

Public Participation

Statement/Question from Mary Jarvis, Clerk to Melksham Without Parish Council

Parish and Town Council grant options

There are two issues I would like to raise

1. The unfair way Wiltshire Council plans to award the grants to town and parish councils, despite our objections. This is based on a percentage amount of the planned precept, rather than an amount per elector x number of electors per parish. Thus if a Council has planned a precept of £100,000, the grant is given of a percentage amount of that 30% = 30,000. This system does not take into account the efficiency of the local council and the formula works against rural parishes and areas. A rural parish with £5,000 precept would only receive £1,500. The system should be done fairly to allocate the grant on an amount per each elector, so that each parish has an equitable amount, regardless of the amount of precept. An example of this can be seen in how the grant was paid last year. Melksham Town Council received £13.80 per elector/tax base whereas Melksham Without who has an electorate about the third of the size of Melksham only in effect received 84p per elector. Melksham Town Council received a grant of £54,072.19 whereas Melksham Without which is about one third the size of Melksham received only £2,313.20. That is just unfair.
2. The requirement to pay Melksham Without Parish Council compensation for the loss of grant due to the grant being calculated on the precept for the year before 2012/13, rather than on the previous year's precept, plus the extra revenue from the 200 + extra houses. Although there were approximately 200+ extra new electors in our parish, as a Council we actually lost grant. We wish to receive the amount which should have been given to us last year; i.e. the extra revenue for the extra housing built in our parish during 2012/13, with our grant from you for 2014/15. This year we will miss out again as last year's grant for us omitted to include the revenue base for our extra housing. This year, you will be basing your grant award on last year's amount which was based on our precept amount **prior** to the construction of the extra houses. How are you going to put this right?

Wiltshire Council has acknowledged that Melksham Without lost out on huge amount of revenue due to the way things were calculated. (Under the old system we would have been able to raise £114,000 due to our extra housing without even raising our Precept amount per elector) We are asking that Wiltshire Council now make the correct adjustments including the amount we lost out on last year. Last year's grant should have been based on the correct precept for the number of electors - £114,000, not £107,000 which excluded the extra houses. As a Council we are struggling with the revenue loss for 2013/14 and no more cuts can be made.

The full response the Melksham Without parish made to your consultation questionnaire is attached as our comments were only partially reported in your Agenda papers.

Response from Cllr Tonge

Cabinet member for Finance, Performance, Risk, Procurement and Welfare Reform

A verbal response will be provided at the meeting.