

Compton & Shawford Parish Council Annual Review

April 2004

Chairman's Report

Another year's activities of your Parish Council are reviewed in these pages.

Particularly of note is the completion and opening of the new pavilion, for so long the subject of debate and even some rancour among parishioners. It is so pleasing to see the building now in regular use.

Planning policy is reviewed in this leaflet, and it is unfortunately not all good news. This subject is the most time-consuming and difficult of the Parish Council's duties, and sometimes we feel alone against both the developers and the planning authority.

However, with the vocal and physical support of many residents I do feel that we have forced Winchester City Council to review their approach to the famous 'PPG3' (Government Planning Policy Guidance Note 3), and our full efforts will be concentrated on campaigning for any

development to be in character and less dense.

There is an 'end of term' feel about the Parish Council at present. Our term of office ends with the election scheduled for June 10th, when councillors will be elected for the next four year stint.

I would like to take this opportunity, in print, to thank on behalf of the community my fellow councillors, and all those others who have helped our work in various ways, for their dedication and hard work over the last four years. It has not always been easy, but their combined varied skills and aptitudes have been well up to the task.

If any local resident is interested in serving our community on the Parish Council, please feel free to discuss the subject with me, the clerk, or indeed any councillor. We will be only too willing to help potential candidates.

Looking to the future, there are clouds on the horizon. New rules, obligations and directions to local authorities are being imposed. Many of these are designed for larger town councils with many employees, but



Less than nine months after signing the new lease and handing over their contribution of £20,000, Sports Club secretary Gordon de la Mare is pleased to accept the keys to the Jubilee Pavilion from Parish Council Chairman George Beckett. 20 December 2004

the "broad brush" approach catches small Parish Councils like ours as well. Combining this with the problems caused by the "compensation culture" and our modern "risk-averse" society means that any organisation providing even our modest services is caught in an intolerable tangle of expensive administration.

We will soon reach a point where the costs of simply being a Parish Council will overtake the costs of providing our facilities and services.

There are options and alternatives, which I will outline at the Annual Parish Assembly on April 28th. I do hope you will be able to attend.

George Beckett

About this leaflet

We have been producing this review for the Annual Parish Assembly since 1998.

This is a report to you as "shareholders" of how the Parish Council has been

handling local matters using its very small share of your Council Tax.

If you have any comments or suggestions about this leaflet or any other aspect of council business, we would be glad to hear them.

Tourism, Trees, Footpaths, and the Itchen Navigation

Tom Threlfall reports on his patch:

Itchen Navigation

There were complaints during the summer of 2003 that the water level in the Navigation had fallen below its usually expected level. At the same time that those complaints were being aired one saw photographs in the broadsheets of the skeletons of ships sunk during the Hitler war being revealed by the exceptionally low water level in the Danube, so we were not suffering alone. Luckily the law of averages (or God) started to work in the autumn, and water levels came back to normal, where they now (mid-March) remain. The Bishop's Drain (through some of Shawford's more select gardens) also suffered from a water-level problem which was delegated to the Village Residents' Association.

Footpaths

These are inspected at monthly intervals, and are in a better state now than they were at this time last year, mostly thanks to the efforts of Liz Giles (area Rights of Way Officer on 02380 455157) and her team, who have always been ready to answer calls for repairs to difficult stretches of footpath. So good has been Ms Giles's co-operation that I have been happy in recent years to forgo the 4-digit annual budget allocated to footpath work by the financial Gurus of the Parish Council, so that the

money can be used to assist the tidy completion of the new Sports Pavilion and its curtilage.

Tourism

With the trains now in-



creasingly reluctant to stop at Shawford station, Tourism in Compton & Shawford is clearly not taken as seriously at Network Rail's Waterloo Kremlin (Quesha Tait, Community Relations, tel. 02079 023325) as it seems to be at Winchester City Council's tourist office (Karen Brazier tel 848181) where they say this year is the 450th anniversary of the marriage of Mary Tudor to King Philip 2nd of Spain, which will be the tourism theme this year. That sounds like an excellent excuse to go to pull the cork from a bottle of Rioja or Crianza, and we should all try to rise to the occasion. Try not to get involved in any ecological arguments about the relative benefits of corks or screwtops on the bottles, since such discussions tend to generate rather more heat than light, particularly after a glass or two of the Navarran Infuriator.

