

2018/19 Precept setting

The precept for Harrold was set in January by the Parish Council, for the coming financial year. The precept is the amount of money the Parish Council requests each year from the borough, who add it to the council tax paid by those who live in Harrold. In January we voted to retain it again at a total for the village of £72,645. However, this will show on individual tax bills as a small reduction, as the number of tax-paying properties has increased slightly. This precept covers 1339 villagers across 720 households.

We are occasionally requested to clarify why the precept for Harrold is high in relation to other villages in the borough. We perform a detailed, line-by-line review of spend each year - it is hard to summarise in a paragraph but, at a high level, the answer is:

1. There are unique features of Harrold that make it a more expensive village to maintain:
 - a) We have a brook running the length of Harrold that needs maintaining
 - b) We have a lot of grassy areas to cut (including the cemetery) and large trees that require maintenance
 - c) We have a lot of items to maintain: 3 playgrounds, a skatepark, an outdoor gym, benches, ornamental hydrants, a historic Buttermarket and Lockup, and more. These also need to be insured.

2. We feel there are items we build into the precept that are perhaps not funded well enough in some of the other villages. To give you some examples of this:
 - a) The grants we provide to make sure our village clubs and organisations survive, and new ones are supported to grow
 - b) Keeping a suitable accrual for replacing the facilities in the village when they deteriorate beyond repair
 - c) Projects to improve Harrold. These have mainly been financed by reserves so far, and have included/will include: New and refurbished benches, new bollards on the Green, replacing the old plastic bins along the High St, Lower Green bins, hydrant restoration, new skatepark ramps, the outdoor gym, lamppost painting, defibrillators, stone wall by the bridge, entrance signs, Neighbourhood Plan (to give us control over development and additional funds from development), new/renovated pavilion, Scout hut refurbishment and more.

There are also plenty of other things the precept gets spent on that there isn't room to list here. You'll notice that, although the above are reasons why the precept is higher, they are also the reasons why Harrold is a great place to live. Reducing the precept might give each villager £10 to £20 back a year, but it would remove support for local clubs and mean a deterioration in the quality of facilities, amongst other things.

Orange recycling bags

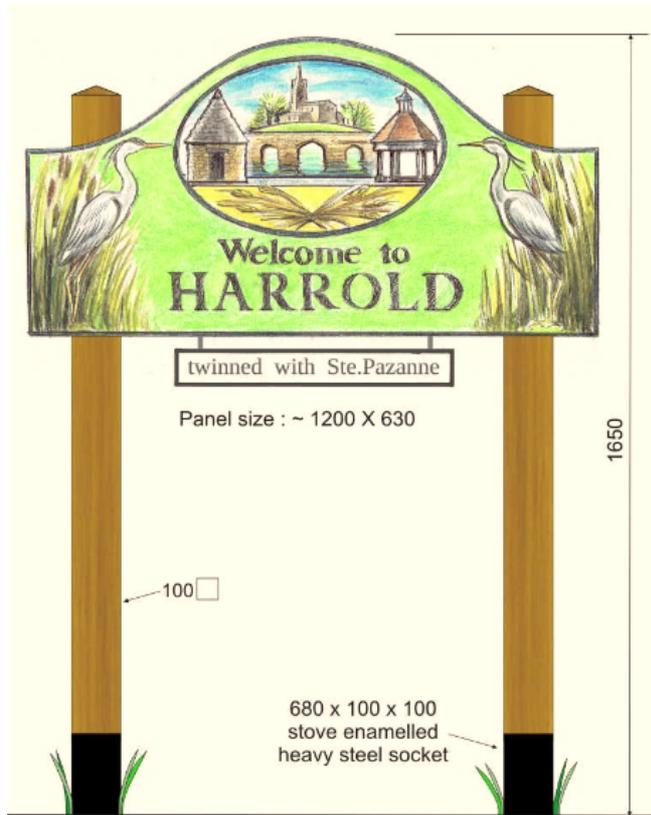
You can put these bags out with your recycling if your orange wheelie bin becomes full. These are available at Harrold Butchers on the High Street – thank you to the butchers for assisting with this. Please only take the amount you need; we assist the Borough council in running this service and we only get restocked on an ad hoc basis.

Items approved for maintenance

At time of writing we have scheduled: for some of the bollards on the green (level with School Lane) to be replaced. These have been removed over time, and parking on the grass is happening; to repair the broken gate at the Harrold Centre playground; to fix the fence next to Saxon House End playground which suffered wind damage.

New entrance signs

Below you can see an artist's sketch of what the new entrance signs for the village might look like. They are expected to be installed at three entrance points to the village and replace the current metal "Harrold" signs (where they exist) - the "T" in twinned will be capitalised. This was up for approval at the March meeting.



Dimensions in mm.

Roman paddock adoption

We have been notified that ownership of the roads in Roman Paddock, Saxon House End and Barley Kiln Lane has finally been transferred from the developer to the Borough council; essentially this means that they are now responsible for maintenance issues. This transfer process was owned by the Borough, but the Parish Council continued to press for resolution.

Saxon House End playground

The council has approved a contractor to replace the climbing frame/fort at Saxon House End playground, which has reached end-of-life. This piece of equipment, and the soft surface underneath, will be replaced with a similar style of apparatus shortly after the Easter holidays.

Stone wall by the main bridge

We have received quotes and chosen a contractor to build a stone wall to replace the unattractive metal railings on the North East riverbank by the main bridge. These railings were confirmed by the borough planners to have no historical value. The borough planning application process took time to work through and we are still finalising with Borough Highways and the contractor to coordinate the work.

Developing the Neighbourhood Plan

The steering group has spent the last few months evaluating the village survey results and met with all landowners who had put sites forward for development. The next stage is to develop a number of potential development options. These options will be put to the village for consultation in the next few months. This is the crucial time for the village to think about where future development should take place. The Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group is looking for ways to reach as many villagers as possible to present the options. We are planning a series of drop-in sessions and presentations. If you run a group or club in the village please come and speak to us; we would like to come present directly to you. Please keep an eye open for more information and visit the Neighbourhood Plan section on the Parish Council's website. We will be publishing a series of documentation and the survey results over the next few weeks.

Contact:

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www.harroldparishcouncil.com

Meetings are held at the Parish Council office. Next dates are March 14th and April 11th. All are welcome to attend, but please email the clerk if you wish to address the council at the start of the meeting.