

Q1. Generally there has been rationalisation in the number of layers of government. In view of this how can an additional tier be justified in Eastbury, when we currently have 3 exceptionally able Councillors that provide the necessary advocacy for any issues that need to be raised?

Q2. Why do we need another level of government when we already have good service being un-parished?

Q3. Moor Park & Eastbury already have three councillors dedicated to that area. Why do they need a load more?

CH Response:

- From information from surveys, people like to think 'locally', to think about the quality of their lives in a local way.
- This is not another layer of bureaucracy competing with the District Council but rather a complementary layer. E.g. see Frome and Sutton Coldfield. Frome encouraged candidates to come forward – 49 candidates for 17 seats – not political, all independent candidates.

MH Response:

- Real benefit re: extra layer and cost – we feel strongly that the turn on investment is very worthwhile.
- Creation of a neighbourhood plan.
- Ability to affect local area in a much more focused way.
- Focus on local environment.
- We can use the CIL monies to support the delivery of service, we can do things that the residents can influence.
- Looking at five years' time now – really being able to influence that.

Supplementary: I don't see the need for another Council when we have the excellent District Councillors we do have.

Why can't these things be done by existing councillors?

MH Response:

- A community council can be a group of people, elected, non-political, who exist on behalf of the residents. One aim; to do good things for the community. Especially the creation of a Neighbourhood plan. For example, at the moment HCC Highways dept are running projects in discussion with parish councils.

CH Response:

- Parish Councils can volunteer more people to do projects (e.g. Frome – a share shop).
- Parish Councils can deliver things quickly and complement what the District Council has to do statutorily.

Supplementary: What more can a Parish do for residents, we currently have a neighbourhood watch that does loads of good work in our community – very good service, with immediate action – what more can you do for us?

MH Response:

- Things that require a more granular look, particularly re: budgets, a community council in a much better position to do that.
- Can also work on behalf of residents at County level. A community council would add a huge benefit to existing arrangements.

Q4. Could one of the District Councillors who is also a Parish Councillor, explain the benefits the residents obtain by having that extra layer of a Parish Council ?- And how do they cope with the diversity of the differing ward identities - like say Moor Park & Mill End?

Cllr MT Response:

- A neighbourhood plan can be focused on the parished area. E.g public conveniences can be re-established and paid for from the precept, this can be done in consultation with residents.
- The District Council already manage and work with diverse communities.
- Chorleywood PC funded an extra PCSO for the area, having consulted the local community.
- However no denying there is a cost involved in having an additional council.

Nb – groups of representative bodies in an area can also draw up neighbourhood plans.

CH Response: stats read out (HW getting from CH)

Q5. There will have to be a Parish Clerk or other administrator, what will be the cost of their wages and who will pay them? (I understand Chorleywood Parish Clerk receives circa £45,000 pa).

CH Response:

- I am a parish clerk – my salary is in the public domain. I don't think this is a question about the cost of a parish clerk but the value that person can bring to a community. Most of the clerks I know are very conscientious and are subject to scrutiny.

MH Response:

- All accounts, including salaries, for a community council are published.
- We don't yet know what the cost will be for the 4wards area, until the Council is created, but it is in our best interests to obtain value for money and a return on investment. Anticipate the precept to be around £20 for a Band D property.
- There would probably a part-time Parish Clerk.

Supp: If we elect more councillors and a clerk and the costs involved; what will they be doing?

CH: Clerk and councillors have completely different roles. The Clerk carried out the decisions taken by the Councillors. IT is a legal requirement to have a Clerk. There are a number of benefits of having a full time officer who can take on a number of different roles.

Q6. Please detail income and expenditure for the proposed parish.

Answered in previous replies

Q7. Will the proposed parish have 'assets' to raised additional income?

MH Response:

- All Parish Councils are set up with no assets.
- It would be sensible to look at money being spent on special expenses, but only if the Parish Council could run them more efficiently.

