

Brightwell, Foxhall & Purdis Farm Group Parish Council
Wednesday, 19th June 2013

Report of the Parish Clerk

The purpose of this report is to update members on outstanding issues, items received after the deadline for agenda items, correspondence and action taken by the Clerk.

SALC LAIS1354 June 2013 Community Infrastructure Levy Guidance

Local councils will be interested in the latest guidance on the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). The CIL is of particular interest owing to the fact that local councils and communities are being incentivised to embrace development through a financial reward. This reward takes the form of 15% of the CIL receipts being passed to local councils (capped at £100 per existing council tax dwelling per year), rising to 25% (uncapped) where those councils have encouraged development through a neighbourhood plan.

Local councils will be aware of the need to engage with the local planning authority at an early stage in order to influence the decisions on the infrastructure requirements affecting their area. However, they will also be mindful that the local planning authorities might well be envisaging business as usual by retaining the local council's element of the CIL where they can persuade the local council that they are in agreement with the local planning authority's priorities. The Guidance is clear that councils have a major advantage in that they are entitled to spend their part of the CIL on a greater range of things than the other part of the CIL as it can be spent on infrastructure or 'anything else that is concerned with addressing the demands that development places on an area', such as affordable housing.

With Government recently indicating that over 500 areas are commencing neighbourhood plan processes, the potential apparent in this financial reward system is notable.

The CIL will apply in relation to most buildings that people normally use e.g. not pylons and wind turbines. Any new build (includes extensions) is liable for the levy if it has 100 square metres or more gross internal floor space, or involves the creation of one dwelling, even when that is below 100 square metres.

Community Emergency Planning Workshop Waldringfield Village Hall 14th May 2013

Although we did not send a representative to the above planning workshop the results of the above meeting have been circulated to all councillors for information. Please read and indicate whether you believe it should be placed on the agenda of the next meeting for further discussion.

SALC LAIS1352 June 2013 Voting Age

Local councils will wish to be aware that a Private Members' Bill to lower the voting age of electors (including for parish elections) has been sponsored by Lord Tyler.

The Bill received its first reading in the House of Lords on 9 May 2013. It would amend the Representation of the People Act 1983 by changing the definition of voting age for parliamentary and local government elections from 18 to 16. Separate provision would be needed in order to amend the qualification age for councillors who were previously reduced from 21 to 18 via s.17 of the Electoral Administration Act 2006.

Local councils will be considering whether successful passage of the Bill would cause a significant increase in the interest in local councils from young people. Progress with this Bill will be of interest as will any connected developments on the qualification age for councillors.

SALC LAIS1353 June 2013 Precept Data

Parish and town councils (local councils) will be interested in the on-going attention that Government is paying to their precepts. Over the last few years, Government has introduced provisions in the Localism Act 2011 for automatic precept referendums for any 'excessive increase', encouraged a precept freeze, reduced the council tax base and introduced a discretionary compensatory grant arrangement through a paternalistic mechanism using local billing authorities.

Although Government has chosen not to apply precept referendums for any financial years to date, this is reviewed on an annual basis. These changes have had an impact on local council precepts.

Given these changes and on-going central Government scrutiny, the annual publication of statistical data by the Department for Communities and Local Government will be of interest to local councils. The latest data covers the period 2013-2014 and shows an increase in the average Band D precept compared to 2012-13.

Local Government Financial Statistics England No.23 2013 (published May 2013) can be found at https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/203942/29699_DCLG_WEB_version.pdf

Angie Buggs

Clerk to the Parish Council

Telephone: 01473 635341 / Mobile: 07770575350

Email: angiebuggs2001@yahoo.co.uk