prevention works have eaten into the Parish's reserves.
 - a. The Upper Up car park is in urgent need of resurfacing.
 - b. The highest annual contractor cost is for grass cutting not only of our several playing fields but also of the roadside verges owned by the County Council which would cut them only twice a year if we did not do the job.

The increasing effects of localism are being experienced with major authorities and agencies now expecting Parishes to contribute towards many types of works, including flood prevention measures. The County Council is committed to a standstill budget – this means cuts. The District Council is looking at a 3% reduction through cost savings. All this puts the Parish in the position of having to pick up the bill from very limited resources. To maintain the way in which your village has been looked after has resulted in our having to make this seemingly large percentage increase in your Council Tax bill but the day to day contribution made by the average South Cerney household will be less than the cost of one visit to the CDC public lavatories per week!

Peter Jay Chairman, Finance Committee, South Cerney Parish Council

14th January 2015