

Guilden Sutton Parish Council Newsletter March 2010, no 136

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Latest news.

Budgets. The Parish Council, along with Cheshire West and Chester Council and the Police and Fire Authorities, have now agreed their budgets for 2010/11. Full details are inside starting in p2.

Marathon. Chester's first ever marathon is to pass through the village on Monday May 31. The event will involve road closures. Advance information from the organisers appears in pp 11 and 12.

Policing. Guilden Sutton is generally considered to be a peaceful village in policing terms but occasionally we are advised of urgent incidents by PC Mal Baker. Watch out for a notice in the Post Office.

Footpaths Group. The village Footpaths Group led by Mr Brian Lewin welcomes volunteers. See p6.

Village roads. The Area Highways Manager is considering a large number of issues which have been identified by the Council or brought to its attention over a period of time. See the road by road list in pp 7-10.

Council tax.

An average band D property in Guilden Sutton will pay council tax of £1,490.09 during 2010/11.

The total includes precepts raised by Cheshire West and Chester Council, Cheshire Police Authority, Cheshire Fire Authority and Guilden Sutton Parish Council.

Any of the smallest band A properties would pay £993.39 while the occupiers of any of the largest band H properties would face a total bill of £2,980.18.

The band D figure includes £1,254.59 for the borough council, £144.53 for the police and £66.43 for the fire authority.

The parish council has raised a precept of £15,778, equivalent to £24.54 for a band D property.

Parish Council budget and precept.

This year (2009/10), occupiers in the village have been paying a precept of £13,104 towards the parish council's budget of £18,764, with the balance being met from a variety of other sources.

This has been equivalent to £1.72 a month for an average band D property.

In recognition of the recession, the council had frozen the precept and the overall budget for 2009/10. The increase would normally have amounted to just over £655 for inflation but a further £1,863 paid by the former City Council towards the costs of the village play area, playing field and grounds maintenance was due to have been taken into account.

For 2010/11, the Council has for the third year been able to maintain the budget at £18,674 and has allowed a modest 1% for inflation. The precept, however, has been increased to allow for the income which the Council agreed to forgo in 2009/10.

The effect is an increase of just over 1p per day for an average band D property with the precept rising to £2.04 a month.

The Council's agreed budget appears on the next page.

Guilden Sutton Parish Council
Agreed budget 2010/11.

(Subscriptions)

Ch Assn of Local Councils	350
CPRE	30
Ch Community Action	50
Mid Ch Ftpth Society	10
BTCV	0
Cty Playing Fields Assn	20
Ch Landscape Trust	40

Salaries	5725
Agreed expenses	104
Clerk's gratuity	185
Postage	200
Photocopies	175
Stationery/equipment	50
Telephone	50
Clerk's mileage	100
Parish car park rates	645
Insurance	1450
Audit fees	225
Gnds maintenance	1500
Lengthsman	1500
Playing field rent	640
Footpath Group	50
Newsletter	600
Room hire	20
Memorial garden	50
Play Area capital	1000
St John's PCC	200
Meeting expenses	125
Bulbs	100
Public seat	150
Web site	50
Shelter cleaning	65
CCTV maintenance	250
Christmas	50
Holiday Club grant	200
Member training	300
Clerk's qualification	500
Quality PC	550
Parish Plan/VDS	0
Events	1000
Contingency	<u>455</u>
	18764

Financed by

Precept	15778
VAT refund	125
Interest	50
Lengthsman grant	650
Graveyard grant	200
Reserves	<u>1961</u>
	18764

Cheshire West and Chester Council.

Cheshire West and Chester councillors agreed a council tax rise of 2.5%.

History was made as the debate was broadcast live on the internet to enable West Cheshire residents to view one of the most important council meetings of the year.

The council says the 2.5% rise – 1% below inflation - fulfilled the administration's pledge to the electorate and will result in an average weekly rise of 49p across the eight council tax bands.

But for the below average level of Government grant to West Cheshire, it could have been even less, said Cllr Les Ford, Executive Member, Finance.

Presenting his budget, Cllr Ford said the Government's "formula grant" allocation of £93.482m had been a rise of 2.06% - 1% less than the average awarded to all unitary councils.

"The average settlement from Government of 3.05% would have meant an extra £900,000 which would have enabled us to have achieved a rise of 1.8%," he said.

"Even so, West Cheshire's Band D figure of £1,254.59 is still £180 below the average for the United Kingdom."

