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**HEYBRIDGE BASIN PARISH COUNCIL**

**NOVEMBER/DECEMBER NEWSLETTER**

Welcome to the latest edition of the Heybridge Basin Parish Council newsletter.

**The Current Situation**

In our October Newsletter we advised you that Anne Beale and Keith Lawson had been appointed as Members of the Parish Council.

Since their appointment we have held four Parish Council meetings and, at these meetings we have

* Prepared and adopted a Data Protection Policy,
* Agreed a Contract with SEE Business Energy for the supply of power to our street/amenity lighting,
* Agreed to donate £100 to the Essex & Herts Air Ambulance,
* Agreed an updated Asset Register which incorporates the new signage in the Daisy Meadow Car Park,
* Prepared and approved a comprehensive Risk Management appraisal,
* Submitted an application to the Highways Authority in respect of Traffic Control in the Basin,
* Formed a Village Amenities Working Party comprising members of the Parish Council Referendum Team,
* Applied to Essex County Councillor Durham for locality funding for two extra rubbish bins to be installed in the Daisy Meadow Car Park.
* Agreed the monthly bank reconciliations and payments,
* Agreed the accounts for the six months to 30th September 2020. All financial documents can be found on the Parish Council website.
* Approved the budget for 2021/22,
* Agreed that the Clerk would investigate the income options for the Daisy Meadow Car Park,
* Agreed that the Clerk would investigate the provision of toilet facilities in the Daisy Meadow Car Park.

We are particularly pleased at the formation of the Village Amenities Working Party. The Chair is Professor Lew Schnurr. The Parish Council look on the formation of this Working Part as an opportunity to engage with parishioners to find out what they want for the Basin in the future. The Working Party has held its first meeting and a member of the Working Party has already provided the Clerk with some useful information regarding the income options for the Daisy Meadow Car Park.

As reported in a previous newsletter, the Parish Council employed the services of the Maldon District Council Community Engagement Team for the months of August, September and October. The team carried out regular patrols in the Basin during these months. We have now engaged their services for the months of December 2020 through to March 2021. Due to budgetary restrictions this has been on a reduced basis being two nights a week in the Daisy Meadow Car Park. We will review this again at the start of the next Council year.

We have previously mentioned in this report that an application had been made to County Councillor Durham for locality funding to provide two extra rubbish bins in the Daisy Meadow Car Park and we are pleased to inform you that our application has been successful. These bins should be installed in the early part of 2021.

The budget for 2021/22 was approved at our meeting on 10th December 2020. This has been a challenging year for all of us not least your Parish Council, as you can see from the work programme itemised. A by-product of the pandemic was a huge increase in visitor numbers to the Basin. We saw the car park full every day and more people using the towpath and sea wall to access the village. A new development was the popularity of inflatable water craft using the canal. Add to this the lack of open facilities due to Covid-19 restrictions, all added to the fact the the Village infrastructure was not up to the job. The Councillors have therefore asked the Clerk to engage with a number of outside agencies over the winter and prepare an options report for Members next year, in time to prepare for the summer season.

We have also had to make an allowance for possible elections in May 2021 which may cost as much as £4,000. Taking all of this into account we have asked for an increased precept for next year which, on the information we have, would be equivalent to an average increase per household of approximately £2.87 per month.

Finally, we thank the Parishioners who have erected a Christmas tree and who have decorated the village sign. This has been a very strange year and it is so nice to have a little Christmas cheer in our lives.