

## **Newsletter from Maresfield Parish Council - January 2021**

**A Very Happy, Peaceful and Safe New Year to everyone in the Parish !**

### **Finance and the Parish Precept**

Last month I wrote about the Parish precept setting process. (The Parish precept is a constituent part of your annual Council Tax.) The Finance and Administration Committee met on Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> December to consider a draft budget and precept level for approval by the Parish Council at its December 15<sup>th</sup> meeting. Next year's budget is £1,000 lower than the 2020/21 budget but an increase in the recommended annual precept is considered necessary if a satisfactory level of reserves is to be maintained. If the Parish Council did not make a decision on the 15<sup>th</sup> then it must set the precept at its January 12<sup>th</sup> meeting.

### **What is the Parish Council? What does it do?**

Civil parish councils were formed in England under the reforming Local Government Act 1894 to take over local oversight of civic duties in rural towns and villages. Each parish council's area of responsibility is a geographical area known as a civil parish; it has no connection with the Church (or its Parochial Church Council). Maresfield Parish includes the villages of Fairwarp, Maresfield and Nutley and surrounding countryside. Parish Councillors are elected every four years though vacancies can be filled by co-option or a by-election.

Parish councils make all kinds of decisions on issues that affect the local community. Probably the most common topics that parish councils get involved with are planning matters (they are statutory consultees), supporting local crime and road safety initiatives and local highway matters such as street lighting and maintenance of roadside verges. They have the power to do a large variety of things, including providing allotments, bus shelters and cemeteries and are often involved in the provision of community transport schemes, sport and recreation facilities and tourism. Parish councils can also provide a focus for representing local issues and identity.

Maresfield Parish Council has a quota of fourteen Councillors; currently we have only nine but has the power to co-opt to fill vacancies. It is a worthwhile and satisfying role so if you are interested in becoming a Parish Councillor please contact our Clerk, Claire Goossens, on 714555.

### **Request a Tree Preservation Order for a Tree**

If you would like Wealden District Council to consider a tree for a TPO contact the planning department with details of the tree, why you think it is important and why you think it might be under threat. Wealden would then assess the tree or woodland using industry recognised methods for evaluation if it is appropriate a TPO may be issued. Anyone can ask for a tree, trees or woodland to be protected under TPO legislation; but usually TPOs are only issued where there is a clear threat and it is expedient to do so. Wealden has produced a useful document describing this process and it is available on Wealden's web site.

### **Covid-19 Pandemic**

Various pandemic related restrictions are still in force so if you are quarantining, self-isolating or are otherwise vulnerable do remember that if you need assistance of a non-medical nature you can phone the Parish Office on 714555 or contact the Wealden District Council Community Hub on 01342 443322.

**Useful links are:**

<https://my.wealden.gov.uk/>

<http://www.maresfieldparish.org.uk/>

<http://www.uckfieldtc.gov.uk/>

<https://www.ashdownforest.org/>

And you can also follow the Parish Council on Twitter and Facebook.

**Martin Craddock** – Chairman Maresfield Parish Council