Cllr Andrew Dawson added that West Cheshire has lost £2.3m in central grant over two years compared to national average awards and £3.3m in Direct School Grant.

Agreed by 45 votes to 17 with one abstention, the budget raises £151m from council taxpayers and provides a total of £244.296m to finance council activities.

It prepares for a future projected 10% cut in government grant, protects front line services and effectively contributes £10m to the authority's £30m savings target over the next three years.

Opposition amendments designed to save over £1.8m with reductions in the areas of corporate training, contingencies, capital funding and vacancy management were not accepted.

Cheshire Police Authority.

Cheshire Police Authority says its agreed budget will protect frontline policing.

The authority set a budget of £177.5m, which means a council tax increase for a band D household of 2.72% or £3.83 per year (about 7p per week). The majority of Cheshire households fall into council tax bands A to C, meaning an even lower increase for most.

Police Authority Chairman, Margaret Ollerenshaw said, "This year, setting the budget has been a difficult decision to make. Whilst the budget has been limited by the Government, we still need to improve the way we deliver policing in our communities. We have consulted widely with the public about their priorities for policing. They have stressed that there should be no reductions in frontline services.

"As in all parts of the country, we have been affected by the recession. Setting the budget at the maximum permitted by the Government will not meet our current shortfall and savings of £5m will be required to balance the finances. The investment made in previous years to improve our response to tackling serious and organised crime and neighbourhood policing has been protected. Last year, crime fell by 10% to one of the lowest levels for over a decade. This means there were over 7,500 fewer victims of crime.

"In areas where we can, we will continue to replace officers in roles that are not on the front line with police staff. We will do this where it makes economic sense and where it is clear that the post does not require the unique powers or knowledge of a police officer.

"Our challenge is to ensure that the police service is efficient and effective. We need the right people with the right skills and investment in place to provide a service in which people feel confident.

"Over 4,000 officers and staff are dedicated to providing policing services 24 hours a day to help people in need. Cheshire is still one of the country's lowest funded police forces in terms of council tax and we are committed to improving local policing, whilst protecting frontline services."

This year's budget increase is 2.65%.

Cheshire Fire Authority.

Major investments to protect both local communities and frontline firefighters are planned by Cheshire Fire Authority over the next 12 months – despite limiting the increase needed in its council tax level to under 3%.

The authority says the increase is equivalent to just £1.90 a year more for a band D home – or 3.6p per week extra - but fire chiefs say it will still allow them to invest in new projects.

New state-of-the-art protective clothing for firefighters and a complete replacement of breathing apparatus sets are scheduled, together with £150,000 to maintain the highly successful home safety assessment programme which offers life-saving advice and free smoke alarms to residents.

The organisation's budget for 2010/11 has been set at £43.4m with an agreed 2.94% rise in council tax – putting the amount needed from a band D home up from £64.53 to £66.43.

Fire Authority Chair Cllr David Topping said it had been possible to keep the increase down thanks to over £800,000 of efficiencies and savings. And he revealed that the budget would still support new developments including:

- nearly £1 million to provide all firefighters with the highest-rated protective clothing and to replace all breathing apparatus sets
- £150,000 to maintain the service's Home Safety Assessment programme
- £110,000 to improve station training facilities
- £150,000 to refurbish Wilmslow and Frodsham Community Fire Stations.

"I am pleased that we have been able to keep the increase down to under 3% as we appreciate the difficult circumstances facing many of our residents," said Cllr Topping.

"We will be able to continue our work in reducing fire injuries and damage in the community as well as ensuring our fire crews are properly equipped. I believe providing a first class fire and rescue service for less than £1.28 a week for an average household represents good value for money."

Footpaths Group.

The Guilden Sutton Footpaths Group, led by the parish council's voluntary rights of way warden Brian Lewin, is busy keeping a close eye on the network of seven public footpaths in the village and reporting any problems to the borough council's Rights of Way Unit.

Although outside the parish, the group is also becoming involved with the Greenway, now extended to Mickle Trafford with a link to Guilden Sutton Lane.

The group is intending to organise path clearing sessions in the village over the coming months and is also hoping to link up with the 'Friends of the Greenway' who organise clear ups of that route in the Hoole area. If you would like to be involved for a couple of hours a month, contact Brian (see back page).

Local roads.

