



KILPIN PARISH COUNCIL

## Open Letter to the residents of Kilpin Parish regarding the decision of the Parish Council to increase the precept for the financial year of 2024-25

**Date:** 15<sup>th</sup> March 2024

Dear Residents

The Parish Council has received an albeit small number of questions regarding Councillors (Cllrs) decision to increase the precept for the financial year of 2024/25 by £6,000. We have already posted a precept statement in January on our website and notice-board; however, we would like to take this opportunity to expand on the statement and hopefully address some of the points raised in the recent correspondence.

Unlike many Councils, the reasons for increasing the precept was not due to budget considerations and in-fact our records show that the Financial Officer's recommendation was that due to effective financial management throughout the year, there was no requirement to increase the precept for budgetary reasons. Cllrs have decided to increase the precept for the coming financial year singularly for the purpose of financing a number of projects which they believe will improve and enhance our community. These projects have been discussed at length at the Parish Council meetings from September of last year, and a final decision was made at the January meeting in time for the submission of the precept demand

The projects Cllrs have agreed have been listed previously but are

- **Parish Signs** – Cllrs are looking at new village signs welcoming visitors to our communities - decorative and eye catching but also with practical features including reminding drivers of the speed limit
- **Groundwork & work to the front of the hall** – Cllrs are looking to carry out improvements to the carpark and the façade of Scholfield Village Hall to improve the look of both. It is worth noting that sandblasting was one proposal but at this point this was only a suggestion. Cllrs are fully aware of the need to engage specialist experts in order to ensure the integrity of this lovely old building
- **Unknown Soldier Statues** – seen in many villages, these would be appropriately placed throughout the Parish and personalised to reflect how we remember and honour the fallen of conflict, both past and present.
- **Flower planters** – Cllrs have also agreed to place flower planters at the side of each of the statues

Both the above products are made by Royal British Legion and so we are proud to be supporting this veteran's charity

- **A new website** – to improve our communications with the community we are looking for a new 'fit for purpose' website which can more easily feature the work of the Parish Council, as well as provide the necessary information you would expect from a Parish Council in an accessible and easy format.

At £7,436, Kilpin's precept has historically been very low compared with many other Parish Councils (Hook = £22,000) and when the £6000 increase is added as a percentage, this does seem to be very high, but it is important to note that the actual costs to households are minimal and the following table shows the impact on a Band D property.

Current Precept =	£7,436.00
Increase to pay for projects	£6,000.00
Precept for 2024/25	£13,436.00
Annual Individual Household cost in 2023/24 =	£52.37
Annual Individual Household cost in 2024/25 =	£94.82
Annual Individual household increase of =	£42.45
Monthly Individual household cost in 2023/24 =	£4.36
Monthly Individual household cost in 2024/25 =	£7.90
Monthly Individual household increase of =	£3.54

As the increase for the financial year is entirely to finance projects, there is no suggestion that this increase will be retained in the next financial year, and Cllrs may decide to reduce the precept back to a lower level.

However, one key point we would like to make is that the precept amount required by the Parish Council, projects and budgets are discussed openly in meetings from September onwards until January when the amount is advised to ERYC. We would welcome residents' attendance at these meeting to contribute to the discussions and advise Cllrs of their views.

The Parish Council is currently progressing with the identified projects and residents will see the benefits of the money spent in the next few weeks and months.