



Frodsham Town Council's Precept is to increase for residents this year but huge progress has been made in 2022/2023.

At its budget setting meeting held on Monday 16th January 2023, Frodsham Town Council made the difficult decision to raise the town's precept by 100%. On a cold and snowy night, councillors spent 2.5 hours combing through the draft budget, presented by Town Clerk Jo O'Donoghue, to ensure that all of the figures for the coming year were in line with the Council's aspirations. Members were united in their decision to support the necessary increase.

2023 is a big year for Frodsham, with Elections on Thursday 4th May looming; there is a lot at stake for current councillors who wish to hold their seats. The decision to raise the precept was not taken lightly by its members.

Frodsham Town Council committed to two extensive projects for the current financial year (2022/23) in order to improve facilities in the town for residents and visitors alike. In November 2022, the new path at Memorial Hill was completed just in time for Remembrance Day, thanks to the hard work by the Council's contractor Horticon. The completion of the path has been met with undivided praise, ensuring that the path is now fully accessible, with brand new entry gates, benches and landscape works, as well as new sandstone features and turf surrounding the monument. The improvement works now show off Memorial Hill for the truly awe inspiring site that it is – the jewel in Frodsham's crown.

In January, seven oak trees have been planted at the site to contribute to the Queen's Green Canopy; a national project and unique tree planting initiative created to mark Her Majesty's Platinum Jubilee in 2022. In Spring, the trees will be officially unveiled to the public and dedicated to the seven decades commemorating the Queen's reign, with the involvement of local schools.

The second largest project Frodsham Town Council committed to in 2022 was the complete overhaul of Ship Street to create a brand new children's play area, which is now very close to completion. This exciting project is due to be finished by the end of January, and it will ensure that children in this area of Frodsham have a safe and enjoyable space to call their own. The Town Council has worked closely with the Ship Street Community Group, who raised £49,455, through the Marshes Community Benefit Fund for play equipment and National Lottery Funding for play landscaping, pathways, and planting, which helped to ensure this project came to fruition.

Completing big projects and working to improve the local area, does however come at a cost. The Town Council was advised by its auditor that holding funds in General Reserves that exceeded three months' worth of operational costs was not appropriate for a Council of Frodsham's size. Last year the Council was only required to request a total of £175,000, thanks to the generous reserves pot. Since 2019, the Council's precept increase has remained at 0% and by 2021 the Town Council had amassed £240,000 in reserves. This is why Frodsham committed to, and delivered, the large projects in the town over the past year. This

is also the main reason that the precept has to be raised for the coming year 2023/24; the Council has now spent its reserves.

Yet all is not lost – even though the initial notification of a 100% precept rise may come as a shock, this equates to 90p per week for a Band D property, only 12.857p per day for Town Council services.

Frodsham Town Council will continue to support the projects that residents care for and uphold including:

- ✓ £30,000 for the Active Travel Development Fund, in partnership with CWaC
- ✓ £18,000 towards Christmas Vouchers for the Over 70's
- ✓ £17,000 to fund safety carpet flooring at Churchfields play area
- ✓ £15,000 for facilities and activities at Frodsham Youth Centre
- ✓ £10,000 to the Christmas Festival (lights switch on)
- ✓ £10,000 towards wheelchair accessible play equipment
- ✓ £10,000 towards Climate Action in Frodsham
- ✓ £5,000 towards events to celebrate the King's Coronation in May
- ✓ £1,500 toward the Frodsham Festival of Walks

The increase in the precept will fund the Town Council's operational costs as well as the projects listed above. The total approved budget total for 2023/24 is £350,921.

As a community, Frodsham has a lot to be proud of and the best way to offer support is by accepting the inevitable the rise to the precept, and focussing on supporting each other as the nation navigates these difficult times.

Locum Town Clerk

Zoë Dean

[ENDS]