



PRESTEIGNE & NORTON ASSETS & SERVICES CONSULTATION

February 2017

INTRODUCTION

Powys County Council (PCC) is under extreme financial pressure to reduce its expenditure dramatically. This means that all Community Councils are being asked to take over various assets and services in their Communities.

Some of these assets earn income and therefore will cost very little to take them over. However most will involve some running costs, which will mean a relatively small increase per year in the local tax paid to the Town Council (Precept).

WHAT IS THE PRECEPT?

PCC collects the Council Tax each year. A small percentage of this (about 4%) is called the 'Precept' and is passed to the Town Council each year. Each year the Town Council decides how much the Precept will be. In 2016 the Precept was £55,693. The amount each household pays depends on the banding of their property; for example, in 2016 the contribution amounted to £44 per household for a Band D property for a year.

All the figures in this Consultation refer to a Band D property. You should bear in mind when considering the figures that if your property is in a lower band you would pay less towards the Precept, and more if it is in a higher band.

THE CURRENT SITUATION

The Town Council already owns and runs a number of assets in the Community, and it has been in ongoing negotiation with PCC about taking on more in order to ensure they remain as a benefit for our community. It has made decisions about which assets and services it believes are important to protect, and worked out some costs for the amount each of these will add to the existing Precept.

All these assets and services are described below, with their annual proposed or actual cost to you. You will see the services and assets which the Town Council is suggesting they take over (Sec. A), those which are currently run by Town Council (sec. B), and those which are currently part funded by the Town Council (Sec. C).

WHY ARE WE HAVING THIS CONSULTATION?

Before the Town Council can go to PCC with the proposal to take on the threatened assets and services, they need to have the support of the community. So the Town Council, supported by the Presteigne Area Community Development Group (PACDG), has prepared this Consultation to explain to all residents what it proposes to do, and asks you to complete this questionnaire, where you can rank your views of the importance of new, and existing, assets and services.

The questionnaire can be completed on-line via the Town website Presteigne.org.uk, by clicking the link on the Homepage. It can also be completed in writing on this form and returned to one of the addresses provided at the end of the form. More will be available from Winnie's and the Library. **The Town Council would ask as many residents as possible to complete the questionnaire online as this very much assists in compilation of the results.** To encourage online entry they will all be entered into to a draw, with £50 first prize, £25 second prize and £10 third prize.

NEED MORE INFORMATION OR HELP?

Two Open Days will be held at the Old School on the ?th and ?th February, where there will be explanatory information available, and people on hand to assist with advice in understanding the issues involved. There will also be a public meeting where the Mayor, James Tennant-Eyles, will present the issues, ?th February at 7.30pm in the Memorial Hall. PACDG will be hosting some events Pop-Up Events in the town and engaging the help of volunteers available to talk to you on a one-to-one basis.

A. ASSETS CURRENTLY UNDER THREAT OF CLOSURE

1. The Old School (Youth Centre)

This building in Hereford Street, next to the Car Park, is owned by PCC. It is much loved by the Community, many of whom went to school there. It has many users, the Youth Club, the Circle, Action on Hearing Loss, Play Radnor, the Breast Feeding Network, Sheep Music, and other smaller groups involved in health and well-being in the Community. PCC would like to close it down and sell it, leaving the users without a place to operate. The Town Council proposes to take it over to prevent this and preserve it as a building for Community use. Because its overheads are covered by the income from rent paying users there will be no increase in the precept as a result of this takeover.

Increase in precept per year = £0

2. The Drill Hall

This building further down Hereford Street is also owned by PCC. It has been used by the Army for the Cadets for many years, but they no longer want to use it. Community Support, providing Community Transport has operated there for many years. PCC would like to close it down and sell it leaving the user without a place to operate. The Town Council proposes to take it over to prevent this and preserve it as a building for Community use. The part that was being used by the Cadets would be converted into a Town Council Office and Town Council Chamber, providing much better access for residents to Town Council Services and better provision for public attendance at Council Meetings.

Increase on the precept per year = £1

3. The Library

The Library is on the ground floor at the Assembly Rooms, a building owned by PCC, and they have said that unless the Community can cover half the cost of the Library that they will close the Library down. It has been suggested that a Trust, (independent of the Town Council), be created to take over the Assembly Rooms from PCC, with a contribution from the Town Council. This would enable the Library to stay where it is.

Increase on the precept per year = £4

4. The Cemetery Extension

The Cemetery is owned and run by PCC. It will run out of space for new graves in about three years. PCC has no funding to purchase any new land for the Cemetery, and suggests that Presteigne would have to have its burials elsewhere. The Town Council is able to raise a low cost mortgage (over 10 years) to purchase enough land to last a further 40 years.

Increase in the precept per year = £6

5. The Cemetery and the Burial Board

The Town Council would also like to take over the Cemetery and run the Burial Board. This would enable them to ensure better maintenance of the Cemetery, and in due course restore the Chapels which are in a state of disrepair. PCC has no funds to restore the Chapels so unless the Town Council take over the Cemetery the Chapels will never be restored and may in due course become dangerous and need to be removed. The income from operating the Cemetery would cover the costs involved so there would be no increase on the precept as a result of this takeover.

