**Bourton Vale Ward**

**District Councillors Report**

**May 2018**

**Naunton Parish Council**

Some highlights of recent Cotswold District Council decisions and other news:

**Council Tax**

CDC has agreed a freeze on the authority’s share of local residents’ council tax payments for 2018/19.

This follows a freeze in 2017/18 and 2016/17, a 5% cut in 2015/16, a 3% cut in 2014/15 and a 5% reduction in 2013/14.  This means that the average band D charge for District services will remain at £126.40.

Taking into account the freeze for 2018/19, the actual amount being charged for a Band D council tax payer – without cutting frontline services – has been reduced by £17.98 per year (12%) over a period stretching back to 2010/11.

Even more significantly, the £126.40 charge is on a par with what residents were paying back in 2005 and, taking the average annual inflation rate into account, represents a real terms reduction of about 45%, saving tax payers about £50 per year.

This is the 21st lowest District Council charge in the country and represents a rise from 63rd in the ratings just a few years ago.

**Car Parking**

A continuation of the freeze on parking charges at all CDC-owned car parks for 2018/19.

A continuation of the ‘free after 3 pm’ parking scheme until the end of March 2019 at selected car parks across the District, including in Bourton-on-the-Water, Cirencester, Moreton-in-Marsh, Stow-on-the-Wold, and Tetbury.

Work is progressing with detailed plans for the proposed Waterloo decked car park in Cirencester with interim arrangements for additional parking at Cirencester Rugby Club.

**Publica**

Cotswold District Council employees have now been transferred to Publica Group, a newly created public sector company, in November 2017. The councils involved in using Publica’s services are Cheltenham Borough Council, Cotswold District Council, Forest of Dean District Council and West Oxfordshire District Council.

The formation of Publica has been driven to create one employer for all four councils and are planned to:

* Reduce the cost of management and administration
* Deliver a better, more cost-effective service to communities
* Allow us to offer new staff an employment package that is both more flexible for them and sustainable for the council
* Provide the opportunity to share workloads, learn from each other and benefit from shared expertise, resources and knowledge.
* **This partnership will bring cost savings of £5.6m a year by 2020 and £41m over 10 years.**
* Residents and businesses will continue to deal with the Council as they always have because services will be unaffected.
* Each council will retain its independence, identity and responsibility for the services it provides and will:
* Still have its own elected councillors
* Continue to make policy, strategies and decisions taking account of the needs of the local community
* Have staff working in the same locations
* Retain the same contact details and branding.

**WW1 Commemoration**

Each District Councillor has been allocated £750 to assist with planned activities to celebrate the end of WWI. Any projects requiring application for funding can submit a form which I can provide.

**Cotswold Community Awards**

The Chairman of Cotswold District Council is proposing to have a Community Awards event for the Cotswold District, one that could be repeated annually. The awards will be solely Community based. Anyone from the Cotswold District can nominate a person or a team from the District. This year the awards event will be held in Cirencester this year. 1. Categories There will be seven categories, several categories have been suggested, they are: Carer of the Year – a person who cares for a relative, friend or neighbour, who is unpaid. Town and Parish Council nomination – the person who goes above and beyond for their community. Community Team Award – A team of people from a community, sports club, activity group, health group etc. who gives their time freely and regularly to assist others. Charity Team Award – A team that has organised one off events or several events to raise funds for charities. Fundraiser of the Year – someone who is the driving force behind charity events and has helped raise money for a charity or several charities. Unsung hero of the Year – someone in the District who quietly makes a difference to other people’s lives. Young Volunteer of the Year – a young person who gives up their time to help others.

**Enforcement**

Cotswold District Council arranged two training sessions for the Planning Enforcement process. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee (on which I sit) pressed the Council hard in the last financial year for additional resources to bring the Enforcement team up to strength. The meetings were well attended and it was felt that they were informative and useful.

I have copies of the Presentation for anyone interested. In the meantime, please see:

<http://www.cotswold.gov.uk/residents/planning-building/planning/planning-enforcement/>

I am hopeful that the Planning Officers will expand the training sessions to include the planning process generally.

**Naunton Village Hall**

I would like to record my heartfelt congratulations to all involved in the magnificent project of the refurbishment of the Village Hall. An object lesson in community effort and cooperation!

I hope it will be a valued asset to the village for many years to come.

Richard Keeling

Bourton Vale District Councillor

May 2018