



14th January 2022

Folkestone & Hythe
Constituency Labour Party

Statement by Folkestone Town Council Labour group

Setting the budget: a balance between providing services and keeping costs down

As fellow citizens of this town we understand the impact of the pandemic on people's livelihoods, finances and mental health in Folkestone.

Last year your majority Labour-run Town Council chose to keep the precept rise – which pays for the Town Council's work – to an absolute minimum. We used reserves and made savings where possible.

In real - cash - terms last year the annual precept was £61.67, just over £1 per week. The precept paid is linked to council tax bands and reduced according to your circumstances. An individual living in a Band A area had to pay £40.30 in total last year. Those on certain benefits do not have to pay at all.

We believe in balancing services, social conscience and financial prudence.

Stagnant wages, job losses and redundancies due to the pandemic, increased fuel poverty and a projected reduction in the standard of living mean that many of us are feeling the pinch.

That's why we have worked this year to set a low precept as far as possible – but we also know that to be an effective and successful council we must ensure we budget responsibly to sustain our reserves and maintain a high standard of services for the inhabitants of Folkestone.

This year we are increasing the precept overall by 3%, which will add a small amount to Council Tax bills – a few pence per week in fact. Again, we are meeting part of the cost from reserves.

We believe the Town Council offers our community good value for money.

In the last year we have taken over management of a several play parks from the District Council.

We have budgeted to start replacing worn and outdated equipment found in some of these parks. We're buying inclusive playground furniture so that everyone in the community can be catered for.

We will continue to operate the Museum and provide grants to many amazing community projects, showing our pride in Folkestone.

With your help and support we shall continue to use the money you entrust to us to provide services for everyone in our community.