

LETTER FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF THE PARISH COUNCIL

Our December council meeting covered the usual wide and varied agenda.

One major decision was to agree the budget for 2019-20 of £30,925 which is the same total as this current year. This will mean that the parish council part of next year's Council Tax will in fact be a little lower than this year as there are a few more households in the parish. I wrote previously about the possibility that WSCC would be asking parishes to help subsidise local bus services and that this would require a significant increase in our budget. I can report now that we received assurances that any request would be made during 2019 and would therefore only impact on the 2020-21 budget, assuming we agreed. Consequently, we went ahead and agreed our 'no increase' budget. The detail of the budget can be found on our website rogateparishcouncil.gov.uk

Even though the risk of a parish subsidy for local buses has receded a bit, the threat of a decision to withdraw local services by WSCC remains. Consequently, I remain interested in whether there is any local interest and support for a Community Bus scheme operated by volunteer drivers.

Out of this year's budget we agreed to grant £300 to the Midhurst operation of the Chichester District Foodbank as a surprising number of local residents benefit from its services.

We heard that the Rake and Hillbrow Community Speedwatch Group has started to monitor speeds on the B2070 with some disturbing results. As reported before the Group will continue collecting data and passing it to the Police who will write to the owners pointing out the error of their ways. The council remains interested in expanding the Group to include Rogate village (A272 and North Street) but initial response to our request for volunteers has been unsuccessful – please consider whether you would be interested and able to help.

Now that the Christmas lights have been taken down, I would like to draw your attention to the issue of outside lights around our houses and businesses. As you will be aware, we are in the South Downs National Park and the area has been designated one of the few Dark Night Sky areas in the country. The SDNPA has a policy to protect the dark night skies but it is also for everyone to think about the amount of artificial light that is directed or escapes skywards. Of obvious concern are our outside lights especially the powerful security lights. It would be best if these could be directed more towards the ground and be switched on for less time.

Lastly, may I wish everyone a very happy and healthy 2019.

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