During the past year, Flitwick Town Council has continued to emphasise our commitment to the community to develop our organisation in order to achieve both good governance and increased relevance to our residents’ lives. In doing this, we have focused on ensuring that we are able to offer services and develop projects which will enhance the standard of living within our Town.

Naturally, the breadth of our activities means that we must always ensure that we understand the financial implications of our decisions. We will always aim to remain prudent with public finances and obtain best value on every Pound spent from the public purse.

In the years coming we will continue to invest in public projects whilst those around us are cutting services and amenities which we feel are so vital to the wellbeing of both individual residents and our community at large. However, we do recognise that the financial constraints on individuals, families and organisations remains a deep concern.

With those concerns in mind, we do understand that we need to keep our expenditure under constant critical review. As such, we have undertaken a review of the delivery time scales of all our live projects to ensure that our priorities are in line with our long-term funding and budget position. We are at pains to ensure that anything we undertake to do is within our financial capability and will not endanger our finances as they stand or unduly overburden the hard-working tax payer. We have therefore resolved to set our 2019/20 Precept as follows.

The Precept figure of 2018/19 is currently £779,592 and this is set to be increased to £816,053 for the next financial year. This means an increase of 4.68%. However, the number of new properties in the Town and consequent increase of the tax base means that the real terms increase to an individual household on a Band D Rate will be 1.87% or £165.39 per annum, an increase of £3.04 on last year.

With the wide-ranging work which Flitwick Town Council does in our community, we feel that this Precept offers excellent value for money. We will continue to offer events such as the Classic Car Show, Flitwick Carnival and the Community Awards or projects such as the Monthly Older Persons Lunch Club, Forget Me Not Group, Youth Outreach via our partners at 4YP or our very successful Children’s School Holiday Scheme. We also offer our Resident Driven Projects Scheme and yearly grants to a multitude of local organisations. Flitwick Town Council delivers more than many other Councils and is widely recognised as a leader in our peer group.

We must also not understate the benefit of having an asset such as the Rufus Centre in our ownership. The Centre is not only the home of Flitwick Town Council but also generates revenue through our highly successful commercial activity. Be this the Tenanted Offices, Conference and Events business or the mere fact that we have this incredible space available for our community events, saving us a considerable amount in costs; the effect of keeping the Precept rises in check cannot be overlooked.

For this nominal cost of £3.04 on a Band D property (less than lunch at your local high street café!) we are confident that this is both a reasoned, prudent and sensible Precept for next year and sets us on a secure footing for the foreseeable future. I continue to be confident in our robust financial position and consequently the future of our Town.

Cllr Gareth Mackey

Town Mayor