



PRESS RELEASE - 30 January 2007

Newbury Town Council Confirms Budget For 2007/8

At the Town Hall last night Newbury Town Councillors set the precept for the ratepayers of Newbury for the coming financial year.

Leader of the Council Ian Grose said "I am delighted that this year's budget is again much less than inflation, and equates to an increase of around 2p a week (or 1.79%) for a band D household. We have set a prudent and forward-looking budget which will allow us to continue to provide many services at our current level, and to improve some of our services to the people of Newbury."

"We are going to replace our Christmas lights on a rolling programme, and revise our method of managing them. This safeguards the future of these lights after years of uncertainty – Newbury won't be dark next Christmas as a result. There is also funding to pump-prime the provision of a neighbourhood warden scheme in the north of the town, following the success of the Town Council-supported scheme in Greenham and the surrounding area."

Deputy Leader Mavis Greenhalgh said "There is also money to refurbish changing rooms at our recreation grounds, to continue to update our playgrounds and to allow us to have floral displays this summer, which are enjoyed by residents and visitors."

The Council's costs have continued to be managed well, and whilst some funds will be taken from the Council's reserves to fund one-off expenditure, the Council's finances will remain in excellent shape (the level of reserves has received much favourable comment from independent government auditors). The budget takes proper account of the risk of damage to parks, especially trees in the recent winter storms, and for looking after the Council's properties, such as the historic and much-loved Town Hall, the allotments, Victoria Park and other open spaces, the chapel at Newtown Road cemetery and for better facilities at Shaw cemetery. The new Services team at the Town Hall will have the training they need to deliver this programme, and the Council is confident of successfully implementing its plans for the next twelve months and beyond.

Councillor Greenhalgh agreed "this is a prudent, affordable and forward-looking budget, which will enable the Town Council to continue to deliver excellent value for money to the citizens of the town".

END

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