Increase in the precept per year = £0

6. The Hereford Street Car Park

The Town Council would like to take over the Hereford Street Car Park, and hopefully run it as a “Pay If You Can” car park to generate income for the Community. If locals could not, or did not wish to pay, they need not, but those who did pay would be making a contribution to Community funds. It could be free to non-residents, to encourage people to shop or visit the Town. The Town Council could allow an Open Air Market to operate there, and could make it free on certain days in support of Community Events, such as the Christmas Fair or Street Parties. PCC say they will not consider a transfer of the car park to the Town Council, but the Town Council would like to go on trying to obtain it. There should even be some income which would go towards reducing the precept.

Increase in the precept per year = £0

B. CURRENT ASSETS AND SERVICES ALREADY PROVIDED BY THE TOWN COUNCIL

The Town Council already provides some assets and services listed here:

1. Went’s Meadow and Eddies Meadow were purchased by the Town Council in several stages over the last 20 years. Went’s Meadow has recently been further augmented by the transfer of the Football Field and the Multi-Use Games Area to the Town Council.
2. The Allotments were created on part of Lower Went’s Meadow in 2010.
3. The Wilson Terrace Toilets were taken over in 2006 and the Hereford Street Toilets in 2015.

C. CURRENT ASSETS AND SERVICES GRANT-AIDED BY THE TOWN COUNCIL

Many services and organisations in the Community operate independently of the Town Council but rely on annual grants to help them maintain their operations.

They are: East Radnorshire Day Centre; Judge’s Lodging and Tourist Information Centre; Christmas Fair and Lights; Memorial Hall; Presteigne Festival; website and town leaflets; Cubs, Scouts and Brownies; Assembly Room and MBA; Little People’s Playgroup; Fireworks; and the Carnival. (Numbers 1–11)

Presteigne & Norton Assets and Services Consultation

Please answer all the questions by ticking the relevant space in the boxes

A. THE TOWN COUNCIL PROPOSAL TO TAKE ON NEW ASSETS AND SERVICES

1. How important is it to the Community that the Town Council take over the Old School?

Increase in precept per year = £0

Not important	1	2	3	4	5	Very important

2. How important is it to the Community that the Town Council take over the Drill Hall?

Increase in precept per year = £1

Not important	1	2	3	4	5	Very important

3. How important is it to the Community that the Town Council supports the retention of the Library?

Increase in precept per year = £4

Not important	1	2	3	4	5	Very important

4. How important is it to the Community that the Town Council purchases additional Cemetery land?

Increase in precept per year = £6

Not important	1	2	3	4	5	Very important

5. How important is it to the Community that the Town Council take over the Cemetery, and becomes the Burial Board?

Increase in precept per year = £0

Not important	1	2	3	4	5	Very important

6. How important is it to the Community that the Town Council try to take over the Hereford Street car park?

Increase in precept per year = £0

(There should be some income which would go towards reducing the precept)

Not important	1	2	3	4	5	Very important

Total £11 increase in the precept for the new assets and services

B. CURRENT ASSETS AND SERVICES ALREADY PROVIDED BY THE TOWN COUNCIL

How important are each of these assets to the Community?

1. Went's Meadow, current precept cost £6.46

Not important	1	2	3	4	5	Very important

2. The Allotments, current precept cost £0

Not important	1	2	3	4	5	Very important

3. The Public Toilets, current precept cost £7.90

Not important	1	2	3	4	5	Very important

C. CURRENT ASSETS AND SERVICES GRANT-AIDED BY THE TOWN COUNCIL

How important do you think it is that the Town Council go on grant aiding these organisations?

1. The East Radnorshire Day Centre, current precept cost £1.58

Not important	1	2	3	4	5	Very important

2. The Judge's Lodging and TIC, current precept cost £1.19

Not important	1	2	3	4	5	Very important

3. The Christmas Fair and Lights, current precept cost £1.19

Not important	1	2	3	4	5	Very important

4. The Memorial Hall, current precept cost £1.19

Not important	1	2	3	4	5	Very important

5. The Presteigne Festival, current precept cost, 79p

Not important	1	2	3	4	5	Very important

6. The Website and Town Leaflets, current precept cost 79p

Not important	1	2	3	4	5	Very important

7. The Cubs, Scouts and Brownies, current precept cost 51p

Not important	1	2	3	4	5	Very important

8. The Assembly Room and Mid Border Arts, current precept cost 40p

Not important	1	2	3	4	5	Very important

9. The Little People's Playgroup, current precept cost 40p

Not important	1	2	3	4	5	Very important

10. The Fireworks, current precept cost 40p

Not important	1	2	3	4	5	Very important

11. The Carnival, current precept cost 40p

Not important	1	2	3	4	5	Very important

D. SUGGESTIONS WELCOME

i. The Town Council welcomes your thoughts on the issues raised, and further solutions not included here.

ii. There will be other consultations in the future as the needs arise. If you have any ideas about what else the Town Council or Presteigne Area Community Action Group (PACDG) can ask the Community about please tell us.

RETURN TO: Winnie's, Spar, Library or Tourist Information Centre
no later than 28 February