

Dear Residents

**Borough Council Tax** – The Borough Council has now set its Council Tax rate for the coming year, 2018/19. It represents an increase over last year of less than 10p per week on a Band D property and amounts to £141.41 per annum on that average-sized property. The Council has a track record of being amongst the lowest in the country (last year it was the 26<sup>th</sup> lowest) and it is expected that this trend will continue. The Council is very aware of its need to look for alternative ways of investing given that the funding from central government has been reducing considerably over the last few years, down by 98% in the last 5 years; it will cease completely for the year 2019/2020. Hence the Council set up its investment portfolio a few years ago and has been investing in property. Thus far, its investments known as Project Enterprise have realised in the region of £2m since its inception.

**County Council Tax** - Meanwhile at County level, the main Government grant that the County Council receives will be cut by a further £23 million in 2018/19. Resources also need to be found to meet growing demand for social care services for vulnerable children and adults. Residents want to see services retained such as school crossing patrols, community transport and Household Waste Recycling Centres. To help provide all of these services, County council tax will increase by 5.99% this year. It will still remain one of the lowest of any county council in England at £1,200.96 for a Band D property. 3% of the increase will be used to help fund pressures in adult social care services. The other 2.99% will help to finance all of the County council's services, including road maintenance, schools, waste disposal, public health, concessionary bus travel, economic development, libraries, trading standards etc.

In addition, taxes for the Police and Fire services make up the total bill. .

**Better broadband service?** – I am currently pursuing a proposition with Sky to see if a solution can be found for them to provide improved broadband services. This is particularly important for those living at the Old Village end of Chilworth where residents are served by a cabinet based in Bassett Heath Avenue and BT refuse to re-locate them. However, others on different cabinets are also disadvantaged due to the position of their homes in relation to this or other local cabinets. I will advise of progress.

**Sensory Garden** - The Parish Council is interested in developing the patch of land beside the Hall to create a sensory garden. It would like to hear from those who have an interest in this project and have ideas to contribute. Contact me, Alison Finlay, in the first instance.

**Tennis Club** – Open Day, Sat 14<sup>th</sup> April -Yes, it is that time of year again, when the tennis club in the Old Village is gearing up for the summer. Tea, Cake and new keys provided on that day. Last year the rates were - £65 family, £45 couple, £35 single; Student, 16-21yrs , OAP's- £20. You have to be a member to play. Further info from Val Thorpe – valthorpe55@gmail.com

Dates for your diary:

11<sup>th</sup> March – Mother's Day.

14<sup>th</sup> March – Gardening Club – Thomas Stone – The Roses of Mottisfont – 7:30pm at Chilworth Manor

25<sup>th</sup> March – British Summer time begins – yes really.

30<sup>th</sup> March – Good Friday – services at local churches.

*Moviola:* The following will be shown at the Hall, both taking place on Sundays starting at 7:30 prompt.

25<sup>th</sup> March, The Mountain Between Us;

22<sup>nd</sup> April, Film Stars Don't Die in Liverpool

Best wishes, Alison