

Parish precept

In last month's newsletter article, I briefly wrote about where your Parish precept is spent. Residents have contacted me to ask about plans to replace sections of the skate park that were removed due to vandalism and wear and tear. This of will course cost a great deal of money to replace, in the region of £30-40,000. The Parish Council is also anticipating needing to spend over £20,000 to replace some of the ageing and rotting play park equipment at the Leisure Centre. Regular users of the indoor facilities at the Leisure Centre are well aware that money needs spending on the facilities to bring them up to date, particularly the changing rooms and the small sports hall. We are currently compiling a list of quotes, and looking into any available grants, to help us determine where and how to spend the money. As soon as we have news to share, we will ask residents for their views.

In line with all local authorities, the Parish Council has been looking at setting its budget for the next financial year. The vast majority of your rates goes to Nottinghamshire County Council, with Gedling Borough Council, Nottinghamshire Police and Nottinghamshire Fire Authority also taking a proportion. The Parish precept forms a small part of the charge, this is being increased from April 1st by £2.08 a year, to £53.10 for a typical band D property, a 4.08 % rise. With inflation running considerably higher, particularly for utility bills, this was considered by Parish Councillors to be a necessary increase. As mentioned previously, no financial support from Gedling is given towards the cost of providing facilities within Ravenshead, this has to be found from the precept.

Planning issues

One of the most commonly asked questions received by the Parish Council is in relation to planning issues. The council's planning committee meets monthly under the Chairmanship of Cllr Stuart Bestwick. We are a statutory consultee when planning applications are received by Gedling B C and the committee will typically comment on around 1- 12 applications per month. These can range from fairly straightforward house extensions to more complex and larger developments, including those in the greenbelt. Our aim is to restrict the erosion of the greenbelt and prevent the urban spread. We also look to maintain the open character of the village, and the large residential gardens. These aims unfortunately are not always met. Despite our objections to a number of developments, Gedling planners will usually have the final say. We do comment to Gedling on breaches of planning rules, particularly when trees which are protected in law, are removed. An example of this, is a case of trees being felled in a garden without permission, resulting in the owner receiving a fine of £2700, a £100 victim surcharge and £375 prosecution costs. In addition, the person who took down the trees was also fined £150, a £50 victim surcharge and £200 prosecution costs. Residents will also be aware of another development within the village that was built incorrectly, where enforcement action was taken to ensure that the approved plans were followed.

Reporting issues within the village

The Parish Council is always keen to engage with residents and a number of you do contact us with issues and concerns. Our Parish Clerks, Belinda and Amanda can be contacted on 01623 490035 or office@ravensheadpc.org.uk. They can often help with enquires about the most common concerns, which usually relate to Highways, a Nottinghamshire County Council responsibility, or waste bins, a Gedling BC responsibility. Monthly Parish Council meetings are held at the Leisure Centre on the third Monday of the month at 7.00pm. The public are always welcome to attend, with a short session at 8.00pm available to allow residents to address the councillors. The agendas for both the full council meeting and for the planning committee, are displayed on the website and on the precinct and Leisure Centre noticeboards.

Road Safety

Recent changes to the Highway Code have

made it even more important when crossing roads within the village to be aware of traffic turning into side roads. This equally applies to car drivers when turning into a side road, who should give priority to

pedestrians and allow those who are on the edge of the pavement, to cross. [The Highway Code: 8 changes you need to know from 29 January 2022 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/the-highway-code-8-changes-you-need-to-know-from-29-january-2022)

The updated code clarifies that:

- when people are crossing or waiting to cross at a junction, other traffic should give way
- if people have started crossing and traffic wants to turn into the road, the people crossing have priority and the traffic should give way
- people driving, riding a motorcycle or cycling must give way to people on a zebra crossing and people walking and cycling on a parallel crossing

The imminent marking of double yellow lines around the junctions off Swinton Rise, will at least give greater visibility for pedestrians and road users alike.

Martin Smith - Chairman Ravenshead Parish Council