

County Council – East Gartree Division Council Tax

The Leicestershire County Council, like other authorities, is debating the budget for the next financial year this month. The Government issued details of the amount of *formula spending share* (FSS) in late November and initial conclusions are that Leicestershire is no longer the worst funded Shire county in England but will now be the worst funded authority in England, certainly so far as education is concerned. This is despite the thousands of Leicestershire parents and teachers who wrote to the Government about Fair Funding for Leicestershire schools. The basic spending formula for the grant offered a real increase in revenue for the Council but then the new *Resource Equalisation* scheme took £9m of grant from the overall budget. This equalisation scheme shifts resources from areas of higher standards of living to areas of deprivation. The County Cabinet have acknowledged that they do not wish to pass on all of this grant loss to Council taxpayers, so rather than a 12% increase in next year's County Council tax share, it looks like the final figure will be much nearer 10.5%. This is still over double the rate of inflation and although you will be given all the background when the final figures are released in February, much of the increase is to cover the Chancellor's National Insurance increases for the thousands of council employees including teachers. No allowance has yet been included in the figures for any conclusive pay award for the firefighters either.

East Gartree issues

East Langton Parish Council have approached me about helping reduce problems with parents parking outside **Church Langton Primary School** to pick up their children in the afternoon. Some parents are parking and obstructing farm field entrances. It would be better if parents were thoughtful and realised

agriculture has to continue even between 3pm and 3.30pm. If parents do not voluntarily make sure the entrances are kept clear, and not obstructed, then painted lines, wardens and other measures might have to be introduced.

A site meeting was held in **Kibworth Beauchamp** just before Christmas with local councillors, retailers representatives and Council engineers to start discussions of the options for traffic calming measures, as requested by Kibworth Beauchamp Parish Council. A wide ranging discussion concluded with the engineers agreeing to take the suggestions away and to bring them back to a Parish Council meeting probably in February for a more detailed look at possible options. This will then provide an opportunity for the public to be consulted before any final plans are proposed. Funding for a full scheme has yet to be agreed by the County Council although indications are looking promising.

The County Council provides a wide range of support for local communities and individuals through several categories of **SHIRE Grant** and East Gartree benefited enormously over the past year. Grants have been made for environmental improvement such as landscape management and hedge laying; for historic building restoration such as thatching; for village halls; for sports such as the Football Clubs in Kibworth; for Community safety; for Arts and Museum developments; for voluntary youth organisations and as small grants for Under 5's and Carer's groups. If anyone would like details about how to apply then please contact me for a leaflet or go through the County website.

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