

**2018/9 Parish Precept Statement**  
**By Cllr Malcolm Fox of Kirby Muxloe Parish Council**

**Proposal of 2018/9 Parish Precept and Review of Financial Policy to the Extraordinary Meeting of Kirby Muxloe Parish Council on 25<sup>th</sup> January 2018.**

Cllr Malcolm Fox said: 'I present the 2018/9 Budget and Parish Precept to Kirby Muxloe Parish Council for its approval with a proposed increase of 2.3%. The increase is almost entirely due to the withdrawal of the Council Tax Support Grant by Blaby District Council, in accordance with HM Government Policy. Essentially it transfers the charge from the District Council to the Parish Council. The other issue is the loss of rental income from the bungalow owned by the Parish Council which will be resolved in the coming year.

I draw the Council's particular attention to the provision of a total of £30,000 for 'Audit and Accountancy' and also 'Professional and Consultancy' in the budget. We have to put these extraordinary amounts into the budget to deal with 'Objections to the Accounts' and 'Freedom of Information Requests'. The accountancy charges for almost all other Parish Councils are £750 per year; the substantial additional provision is for Kirby Muxloe Parish Council to deal with the extraordinary objections to its Annual Accounts year by year. Any formal Objection to the Accounts of the Parish Council made to the Audit Commission is examined at the Parish Council's expense. A very large number of Freedom of Information requests are made to the Parish Council year-by-year; it is unusual for a Parish Council to receive even one Freedom of Information request per year.

Responding to these Objections and Requests costs both money and staff morale. The Parish Council has had to appoint a professional Consultant to deal with the very substantial number of minutely detailed Freedom of Information Requests. The total cost in recent years to Kirby Muxloe Parish Council of replying to Freedom of

Information Requests and Objections to the Accounts has been around £100,000. Whilst entirely democratic, Freedom of Information Requests to the Parish Council are now tested for vexatious character as they arise from the same very small number of people.

It is worth recalling that the cost of re-establishing Kirby Muxloe Parish Council after its collapse in June 2013 during the following two years was around £205,000. The seven external councillors appointed by the Secretary of State in 2013 were not paid for their services; only two of these councillors claimed a very small travelling expense.

The total expenditure to re-establish Kirby Muxloe Parish Council and to respond to Objections to the Accounts and also Freedom of Information Requests so far to 2018 is of the order of £300,000. Kirby Muxloe is not well endowed with community facilities compared to its neighbours; it would have benefited from the careful expenditure of £300,000. The residents of Kirby Muxloe should be aware that this amount had to be spent to correct the management of their Parish Council up to 2015 and also to respond to the many detailed Freedom of Information Requests and Objections to the Annual Accounts, those Requests and Objections coming from a very small number of people'.

**Cllr Malcolm Fox**

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