

Dear Councillors,

Thank you for notification of the above update.

You cite specifically that the reason for the rise is ‘the lengthsman scheme (which deals with highway problems like ditching and drainage) or for footpath maintenance)’

I feel we are being hoodwinked into paying twice for the same service

I have in front of me the Herefordshire Council leaflet entitled ‘Working for Herefordshire. The Highways Authority (Balfour Beatty) information on ditch clearance’

There is an annotated diagram showing clearly that ditch clearance is the responsibility of the adjacent landowner. The maintenance of footpaths also appears largely to be the responsibility of the landowner who must clear paths, cut back hedges, vegetation and maintain stiles. If this is not done then Balfour Beatty has to accept responsibility.

It is unreasonable to expect 326 (approx) families to pay for the maintenance of 55 km of footpaths, however precious a commodity they might be

I understand being a member of the lengthsman scheme is voluntary. Not all parish councils are members. The grants which were given at the inception of the scheme are to be discontinued. Despite this, it would appear you are considering extending the work of the lengthsman to undertake responsibility for filling potholes. This is the duty of the Highways Authority who maintain the roads who have the training, expertise, equipment, and insurance and who are already paid by the County Council.

There is an easily accessed Herefordshire Council website where road problems can easily be reported and there is a telephone number for emergencies to be reported

It appears you wish to raise the Parish Council Precept by more than 100% over 2 years. I find this totally unacceptable given the Government has capped Council Tax at 6%

There are, I believe, 325 households in this parish which lies in a rural area of low wages. Rents, Council Tax, fuel bills and general cost of living are rising

I would have thought that their Parish Council had an avuncular duty to protect vulnerable people rather than making their lives more difficult.

I would request an Open Meeting be called to discuss this matter. There are many people who would not write to you but would happily sign a petition or attend a meeting

Yours faithfully