Trees

The use of the Tree Preservation Order (TPO) seems to be one of the contemporary fashionable means of conducting gentle hostili-

ties with one's neighbours, but the City Council's Arboricultural Officer (Michael Edwards tel. 848177) has to be brought on side first. Once Mr Edwards has issued a TPO,

which he can do in emergency in 24 hours, it becomes very expensive (< £30K per tree) and socially damaging (+a criminal record) to break it. Unfortunately the processes of bureaucracy are such (Data Protection, Ordnance Survey copyright, etc.) that I am unable to keep a definitive map here showing which local trees enjoy the benefits of a TPO, so if you need to tidy up your garden or open up a view, go first to the City Planning Kremlin at Avalon House and check whether your victim tree is TPO'd. If it is, leave it well alone but ring Mr Edwards for advice.

We need to find a happy medium somewhere between blanket application of TPOs to stifle any change and pre-emptive felling of healthy trees by developers.

[If you live in the Compton Street conservation area, different rules apply and you need permission for any tree work.]

Sustrans

This no doubt worthy spender of public funds on such projects as the unused

cycle lane up Otterbourne Hill was attempting a couple of years ago to route cyclists down many of our public footpaths (Itchen towpath, etc.). I was obliged to explain to it the difference between a Footpath (on which it is illegal to ride a bike) and a Bridleway (on which bike-riding is okay), and that if it wanted to send bikers down our footpaths it should first get them reclassified as Bridleways or BOATS, which process takes 5-7 years presently and has to be paid for by



someone - who would not be Compton & Shawford Parish Council. Since then all has been quiet on the Sustrans front, but please keep your ear to the ground. That body could well find a new budget and try once again to intrude upon our privacy.

*Tom Threlfall,
Hollowforth,
Bridge Lane,
tel. 712608.*

Highways, Byways & Environment

Convenor Celia Simmons writes:

Bus shelters

In May the old southbound bus shelter at Place Lane was refurbished, but unfortunately was then vandalised by human excreta. Jan Russell did a sterling job clearing up the mess and it was then repainted. Later in the year it was once again vandalised and part of it had to be rebuilt. This is a sad reflection



Attwoods Drove bus shelter

on society and is of course costing the Parish money.

New bus shelter

On the brighter side, in October '03 the new bus shelter was installed in Attwoods Drove. We were fortunate to have a grant from Winchester County Council. It was generally agreed that it looks good and will serve the purpose as required by local residents.

Bird scarers

After a number of complaints of 'gun shots' in the Parish, I met with Mr John Venn of Silkstead Farm and discussed the problem with him. As a result, the bird scarer near to Hurdle Way, which was causing most of the noise, was moved to the other side of the field. The other one in our Parish is well away from any residential dwelling and therefore within the guidelines of the Environment Agency.

Spring clean

The annual Parish Spring Clean took place on May 11th. Bags and gloves were provided by W.C.C.. My thanks to those who helped on the day - particularly some of the Shawford residents and the Cubs and Scouts who cleared up Shawford Down. Perhaps this year we could have a few more people to help out.

M3

2003 was mainly taken up with the mammoth task of completing a petition for a quiet surface for the M3. My grateful thanks to all those who helped with the time-consuming job of collecting over 1,000 names from Compton, Shawford and Otterbourne.

On 15th October our working committee of Councillor Mrs Ann Bailey H.C.C. and Councillor Mrs Charlotte Bailey, W.C.C., Councillor Mrs Celia Simmons, PC, sup-



plemented by Mike Warne, Chairman of Otterbourne PC and Mrs Tricia Caffyn, Chairman of Shepherds Down School Governors, delivered the petition to Government. Mark Oaten took us to the Ministry of Transport and the Ministry of Education, where we handed over the petition.

Flightpaths

We continue to work with the airport authority to reduce noise nuisance. Alternative routing is being tried for three months from April.

Parish Council Powers

The 1997 Local Government & Rating Act gave Parish Councils powers to organise or contribute to car pooling schemes, local transport, traffic calming and crime enforcement. The Act does not currently allow us to reclaim money from the City or County Councils when we organise such schemes for our-

selves rather than asking them to do it.

The full list of council powers is summarised on the Parish Council web site. It covers playing fields, lighting and village halls as well as historic powers such as provision of public wash houses.