CH Response:

- Assets can come from Herts CC too.

Q8. I am told a Band D property will have to pay £10 more on their rates, how much more will a band G property have to pay?

MH Response:

- For a Band G property anticipate the precept to be about £35, if a Band D property precept is set at £20.
- The level of the precept will be set by the Council – the Council will talk to residents to ask them what they think the precept should be.

Q9. I would like to ask the proposed Community Council what it will and will not be able to do regarding the roads, pavements and lights in Moor Park and Eastbury.

MH Response:

- Moor Park 58 is a private estate.
- The benefit of a parish council is direct liaison with Herts CC on local projects, e.g. speed issues, use of 'slow down' stickers.

CH Response:

- Costs of projects can be supported by other government tiers. Woolmer Green – involved with Highways Together project – Parish Council has a letter of enablement for activities which the Parish Council can carry out.

Cllr MT Response:

- A campaign in Chorleywood for a road crossing achieved a contribution of £10k from the Parish Council when the County Council did not have enough in the budget; now the scheme is going ahead.

Supplementary: How would it be dealt with specifically for Eastbury?

MH Response:

- The idea is that the new Parish would be warded, with specific local councillors responsible for each area. Would ensure that each area would benefit from this arrangement. As an example, Abbots Langley Parish Council keep a track of money spent in each ward and allocate funding fairly to each area.

Q10. Eastbury Ward have very few public amenities provided by Three Rivers, can the Working Party provide any practical examples that justify Eastbury having a Community Council and what the benefits would be to the average household for the additional cost on the annual Council Tax bill. Depending on your response, do you think Eastbury residents been failed by not having a Community Council?

MH Response:

- Direct liaison with local government tiers

Elizabeth Willetts of Eastbury Residents Association Response:

- In not having a community council, we are missing out, e.g. CIL monies, would go straight to Parish Council to decide how to spend it.
- Parish councillors would be able to be represented at HCC.

- School transport and discretionary travel - a Parish Council would be able to have some input.
- Change in Parish boundaries next year re: South Oxhey – feel Eastbury will be left out as we won't have a Parish Council.

Q11. What activities will the proposed parish undertake?

CH Response:

- There are possibly around 10,000 ways of providing various types of activities, e.g. Sutton Coldfield.
- my village do more community work now e.g. Redbourne provide £20k to local groups / celebrating the Queen's 90th birthday.

MH Response:

- Precepts are set to reflect the services provided.
- Parish Clerks can be required to obtain external grants as part of their performance targets.

Supplementary: What will the 'teeth' be of a community council? Many infrastructure services already provided by our Neighbourhood Watch.

CH Response:

- Each area has different aspirations, and different aims.

MH Response:

- I have received lots of feedback on what local people want to see happen, that they want money spent at a local level.
- I would like to see more money spent on events in Rickmansworth. Infrastructure services also much better served by having a community council.

Q12. What will be the overall benefits/improvements to the community of the proposed parish?

Answered in previous replies

Supplementary: I'm concerned about the extra costs and the extra level of bureaucracy.

MH Response:

- I understand these views – we would want to know that the precept was going to deliver value for money.

Additional Questions from the floor:

Question: We have a Parish Council in Croxley. It costs over £250k per annum. They only employ two productive workers. Their admin costs to run the above are over £100k. The cost to me is £83.65 pa. Not money well spent. We certainly do not require another tier of Government, particularly as CGPC put up their precept every year even though everyone else is cutting back. They also have savings of over £100k?

MH Response:

- Cost – really important to recognise the fact that the money spent is a mixture of precept and special expenses – varies, depending on the area. Special expenses specifically for services agreed by the District Council.

Question: Do you have figures for how many seats are empty in community councils after a few years?

CH Response:

- A Community gets a Council it deserves – moribund councils don't excite people and encourage them to stand. Co-options do happen but can be very good candidates from local community.