

## **FEBRUARY 2017**

Nicola Baker writes:

### **Website**

The Parish Council website has had a make-over! Please take a look at [www.dedhamparishcouncil.org.uk](http://www.dedhamparishcouncil.org.uk) and let us have any comments on its accessibility and ease of use. There is a feedback form on the front page.

### **Business breakfast**

As reported last month, at the November Business Breakfast a question was asked about the apparent conflict between the aims of the Dedham Vale Society and the environment lobby to keep the car driving visitors out of the Dedham Vale. The Dedham Vale Society has asked us to make clear that this is NOT their policy and we are happy to set the record straight.

### **Environmental forum**

Residents will remember the problems caused by excessive rainfall in June of last year, with many areas of the village affected by flooding. Since that time the Parish Council has been in communication with a number of statutory bodies, including the Environment Agency, to try to establish whether any action can be taken to improve matters in the event of future flash floods. On 16 February there will be an Environmental Forum at the Assembly Rooms, to which all residents are invited. It will be a 'drop-in' event from 3pm and we hope to have a number of short presentations in the evening. The programme is still being finalised, so please check for up to date information on the website or notice boards. The Environment Agency will be represented and it will be a good opportunity for residents to raise any matters of specific concern.

### **Budget**

Councillors have set the budget for the 2017/18 financial year. A careful analysis of this year's spending has been undertaken and it has been decided to set a budget which allows us to fulfil all our obligations from our annual income, rather than relying on our reserves. It has become clear that it may be necessary for Parish and Town Councils to undertake some of the responsibilities of the County and District Authorities.

For example, Essex County Council's footpath budget has been cut, which means that the Parish Council is funding some of the footpath maintenance in order to maintain the high standards in our village for the benefit of residents and visitors. We have also decided to keep the income received from parking fees in the village's car parks in a 'ring-fenced' reserve to allow us to investigate two specific areas of concern for residents. These are car parking and street lighting. The Parish Council is very aware of the sensitivity of both of these matters and is committed to a comprehensive consultation with all interested parties. The net result of these budget decisions is that the Parish element of your Council Tax will go up this year to £43.51 per household (Band D). This remains lower than most of our neighbouring parishes and Dedham Parish Council feel that this represents good value for money.

**Next meeting.**

Monday 6 February 2017, 7.30pm in the Duchy Barn.

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