

NNDC Budget 2016/17

At the Full Council meeting on 23rd February 2016, the District Council set its budget for 2016/17. This is a balanced budget that maintains all of our services and also prudently retains an adequate level of reserves. For the fifth year in a row, NNDC's share of Council Tax will **not** increase.

It is sound financial management for the District Council to maintain adequate reserves as this enables the District Council to more easily take action to help individuals and communities following events such as the 2013 tidal surge and the 2014 Fakenham fire.

Department of Work and Pensions

A 14 strong team from the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) moved into the District Council office at Comer on the 11th January 2016 occupying some 170 m² of office space. The DWP move brings services together in one location and hence provides easier access to these services by the public. Additionally, the District Council receives rental income which contributes to keeping down council tax.

Free Start-up Business Workshops

NNDC is supporting a series of "First Steps to Start-up" workshops which will be delivered by local Enterprise Agency Nwes and funded by the European Regional Development Fund. The workshops require no previous business experience. Topics include finance, market research, legal requirements and business planning.

The first workshop was held in Fakenham (24/03/2016) but the remaining workshops are to be held in Cromer (25/04/2016) and North Walsham (16/05/2015). Perhaps councillors could help to spread the word? Further information about the Business Workshop programme can be obtained from Nwes on 08456 099 991, info@nwes.org.uk or www.nwes.org.uk.

NNDC Enforcement

A company and its director were fined £25,000 by Kings Lynn Magistrates' Court for felling two trees on a development site in Fakenham that were protected by a Tree Preservation Order. The felling of the trees took place after North Norfolk District Council advised that permission to cut the trees down for better construction access to his building site would not be granted.

Norwich Magistrates' Court fined a mother and son £1,000 for operating a riding establishment without a licence and also disqualified them from keeping a riding school for five years. The court heard that North Norfolk District Council had refused a licence due to

Report to Wells Town Council

serious concerns identified by the Veterinary Inspector relating to the health and welfare of the horses. Despite having no licence the pair continued to advertise riding lessons. There were eye-witness accounts of riding lessons continuing at the establishment, and a covert surveillance operation organised by NNDC and carried out by an officer from another local authority, resulted in them being given a riding lesson.

The magistrates noted a considerable amount of work had gone into establishing the facts and evidence of the case and that the pair knew they needed a licence. They accepted money for riding school services, described by the defendants as donations, but the magistrates saw it as receipt of money.

Wells Croquet Club

Wells Croquet Club has welcomed 10 new members after NNDC support project helped replace equipment and engage a croquet coach. Anyone who would like to join the club should contact Lindsay Dew or Marilyn Smith. I can supply the phone numbers.

North Norfolk Big Society Fund

The fund makes capital grants of up to £15,000 to voluntary and community organisations within North Norfolk. Grants have been awarded to a diverse range of projects including Children's play equipment, new kitchens for community halls, provision of musical instruments and purchase of football goals and match ball for under 9's and under 16's. If you know of any organisation that may benefit, then please get them to apply. Applicants do not need to ask for the full £15,000 – applications for smaller amounts are equally welcome. Full details are given in the Fund's page on the District Council website: <http://bit.ly/North-Norfolk-BigSociety-Fund>. Help and advice is available from the Officers (telephone: 01263 516173; email: supporting.communities@north-norfolk.gov.uk).

To be considered by the Big Society Fund Grant Panel on the 6th June 2016, applications need to be received by **9th May 2016**.

Councillor Vincent FitzPatrick
Priory Ward