

## All Saints Parish Council – April Newsletter submission

By the time this newsletter reaches you, most households will have received their annual Council Tax demand from East Devon District Council, and some parishioners may be questioning the 16% increase in the precept requested by the Parish Council; especially, when considered against the lower increases proposed by the higher authorities at District and County Council level.

As many of you are aware, the austerity measures currently being implemented from Westminster are being felt incredibly hard by the County Council in Exeter, which is struggling to provide the services for which it is statutorily responsible within the diminishing budgets available to it. In order to achieve this, the County Council is gradually withdrawing support for many of the services it has historically provided to the parishes over the years, whilst simultaneously seeking further funding from central government for those essential services such as social care, protecting children etc. hence the 4% increase in their element of the Council Tax demand.

As a result, the members of your Parish Council have considered the implications of these cuts very seriously and have agreed to put measures in place to safeguard and maintain the parish landscapes, roads and amenities that we all treasure; however, these measures come at a cost, and that cost is a modest increase of roughly 10p per week per Band D parish dwelling for the forthcoming 12 months; £5 per annum, after which time the full extent of the new parish responsibilities and financial burden will have become more clear.

Furthermore, in order to assuage the impact of the necessary increases in local council funding, the Parish Council has voted to start using the reserves which it has built up over the years thanks to prudent and provident budgeting for this purpose; this year, over £1600 has been taken from Council reserves to balance our books, and such action will be considered again when next year's budgets are calculated and discussed. This is not, however, a course of action that can be repeated annually *ad infinitum* and difficult decisions will therefore have to be taken by your elected members every time that the issue of parish finances are considered.

If you have any questions regarding this matter, please do not hesitate to contact any of your elected councillors, named above, or the Clerk, who will be more than happy to provide a full and comprehensive breakdown of how our precept demand is calculated.