



## **PRESS RELEASE**

**For immediate release**

### **GODALMING TOWN COUNCIL BUDGET & PRECEPT 2020-2021**

On 19 December, Godalming Town Council agreed its budget for 2020/2021, which increased the Town Council element of a Band D council tax by less than 13p a week to £75.99 a year. With climate change at the forefront of the world's agenda, this modest increase allows the Council to work towards a healthier and more sustainable society. A fund of £10,000 will be available to support community carbon reduction initiatives and projects that further increase and enhance local bio-diversity so that Godalming can become a greener and healthier town. In supporting a greener healthier Godalming, the Council wishes to reduce its reliance on external contractors. The Council's grounds and buildings maintenance team will now be able to increase its activities in supporting the Council's greener and healthier ambitions, which were demonstrated when as a first time entry of South & South East in Bloom, Godalming won awards for both the Town Centre and Nightingale Cemetery. The Town Centre floral displays, which enhance bio-diversity by encouraging pollinators and other insects will benefit through an extra £2,000 of funding.

In addition to the climate change challenge facing our community there is the concern regarding the lack of youth provision. This was highlighted as a significant community issue in the Godalming & Farncombe Neighbourhood Plan adopted by voters in July 2019. Recognising the needs of the town's young citizens is a complex matter and notable investment in youth services needs the support of the community. The Council's budget provides an additional £10,000 for further research and consultation with residents of possible options to determine if the community supports future higher investment in youth provision.

The Town Council's budget continues to support the provision of a wide range of services to the town's residents including the management of the Wilfrid Noyce Centre, Broadwater Park Community Centre and the town's iconic Pepperpot. The Council will also continue to fund Godalming Museum, Farncombe and Godalming's public toilets, the town's cemeteries and sixteen acres of allotment sites. Additionally, 2020 will see expansion of Floral Godalming flower displays, maintenance of street furniture including public benches, Christmas Lights in Farncombe and Godalming retail centres and enhancements to the existing festivals and markets. As well as supporting the monthly Farmers' Markets, Friday Pop-up and Saturday Vegan shopping events, the Council will also continue to organise the Staycation holiday programme and the town's annual

Remembrance Parade, as well as leading the commemorative events for VE Day 75 over the May 2020 bank holiday weekend. The Council is also pleased to be able to continue its support of the many local community events and organisations including the Relaxed Film Screenings, Sport Godalming's Community Run, The Round Table's Town Show and Staycation Live Music Festival, which all help make Godalming such a vibrant community.

The budget will also support the Council's move from its existing office accommodation to new premises next to Godalming Museum that will allow all members of our community including those with mobility challenges to access its offices.

Cllr Penny Rivers, Mayor of Godalming said of the Council's budget and ambitions for 2020, "our Town Council does exemplary work on behalf of our community and will continue to do so. The new offices will be more accessible and welcoming and along with the Museum and The Pepperpot will become the hub of our town."

Ends....