This is over and above the powers granted under Section 137 of the 1972 Local Government Act which allows a local council to spend in any one financial year up to £3.50 per elector on anything

for which it has no express power, provided that the expenditure is for the direct benefit of the parish, or some or all of its inhabitants.

The Local Government Act 2003 made several changes to give local councils more financial autonomy. The annual "Free Resource" limit is now £5.00 per elector, and will rise in line with the RPI.

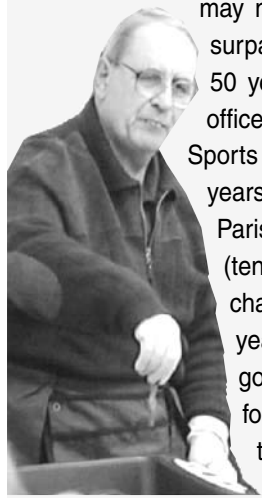
District and Council councils (but not parish councils) are given explicit powers to organise polls.

Hail and Farewell

After a year's interregnum, we welcomed **Paul Baird**, seen here at the pavilion opening, and his wife **Joanna** to the Rectory.



We mourn the loss of **Ray Wilmshurst**, whose astonishing record of service to the community



may never be surpassed: over 50 years an officer of the Sports Club, 38 years on the Parish Council (ten as chairman), 20 years a school governor and, for the past ten years, the

inspiration behind the Horticultural Society. Ray is shown here giving a demonstration at their 2000 Spring Show.

Also **Robbie** and **Ron Sherren** who sadly died within a few weeks of each other at the turn of the year having lived here since the 1950s and served the community in many ways, and **Winifred Burgess**, one of our oldest residents, whose memories of a bygone age were chronicled by Nancy Emmerson in the Parish Magazine last November.

Playing Fields

Mary Shaw, convenor of the Playing Fields Management Committee, writes:



The Memorial Playing Field and Compton Village Playground continue to be enjoyed by all the community. Our groundsman Jim Kimber keeps the playing fields in great shape.

teams and for the juniors they have under 11s, under 13s, and under 15s teams.

The Tennis Club had their courts resurfaced last year and are looking forward to the erection of

area and fence off the old entrance in Shepherds Lane.

The Play Areas continue to be enjoyed by the younger children. They are inspected every week and also have a professional safety inspection annually

Compton village playground has New Goalposts and nets to the delight of the local footballers who helped to choose them! Our sincere thanks to the parents who installed them.



Pavilion seen from the play area

Of course the highlight of the year was the opening of the Jubilee Pavilion at the Memorial Playing Fields in December 2003.

The Football Club field three Saturday teams (the first is hoping for promotion this year) two Sunday morning teams and two boys' teams playing on Sunday afternoons. This year they hosted Southampton Veterans Trophy. Everyone was most impressed with all the facilities provided by the Compton Team at the Memorial Playing Field.

The Cricket Club field 3

the 3rd court as soon as the old Pavilion has been demolished. The Club fields two teams in the summer Southampton LTA Apsley League and hold several one day tournaments for members during the year. There are an encouraging number of the local children who enjoy the facilities: Mini- Munchkins (aged 5-7), Munchkins (7-9), and Advanced Munchkins (9-18).

Following the demolition of the old Pavilion and the building of the new Tennis Court plans are afoot to landscape the

A Plaque is belatedly being installed by the Evergreen Oak on the eastern boundary of the Memorial Playing Field. It was planted November 27th 1982 in celebration of Mr. William Webb's 100th birthday. He ran the local village shop opposite the Bridge Hotel and the local Coal Merchants from where Adrian Neil now has his upholstery business. He was a great walker and regularly walked all the village footpaths and bridleways reporting back to the Parish Council any problems!



Paul Murray, seen here at the opening ceremony, sent in this final report:

This time last year the construction had not even started! And here we are looking at the completed building that has been in use since late December. What a difference a year makes!

I am pleased to be writing about the building of the new pavilion in the past tense. It has been a long and arduous process but the successful outcome of the project more than justifies the decision to go ahead and build it.

It is a fine looking building and is a credit to the architect, Simon Alford, who, if you remember, kindly did

the first drawings for only £250. He has received a greater financial reward since then, but his initial cooperation was instrumental in helping us get the project started.

