

# Hoo and Chattenden Parish Council

## Community Connections



### Welcome to the Hoo and Chattenden Parish Council Newsletter

#### How is the Parish Council Funded?

A parish council is primarily funded through a **precept**, which is collected as part of the **council tax** by Medway Council. Each year, the parish council is required to prepare a budget to outline its expected income and expenditure for the upcoming financial year. This process helps determine the level of precept required to fund council activities and services.

Historically, Hoo St Werburgh and Chattenden Parish Council has set one of the **lowest precepts on the Hoo Peninsula**. For example:

- **2022/23:** The precept was set at **£30.01 per annum per Band D household**.
- **2023/24:** The council opted to **freeze the precept**, keeping it at **£30.01 per annum per Band D property**.
- **2024/25:** A **2.5% increase** was applied, raising the precept to **£31.28 per Band D household** to help balance the council's accounts while also using some of the council's reserves.
- **2025/26:** Due to **changes in financial circumstances** and **additional responsibilities**, the parish council has had to consider a slightly higher increase. This will raise the precept to **£36.13 per Band D household**, an increase of **£4.85 per year**.

#### Why is the Precept Increasing?

The need for this increase is driven by several key factors:

##### 1. New Responsibilities – Village Hall Management

From **1st April 2025**, the parish council will take over responsibility for the **Village Hall on Pottery Road**.

This is part of preparations for the **new Community Centre**, which will be located on the same site and is currently in early planning stages.

##### 2. Specialist Planning Advice

The parish council anticipates the need for **professional planning advice** to respond to major planning applications submitted to Medway Council.

The **Medway Local Plan**, expected to enter its **Regulation 18 consultation phase** in 2025, will require detailed scrutiny to ensure the best outcomes for the local community.

##### 3. Balancing the Budget

To **minimise the financial burden** on residents, the council has allocated **some funding from reserves** to help keep the precept increase as low as possible while ensuring a balanced and sustainable budget.

#### Keeping Costs Low for Residents

While any increase in local taxation is an added strain, the parish council has worked to **keep costs as low as possible** while still ensuring effective and transparent governance. Even with this year's increase, the precept for Hoo St Werburgh and Chattenden **remains among the lowest on the Peninsula**, and the parish council is **confident that it will continue to be one of the lowest in the future**.

If you have any questions about the parish council's finances or upcoming projects, please feel free to contact the Clerk or attend one of our upcoming meetings. Thank you for your continued support as we work to serve our community effectively.

# PARISH COUNCIL PROJECTS

## Changes are Happening

The Parish Council would like to keep you up to date with two projects which are occurring in the Parish.

### Memorial Garden

First there is the development of the new Memorial Garden. This is opposite the Church Car Park in Vicarage lane. The land was originally purchased by the PC to prepare it as an extension of the existing Church Burial site. As the Church are unable to proceed with this project, the Parish Council have decided to convert the project into a Memorial Garden. The intention is to provide a Memorial Stone on Which those Hoo and Chattenden Service personnel who have lost their lives in conflicts since the Second World War will be remembered. It is also planned to have an area where residents will be able to scatter the ashes of those family members who have died, and to erect a small plaque of remembrance.

The area will be landscaped to provide quiet surroundings and seating for those who wish to have an opportunity to sit in tranquil surroundings with your thoughts.

### Community Centre

The second project is the building of a New Community Centre at Pottery Road, which will replace the existing Village Hall, which has now come to the end of it's useful life and is in need of extensive renovation. The existing hall was built by the Parish Council in the early 1960's, and has been run by a Charitable Trust ever since it was completed.

The Parish Council, working with Medway Council, have obtained funding to design and build a New Community Centre. This will have increased and modern facilities to serve the needs of the community now and in the future.

It will enable more clubs and organisations to use the building at the same time, improved car parking and refreshment facilities.

To enable existing the existing nursery and clubs to continues to operate whilst the new build progresses, the existing Village Hall will continue to remain operating. In order to ensure that this happens smoothly, the Parish Council will take over the operation of the Hall on the 1st April, from the Charitable Trust who have operated the Hall from the original opening in the early 1960s to the present day.

The Parish Council would like to take this opportunity to thank all the volunteers for their time and effort in providing this facility for the Village.