The Area Highways Manager is considering a lengthy list of issues which have been identified by the parish council or brought to its attention over a considerable period of time and has promised a response to each. In a number of cases the points have been previously reported to the former councils.

Guilden Sutton issues list

A55 resurfacing River Dee to A51: *Need for similar low noise surfacing in Guilden Sutton (and Hoole Village) raised with Highways Agency.*

Belle Vue Lane: *Haunching/pot holes/condition of surface.*

Church Lane.

Condition of cycle route Church Lane - Cinder Lane. Request for barrier to prevent reported use by motorcycles.

Flooding. In carriageway at foot of Fox Cover steps, BT manhole problem near junction with Wicker Lane.

Cinder Lane: *Overgrown hedges, condition of footway.*

Guilden Sutton Lane

Steps, Heath Bank to Guilden Sutton Lane. Untidy condition reported.

A 41/Guilden Sutton Lane, road rage, double parking in the gap, reinstatement of crossroads, installation of traffic signals, provision of crossing for cyclists and pedestrians as part of a safe route to school, traffic conditions on car boot Sundays.

Boundary sign, Guilden Sutton Lane by reservoir. Requires refixing.

Damage to verges, truncated length of Guilden Sutton Lane. Request for road widening to accommodate HGVs. Concerns at effect of possible work by Scottish Power to their plant in the verge which would affect this.

Drainage issue in footway at field entrance. Recent flooding.

Lighting obscured by trees at reservoir.

Obstruction of footway by nettles etc and brambles.

Heath Bank, shrubbery, need for pruning. Dealt with.

Signing and lining: Guilden Sutton Lane at playing field, extend red patch "SLOW" marking to both carriageways and restore disturbed surface. Recently dealt with.

Wilding Business Estate, emerging traffic. Ongoing. Lining provided by Messrs Wilding.

Bus stand opposite houses between Moorcroft Crescent and Wilding Business Estate. Growth obscuring view of approaching traffic for alighting passengers.

Condition of carriageway under A55 bridge.

Hare Lane.

Speed of traffic, double parking in vicinity of Rugby Club.

Oaklands

Shops area -

Disabled access to shops.

Concern that installation of a further dropped kerb from the shops car park to the pathway of the village hall car park is leading to vehicles over riding the footway to reach the Village Hall car park.

Perceived defect with the ramp closer to the Village Hall.

Flags adjoining Summerfield Road. Ongoing concerns re condition. Not adopted.

Footway rear Cathcart Green. Faulty step. Not adopted. Discussed at site meeting.

Elsewhere -

Footpath 2, condition. Raised with Borough Council.

School access to rear of Orchard Croft. Raised with Borough Council.

Need to edge out footway at Cathcart Green.

Carriageway defects on Oaklands approaching junction with School Lane at Wood Farm.

Carriageway defect in vicinity of the dell (site of previous collapse).

Parking, Arrowcroft Road. Ongoing school issue.

School Lane

Porters Hill, remove centre line, add in edgeline, increase width of footway, provide rumble strips, install signals, reduce tree canopy. Issues raised by Members and the public.

Flooded gulleys/depressed covers in vicinity of Arrowcroft Road.

Condition of School Lane nameplate at the war memorial.

Station Lane.

Renewal of SLOW sign when leaving the village.

Speed review.

Village boundary sign requires refixing.

Wicker Lane

Gully kerb, Concerns re the position of this kerb in the carriageway.

Visibility issue Wicker Lane/Church Lane. Overgrowth on corner, previously cut back by highway authority.

Surface water running from S bend towards Wicker House.

General

Planters. Possibility of planters being provided on highway land at a central location in the village. Policy?

Migration of gravel from drives onto the footway. No current issues.

Overgrown hedges.

SatNavs, request for weight restrictions on unsuitable roads. Response received.

Speed reviews, A41, Guilden Sutton Lane, Wicker Lane, Hare Lane, Station Lane. Ongoing. Update needed on proposed 30mph on Guilden Sutton Lane and reduction in the limit on Station Lane.

Grants policy.

The Parish Council has adopted a grants policy which will apply to organisations and individuals seeking financial support from the Council. This comprises an application form and guidelines both of which are intended to help applicants by stating clearly what is required and the conditions which apply.

The policy is not intended to deter applications and is similar to the approach taken by many other councils. It will also help the Council to give consistent consideration to applications which are made.

Details are available on the village web site and from the Clerk (contact details in p12.) Please remember the Council itself does not have its own finance and any grants it makes are funded through the precept paid by council tax payers in the village.