The Project Managers, Gentle Associates Ltd, put in an extraordinary amount of work and gave us good value as well as sound advice along the way. Jed Bonser, in particular, worked tirelessly on all aspects of the project.

The builders, themselves, Wilding Butler, worked to a high standard throughout and Graham Cordell masterminded the construction on their behalf. I will always remember the site foreman, Bruce Sneddon, who had to nurse his terminally ill wife during the construction period and lost her just before the work was completed.

The Pavilion Building Committee's work is almost done. We have one more wrap up meeting to tie up the few remaining loose ends.

Jubilee Pavilion

But I know that all of the Committee are proud to have been involved in this project, and are pleased that they have achieved what they set out to do.

Cllr. Nick Campbell-White is handling the "snagging list" of jobs that need completing and rectifying and Gordon de la Mare's responsibilities seem to be endless!

There is an issue in relation to asbestos in the old pavilion, but this should be removed in the next few weeks and we are currently negotiating about the demolition of the old structure. When that is gone, the third court can be built and normality will return to that corner of the village.

I hope that all consider it a vast improvement and that the new facilities will be a great asset to the community for many years to come.

*Paul Murray,
Chairman,
Pavilion Building
Committee
(almost Retired!)*

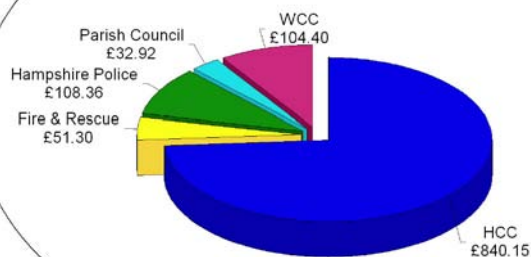
Quality Parish Council status

This is a government scheme from the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister.

A "Quality Parish Council" is expected to represent and engage with its community, to be effectively and properly managed; to uphold high standards of conduct; be committed to work in partnership with local authorities and other public services, to deliver local services on behalf of principal local authorities when this represents the best deal for the local community; to work closely with voluntary groups in its community; to provide leadership to the community through its work on parish plans; and working with its partners, to act as an information point for local services.

Your Parish Council has so far taken the view that although we do fulfil most if not all of the above criteria, the red tape involved in achieving formal "Quality" status is not worth the effort involved

Where your Council Tax goes
Band D figures 2004/5



Council Elections Your Councillors

Elections to the Parish Council are held every four years. 2004 is an election year. Polling will be on June 10th to coincide with the Euro-elections.

Vacancies on the Parish Council which occur between elections are filled by a by-election, or if none is called, through co-option.

George Beckett (chairman)
Martin Bell (vice-chair)
Nick Campbell-White
Jean Millar
Mary Shaw
Celia Simmons
Tom Threlfall
Adrian Walmsley

and last but not least
Jo Ford who recently came forward for co-option following the resignation of Jude Vallis.



Public participation at Parish Council meetings

Our Parish Council meetings - first Tuesdays at 7:15pm - are open to public attendance, as they have to be by law.

Like many other councils, we have a formal public question session near the start of every meeting.

You don't need to give notice of your questions, but if it is a complicated subject, or if you would like it to be made a formal agenda item, it helps if you can give notice of your question before the meeting.

Council committee meetings are also held in public. Watch the noticeboards for times and dates or talk to the committee convenor. The convenors' names are published in the Parish Magazine after the first meeting of each Parish Council year when all committees have to be reappointed. This is normally the May meeting, but will be June this year because of the elections.



Mike Matthews writes:

Shawford Parish Hall - managed under lease from the Parish Council by CASCA - has had another successful year. Occupancy has continued to rise with the Heathcote Room being 'adopted' during the day-time by a number of body and mind fitness groups.



Vanessa in the Post Office in the ladies' loo before the Hall was modernised (reproduced on the pc website by permission of the editor of the Extra)

Last year's surplus not only allowed us to finish the Caretaker's Cottage refurbishment but also to freshen up the paintwork and improve the lighting in the Shawford Hall. The surplus for the year just ended should provide enough to redecorate all the exterior paintwork and to replace the Shawford Hall window frames with UPVC this Summer - plans which will be confirmed at the Spring biannual inspection.

