**Bawtry Town Council**

**Parish Precept Increase 2017/2018**

At the Town Council meeting on 24th January 2017 it was decided to increase the Parish Precept (which comprises part of Council Tax, collected by DMBC) from £24,601 to £27,061 – that is a 10% increase. How much Parish Precept individual households will pay depends on which band their house falls into. This will vary from Band A (£13.75 per household) to Band H (£41.25 per household); the average value house is in Band D (£20.63 per household).

**Comparisons**

The Band D sum of £20.63 compares with £18.75 for 2016/2017; that is an increase of £1.88 – or slightly less than 4p a week per household.

Bawtry’s Parish Precept is very low compared to other DMBC parishes. There are 40 of them altogether, and in 2016/2017 Bawtry’s precept, at £18.75 for a Band D property, was 5th lowest. In comparison, Tickhill’s was a little bit higher at £20, Auckley was £24, Cantley was £27, Austerfield was £40, and Rossington £51. Our increase of 10% won’t change those comparisons much, if at all.

**What the Precept is for**

The Parish Precept pays for services provided by the Town Council – street cleaning, litter bins, flower displays, the cemetery, the allotments, Wharf Street Play Area, Christmas and other events, and support to BARS (for the Memorial Sports Ground) and to other organisations. We also have to maintain and repair our property, and pay rates and utilities for them, and pay salaries to our Clerk and a small team of handymen.

**Our strategy and our aspirations**

Until now, the Town Council had not increased the Parish Precept for many years. In the last 10 years, inflation has caused the buying power of our precept to decrease by 25%. This has been compensated for by increasing parking charges and extending parking hours. The Council does not wish to continue with this strategy; indeed we would like to cut back charging times - because we believe they are causing nuisance parking throughout the town and deterring visitors – although this may not be achievable.

Further, we believe Bawtry is in need of a little TLC – which costs money. We want to smarten up the town, by improving our maintenance, providing more litter bins and flower displays. New “Welcome to Bawtry” signs are on their way. We also need to at least repair the War Memorial, and hopefully move it somewhere it can be seen. We hope to help provide more and better events in the town. We’ve made a big contribution to the new pavilion at the Memorial Sports Ground, and hope to continue to support BARS in their management of that and the grounds into the future. Some parts of the footpath on the west side of Market Hill are in terrible condition. Bawtry Town Council is not responsible for maintaining it – but it is unclear who is responsible. To get it fixed, it may be we will contribute to the cost, which could be considerable.

We believe these improvements reflect the preferences of Bawtry residents. This imposition of an average 4p a week increase will help us fund them.

**Further Information**

The Council’s annual accounts are published in May of each year; May 2016 reports may be seen on our website (bawtrytowncouncil.co.uk) under the “Council Governance” tab. Spending approvals are noted in the minutes of each Council meeting (available under the “Council Meetings” tab), and our annual account for 2016/2017 will be posted in May 2017. All these items may also be inspected in Bawtry Community Library.