

At the meeting of the Full Council on Wednesday a fully costed and balanced budget for 2024/25 was approved. As expected, the Council Tax will increase, the F&HDC proportion of it is increasing by 2.99%. Other precepts will be determined by KCC, Kent Police and Crime Commissioner, Kent Fire and Rescue Service and Town/Parish Councils. The budget includes £18 million to be spent on front line services such as waste collection, quality social housing and other community based services. The Housing Revenue Account budget was also approved and unfortunately rents will be increasing by 7.7%. This is in line with the Government recommendations. The extra money will enable the council to continue with the maintenance of it's properties and allow us to build more social housing in the District. I know that these increases come at a very bad time with the ongoing cost of living crisis. Please check the Council's website for details of help and support that can be provided if you are affected by this.

At the Overview and Scrutiny Committee there was a presentation on the CIL regulations. The figures that were given were for the year 2022/23; almost a year out of date. Sellindge was listed as £0 on the table and I queried why. I was told it was because there was no 'qualifying development' during the year. I requested up to date information for all eight parishes in the North Downs West Ward. There was a note indicating that in the year 2023 – 2024, so hopefully by the end of this month, Sellindge will be getting £72,359.04.

There have been several landslides along the Folkestone part of the coast and the Road of Remembrance remains shut. F&HDC have completed the works they are responsible for: all shrubs and sycamore trees were removed, and 12 evergreen oak trees were coppiced to form a low hedge. We are now awaiting a drone survey to be carried out along the escarpment and an assessment will be made to see if any other works need to be carried out. The road remains closed whilst KCC arranges clearance of the fallen trees.

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