The saddest event of the

year was the sudden death in September of our Caretaker, Vanessa Smith. Her husband Frank, who ably stepped in after Vanessa's death, now has a new contract as Caretaker and is maintaining the tradition of attentive helpfulness which was the hallmark of Vanessa's style. The job gets busier by the month: we currently have 52 recurring user groups which can often mean four or more bookings a day.

We've added more props during the year, most notably a new Larder Fridge, a second TV/VCR Combi, a portable sound system and six more tables.

Prompted by my recent attendance at a General Risk Assessment Course we are now ready to conduct our first Risk Assessment inspections. I also attended a briefing on the Disability Discrimination Act and was very reassured to find that there are only a few small things we need to attend to before the Act comes fully into force at the beginning of October. One of these is the use of large print whenever possible, which puts an end to my normal aim of restricting Trustee meeting notes to two sides in the interest of saving trees of course!

A restructuring of CASCA is currently in progress. The aim is to reduce the number of Trustees to around 8 so that the Association can be managed more effectively. A Council of Representatives will be established alongside the Trustee Board which

will be able to elect trustees and provide feedback from groups who use the Hall. The Constitution is being amended to reflect these changes and it is planned to implement them in time for this year's Annual General Meeting.

Also at the AGM both I as Chairman and Philip Gorrod as Treasurer will be standing down. The search is on for willing volunteers to take over our responsibilities. Anyone interested?

Mike Matthews

Council documents

Under recent government legislation we have had to prepare a Publication Scheme actually listing all the documents we hold and the charges we will make to provides copies of them.

The publication scheme itself is available on request and, together with summaries of all our meetings, can be viewed on our web pages at compton.parish.hants.gov.uk or shawford.parish.hants.gov.uk

Do you take the Parish Magazine?

It's your best source of information about events run by local clubs, societies, the church and the Parish Council.

If you are not receiving a copy and would like to - contact Barry Nicholson on 712201. The annual subscription is £6.

Planning

Martin Bell writes

Two steps forward, two steps back. Winchester City Council planners, after much pressure, decided to re-evaluate their interpretation of PPG3 densities recently and agreed that local character could be an overriding factor. However the minimum density (30 dwellings per hectare - about 12 per acre) should be a starting point. The applicant could then demonstrate harm to local character caused by such a development and seek a less dense one. This sounded like good news until the appeal decision at Longacre came in. The Inspector found the 17 dwelling development not out of character, sustainable and unlikely to overload Hurdle Way itself. The appeal was rejected on the sole grounds that the junction of Hurdle Way with Main Road was inadequate.



We are left to ponder our "character" and sustainability.

Changes in the production of Local Plans (dictating what sort of development may be permitted) ask for Development Briefs to be

used as supplementary guidance. As a local community, the production of a suitable brief may be the best form of defence against unwelcome development in the parish. This may be expensive and it may not necessarily be a task for the parish council, more for the whole community.

The recent Barker report on housing stresses the need for affordable housing and re-

The parish council accepts the inevitability of modest development in our parish along the lines described in the Urban Capacity Study.

The council will strive to obtain the maximum positive influence with the planning bodies over the longer term.

To this end the council should adopt a reasoned and consistent policy towards new developments.

ommends changes in planning law to achieve this. The report also seeks to further increase the presumption for development. This presumption will only be overridden in "exceptional" circumstances. This adds up to significant planning support for more dense development and affordable housing. It will be very difficult to resist, and a development brief may be our best tool for having input into the planning process.

The parish council has adopted a Planning Policy (see box) to allow us to re-

spond consistently and reasonably to the challenging times we are in concerning new developments in the

Within those constraints the parish council will specifically oppose developments that do not reflect and preserve the character of the area.

We also recognize that we are a low sustainability area with minimal infrastructure.

The parish council will oppose any increases to the current policy boundaries within the parish.

area.

