

Frequently Asked Questions - Churchtown Parish Council

Please read the frequently asked questions below and then complete the survey.

What is a Parish Council?

Parish councils have a wide range of powers including looking after community buildings, planning, street lighting, allotments. They also have the power to raise money through council tax. Parish councils are made up of locally elected councillors. They are legally obliged to hold at least one meeting a year. Most meet on a six-weekly cycle to discuss council business and hear from local residents.

What are the functions of a Parish Council?

Parish councils have a variety of powers and duties, all of which impact directly on the community. Parish councils vary considerably in size and their duties and powers will reflect this.

How is a Parish Council funded?

Parish Councils are funded by levying a "precept" collected from within the council tax paid by the residents of the parish. The introduction of a new Parish Council will mean a rise in council tax for those in the Parish area – this will be dependent on council tax band and the functions of the council.

All Parish Councils regardless of their size can also apply to external bodies for funding e.g. grant funding.

The precept cost is not based solely on population and geographical size. The precept cost will be dependent on a number of factors including but not limited to: the functions they perform, the number of Parish Councillors and the number of staff members and their respective salaries.

Example A – Large Town Council in Sefton – population electorate approximately 16,000 (approximately 4 times larger than the electorate for this area) a household living in a Council tax band D property would pay £98.32 per annum. The functions this Council performs includes:

- Town Hall facilities
- Maintenance of Parks and Open Spaces including Football pitches, Play Equipment, Bowling Greens, Tennis Courts, and Basketball courts
- Grants and donations to Community Groups
- Contributions towards local events
- Contribute to the local plan for the area and provide comments on planning applications.
- Co-operation with other community partners on wider issues

Likely running costs for a Council of this size are in the region of:

Staff: £100,000-300,000 (wages, tax, NI, pension contributions etc)

Other running costs: £100,000-300,000 (including meeting room costs, office equipment, phone and broadband, postage, stationary payroll services, audit fees etc)

Example B – similar electorate size to Crossens –precept for D banded property of £34.70 per annum. An example of the functions exercised by this Parish Council are:

- Grants and donations to community groups
- Maintain notice boards and other routes of communication with local residents.
- Working with partners such as SMBC to help resolve local issues of traffic management, littering, and anti-social behaviour.
- Contribute to the neighbourhood plan and comment on planning applications.

Likely running costs for a Council of this size are in the region of:

Staff: £20,000-70,000 (wages, tax, NI, pension contributions etc)

Other running costs: £30,000-70,000 (including meeting room costs, office equipment, phone and broadband, postage, stationary payroll services, audit fees etc)

Example C – electorate size of around 1,000 paying a precept per household of £6.27 per annum

- Ties with groups and community events
- Raising awareness and assisting residents in objecting to topical local issues (e.g. proposed infrastructure changes)
- Provide small grants to local community projects (up to a maximum of £500)
- Consultation on local planning matters

Likely running costs for a Council of this size are in the region of:

Staff: £1,000-2,000 (wages, tax, NI, pension contributions etc)

Other running costs: £1,000-5,000 (including meeting room costs, office equipment, phone and broadband, postage, stationary payroll services, audit fees etc)