It is suggested that applicants should contact the Clerk informally before proceeding with any application.

Sewers.

Not the most pleasant of topics but we can all do our bit to prevent them becoming more unpleasant. Although we now live in the disposable age, some sewers in the village are notoriously flat and can become blocked if inappropriate materials find their way into the system. Please read the small print carefully to check that what you think may be disposable actually is.

Parish Car Park.

Improvements have progressed at the rear of the parish car park in Church Lane. The Parish Council's contractor has removed a large amount of ivy which had taken hold, together with unwanted debris which was discovered. The mass planting of daffodils has taken place which it is hoped will be a blaze of colour in future years having been delayed by the weather.

Work to the boundaries of the car park itself, carried out in 2008, has not been entirely successful and it is hoped it will be able to deal with the sides and rear by concreting the verges and adding setts. The front planting is to remain.

MBNA Chester Marathon

The first ever Chester Marathon and the only marathon in Cheshire is being run on Bank Holiday Monday 31st May 2010.

The 26.2 mile run will start and finish at Chester Rugby Club, with an initial loop round Guilden Sutton (including a section of the Greenway) before taking runners along the full length of the Greenway cycle path from Mickle Trafford to Hawarden Bridge – and back! – before the final stretch to the finish at the rugby club. We hope that the event will raise thousands of pounds for the Hospice of the Good Shepherd.

We are writing to inform you about this exciting new event for our City and to outline the arrangements for race day when there will be some road closures. The road closures have been arranged in association with the Borough Council and Police to ensure the safety and welfare of the public and runners. We have met with the Guilden Sutton Parish Council and are grateful for their enthusiastic support.

The event will be fully marshalled, with police in attendance, and road traffic management. Details of the closures are as follows:

9:00 to 10:30 - outbound leg

Road closure:

9:00 to 9:35 Hare Lane

9:20 to 9:40 Belle Vue Lane

9:20 to 10:30 School Lane and Station Lane (and approximately 250 m of Guilden Sutton Lane)

From 9:40 to 10:30 access to/from Guilden Sutton estate will be via Middlecroft, Belle Vue Lane, and Hare Lane.

Greenway closure: 9:30 to 10:30 - Mickle Trafford to Limewood field.

11:30 to 15:00 - return leg

Road closures:

11:30 to 15:00 Hare Lane, Belle Vue Lane, School Lane and Station Lane one-way traffic only.

11:30 to 15:00 Belle Vue Lane (residents' access only)

Greenway closure - 11:40 to 13:30 Mickle Trafford to Limewood fields.

26.2 miles is a long way and we are sure that runners would appreciate your encouragement, support and cheers as they pass by.

Further information on the race route and details of how to enter are on our web site www.chestermarathon.co.uk. The above details and a colour version of the map are also on the Village web site www.guildensutton.org.uk. Thanking you in advance for your co-operation and support, please accept our apologies for any inconvenience which the marathon may cause.

If you have any queries, or would like any additional information, please contact us via e-mail chestermarathon26.2@googlemail.com or in writing to Andy White, Race Director, 22 St George's Crescent, Queens Park, Chester CH4 7AR.

Yours sincerely
Chris Hulse & Andy White
Event Organisers.

The Council has raised a number of points with the organisers and in particular has requested that a leaflet to be delivered to households has a contact telephone number for use on the day.

Information. The Council's e mail address is info@guildensutton.org.uk and its web site is at www.guildensutton.org.uk

Future meetings: Future meetings of the Council are due to be held in the Village Hall at 7.30pm on 12 April, 10 May, 7 June, 12 July, 6 September, 4 October, 1 November and 6 December 2010.

All meetings include public speaking time and residents are welcome to attend and address the Council.

Contact Councillors Derek Hughes (Chairman), 300185, Imogen Brown 300812, Alan Davis 303022, Danny Fisher 301398, Jane Hughes 300863, Michelle Kerfoot 300644, Bill Moulton 348473 and Trisha Paterson 300307 or the Clerk, David Norbury, 1 Orchard Croft, Guilden Sutton, CHESTER, CH3 7SL, 300783.

Mr Brian Lewin 301501 is the Rights of Way Warden. The Parish Tree Warden is Cllr Brown 300812. Cllr Jane Hughes deals with recycling issues. Cllr Moulton is the Local Bus User Contact.