These last twelve months should have made things clearer. In terms of big decisions, however, we are not really there yet. A high-density application at Longacre (subject of a well attended public meeting and full planning committee) was rejected, but the subsequent appeal decision was not based on as many grounds as we had hoped. The current application at Longacre is for a four dwelling terrace at the front plus two houses at the back, and, in light of the appeal decision, will be

SILKSTEDE DEVELOPMENTS LTD

3 Large Classical Houses designed by Huw Thorpe

Plot 1- 7 bedroom Renaissance style house in walled garden

Plot 2- 6 bedroom Georgian style house in 0.5 acres

Plot 3- 6 bedroom Edwardian style house in 3 acres

Completion - Summer 2004

Shepherds Lane: one of the few developments that is, arguably, less dense and in character.

difficult for the planners to refuse. The Mawdlam Lodge refusal for a low-density application was appealed unsuccessfully but did not clarify matters significantly. An application for a potential development off Highways Road was withdrawn and was re-presented in a more dense form on advice from a planning officer. The officer then appeared to prevaricate for about a year before the application was refused. A one off development of disused buildings at Southdown School was approved; this will provide some smaller dwellings and two key worker units. A major development proposal at Mountain Ash (27 dwellings) off Tilden Road was refused and subsequently appealed. There are "enquiries" about a 21 unit dwelling at Shawford Close in Shawford, and a smallish site at Highdown, Cliff Way has an application in for four dwellings including a terrace of three houses.

The Local Plan review has reached its Public Enquiry stage. The parish council has made representations towards defending the character of our parish and we will be appearing at the Enquiry to reinforce those comments.

The City Council internet site now provides public access between 6am and 12 midnight, to details of planning applications and their current status.
See <http://www.winchester.gov.uk/planning>

Finance committee report

Nick Campbell-White
writes:

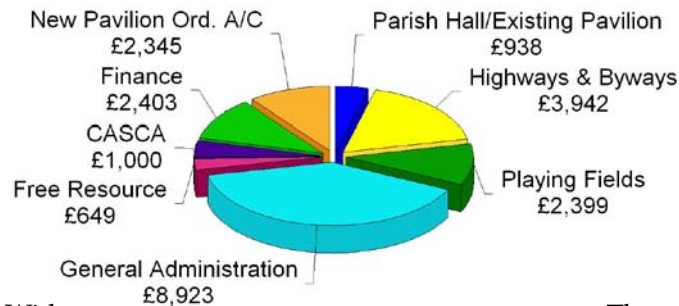
The main financial issue over the year, still not completely finalised, was the building of the new Sports Pavilion.

In February 2003 the Council had authorised expenditure up to £399,225.00 on the new Pavilion and related works, which was made up as follows:

Sport England	£246,025
Parish Council	£100,000
Hampshire Playing Fields Association	£1,800
WCC Open Space Fund	£10,000
Sports Club	£20,000
Local fundraising	£21,400

The last figure of £21,400 was the magnificent sum that Paul Murray's Pavilion Building Committee raised. Paul took on the responsibility for bringing the work to fruition, overseeing the building work by Wilding Butler and liaising with our agents, Gentle Associates. Without Paul, the project would not have been possible and we owe him a great vote of thanks.

**Council Expenditure
2003/2004 (to March)
excluding new pavilion capital account**



With expenditure to date and known expenditure to come, i.e. final settling up with the builder when all the snagging and tidying up is finished, we have just £1,163 in hand for limited landscaping. Paul had negotiated a contingency sum of £18,750 as part of our Sport England Lottery grant. This has almost exactly covered the problems we hit, the most recent being updated regulations for the removal of asbestos from the old Pavilion for which the lowest estimate was £2,995.

The Parish Council has budgeted funds for tidying up and closing off vehicular access to the old pavilion site once the third tennis court is built.

All lottery grant money has now been received and the VAT reclaimed. Managing the cashflow on a project some 20 times our normal annual turnover has been crucial. Thanks almost entirely to Mike Langford, our clerk, this has been handled efficiently and in far less time than when the Parish Hall was ex-

tended.

I reported last year that "the stream of directives, forms to fill in and irritating legislation continues unabated from Central Government." The stream is turning into a river. The clerk is, unfortunately, having to spend an increasing proportion of his time understanding and complying with the latest regulations rather than on activities directly relevant to running the parish.

The new Sports Club lease for managing the new Pavilion and the Memorial Sports Field and a revised Tennis Club lease to incorporate a third court were negotiated and drawn up by our solicitors White & Bowker.

The declaration of office and register of members' interests as required by all Councils throughout England was signed by all 9 members. We did not have the problems that many other Councils had, but this Code of Conduct could impact on our search for future new councillors.

Both our internal auditors and the National Audit Office signed off our 2003 accounts without a single query – a tribute to the way our Clerk keeps our records and our finances in order.

Precept per Band D property

