

What should Woodcote Parish Council spend your money on?

People frequently suggest things that Woodcote Parish Council (WPC) should do, facilities we should deliver, plus there are our own ideas. At a time when Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) & South Oxfordshire District Council (SODC) are cutting back, what WPC can provide has become extremely important.

It was agreed by WPC to carry out a public consultation to help determine which projects should be taken forward (and to repeat the exercise in future years). This is the start of that process.

This consultation is about how **you** can have a say in what projects WPC should spend its (and your) money on, and to introduce our survey seeking your views. You can find out more in this leaflet, on our website and at a number of drop in sessions we will be running.

The consultation runs for 6 weeks, from 9th May to 19th June 2022.

How would new projects be paid for?

WPC has 2 principal sources of funding for general expenditure and projects – 1) the parish precept, paid as part of your Council Tax; and 2) a percentage of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) paid to SODC by certain developers, in respect of new developments (more about these funding sources below).

Because of its entitlement to CIL money, WPC has an opportunity over the next few years to undertake more (or bigger) projects than in the past. The projects that are chosen will impact not only the immediate future, but also the way the village develops.

Precept and Operating Expenditure

First, WPC are given a small proportion of the Council Tax paid to SODC each year by those who pay Council Tax. For 2022/2023 this is between £73.13 per annum for a Band A property and £219.40 for Band H. The average (Band D) is £109.70 per annum. Band E, as the predominant band in Woodcote is £134.08 per annum.

The total WPC receives from all the properties in the Parish is known as the **Precept** and this is used for the ongoing expenses of the Parish Council, known as **operating expenditure**.

The operating expenditure covers the running costs of the Parish Council including maintenance of the village, village green, village hall, play areas & equipment, staff salaries, grants to local organisations, insurance and various small-scale projects. Each year the Council produces a budget of these costs and income for the coming year and requests the precept from SODC to balance this budget.

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and Capital Expenditure

WPC also receive 25% of any **Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)** paid by developers to SODC. As we have a Neighbourhood Plan the percentage is higher than it is for other parishes in the district who do not have one and only receive 15%.

CIL is mainly geared for capital funding. This means we are not permitted to use it (for example) to subsidise our day-to-day administrative costs, reduce the precept, etc.

Having said this, it is important to understand that some of the capital projects proposed below will incur future running or maintenance costs that will have to come out of operating expenditure and may therefore require an increase in the council tax precept.

For instance, if outdoor gym equipment is installed, there will be a capital cost but there will also be an annual safety check and maintenance costs per annum. The capital cost could be paid for by using CIL, but eventually we will all have to pay for the upkeep and maintenance through increased council tax or find another source of funds.

Funds available

The total amount of funds WPC are estimating will be available is £355,000

This is made up from approximately £120,000 of money already held in Parish Council Reserves, which have been held for specific projects or as previously received CIL funds for village projects.

The amount of CIL that will be received in the future and when it will be received is harder to accurately estimate. However, if the total number of dwellings proposed in WNP2 were to be built, in the period the plan runs (up to 2035), then it is estimated that WPC could receive around £235,000 in CIL funds. Any additional windfall or infill sites would generate additional funds.

Therefore, as there are not enough funds available to complete all the projects proposed, WPC need to prioritise and we are asking Woodcote residents to help us do that, by telling us what you think is important.

The Plan

There are a limited number of projects that have been researched, enough to be subject to a meaningful consultation this time. However, we sadly won't be able to do them all at once.

A high level of public support through the survey, available via the parish website (or a hard copy), is needed for WPC to feel confident in going ahead with a particular project and dedicating a lot of time developing it to fruition.

It is important, however, to stress that a project receiving a huge level of support might still not go ahead because of factors outside WPC's control. Such as development (& CIL) not coming forward, refusal of planning permission or lack of consent from landowners or Oxfordshire County Council. A project might therefore have to be abandoned.

There are also potential timing issues with all projects. Complying with external bodies' rules and regulations, such as gaining planning permission, invariably takes a lot of time, meaning projects cannot be completed as quickly as desired. CIL only becomes available once a development has started, so that will also be a major factor on timing.

It has been already mentioned that projects may or will have an impact on the level of the Precept for future years. This must be a major consideration for the Parish Council as well as the individual tax payers. This is particularly relevant for the proposals for the future of Woodcote Village Hall.

On a more positive note, you can see that the incoming CIL will provide an opportunity for new projects and the survey gives space for your suggestions for other projects.

Drop ins

There will be manned drop in exhibitions in Woodcote Village Hall on:

- Sunday 15th May - 10am – 12:30pm in the Pavilion
- Thursday 26th May - 7:30pm – 9pm - in the Function Room
- Saturday 11th June - 2pm – 4pm - in the Pavilion

At these drop ins, there will be more information on the individual projects. Please come to find out more & ask any questions.

Online

The information on show at all the drop ins is available online if that is more convenient to you.

www.woodcoteparishcouncil.org.uk/Consultations

Hold your phone or ipad camera over the QR code below to take you directly to the webpage.

Please respond by Sunday 19th June 2022.



The Possible Projects

The projects which you are being asked to give your views on, in the survey are:

- **Outdoor Public Fitness Equipment**
Fitness equipment located on parish owned land, for all to use for free.
- **A Pump Track**
A modular 'pump track' for use by anyone on two wheels – bikes, scooters, skateboards. To be located on the recreation ground / village green.
- **Village Green Path Extension**
A new resin path on village green, to go north to south, along the primary school & Langtree fence line, joining the existing path to the entrance to The Close.
- **Electric Vehicle (EV) Fast Charging Points**
Installation of 2 – 3 EV fast charging points in village hall parking areas.
- **Additional Pedestrian Crossings**
Additional Pedestrian crossings located near Goring Road / Bridle Path junction and Reading Road.
- **Speed Cushions**
Speed cushions on parts of Goring Road and/or Greenmore to reduce speeding by vehicles.
- **Traffic Speed Limit Signs**
Additional vehicle activated signs to increase awareness of speeding as a preventative measure.
- **Woodcote Village Hall Maintenance / Development**
There are multiple options to consider regarding the village hall ranging from basic and necessary maintenance to keep the hall functioning to the suggestion of a completely new build village hall.

It should be noted that all the costs are very broad estimates at this stage. It is not until individual projects are worked on in more detail that accurate costings will emerge.