

## **March Borough Council Report from Councillor Bill Crooks**

### **Council Tax**

**Budget setting has been going on at all levels.**

- **The County Council has set a rate of 4.99% which is equal to £73 per household.**
- **The Police Commissioner has set a rate increase of 5.81%**
- **The Fire Brigade have set a rate increase of 6.73%**
- **The Borough Council has set a rate increase of 3.45% which is equal to £5 per household per year at Band D.**

**Out of 24 Parish's Barlestone is 3<sup>rd</sup> Highest, Nailstone 6<sup>th</sup> Highest and Osbaston 13<sup>th</sup> highest. Desford is 11<sup>th</sup> highest, Peckleton 10<sup>th</sup> and Newbold Verdon 17<sup>th</sup>. The lowest of the Parish's was Carlton.**

**The Government has reduced its funding to the Borough Council since 2016/17 by £10.6m, so some difficult decisions will have to be taken, especially next year when we cannot reduce the reserves any further. The Total increase for all the services (County, Police, Fire Brigade & Borough) will be an average of 5.10%**

### **Council Housing**

**The Borough Council currently have 3211 dwellings. The rent is to increase by 5% which is 2% lower than the Government rent cap = 7%. At this time the council are, on average, having to sell houses at a reduced rate (approximately 30 dwellings per year) under the Government's Right to Buy. The increase in costs for servicing the council owned properties has been set at £900k.**

### **Staffing**

**A National agreement has been reached for Council Staff to receive £1925 lump sum as a pay settlement this year, which will be 8.04% for the lowest paid and 1.58% for the highest earners.**

### **Climate Change**

**Apart from planting approximately 32k trees on the parks & open Spaces etc, the Borough Council has swapped its refuse Lorries over to Bio Diesel which**

**gives off 90% less carbon, but it is a lot more expensive! The Council Offices at the Hub have solar Panels on the roof and they are investigating installing them on the Leisure Centre roof. This, we are advised, will cost £200k but Leisure Centre's use a massive amount of Energy and this installation should pay back in no time! In some areas some Leisure Centres have had to close because the energy cost are too high.**

### **Parish Councils**

**The Borough Council had to take steps to co-opt the Leader of the Borough Council, The Leader of the Conservative Group and a senior Officer onto Markfield Parish Council following the resignation of seven of its Members. This made the Parish Council inquorate so they couldn't set a budget or carry out any of the Parish Business including payment of invoices. This situation will continue until May, when hopefully new Parish Council members will be elected.**