

**Dear Bamburgh Property Owner and Friend of the Village,**

We have all experienced a year like no other that has hit everyone in terms of personal and economic hardship and inconvenience and so many have been impacted by the virus, either directly or indirectly.

Although the coronavirus pandemic has significantly affected our community since March 2020 the Parish council has been able to operate remotely to fulfil existing obligations and to initiate additional projects. Nevertheless, 2020/21 has been marked not only by the consequences of the pandemic but also by an increase in the visibility of the village at a time when Britons were constrained to choose a holiday destination within the British Isles. The rise of Bamburgh as a must visit holiday destination naturally brings a sense of pride but also imposes additional demands in terms of the expectations of holidaymakers visiting a premium location. Whilst responding to these expectations the Parish Council is also firmly committed to preserving the lifestyle of the village residents as visitor numbers increase. The combination of these factors has led to a significant increase in the level of activity of the Parish Council.

Within this context of increasing demands on the time and finances of the Parish Council the reduction of the availability of funds is important. As you are probably aware, homeowner residents in Bamburgh pay council tax, which includes the precept paid to Bamburgh Parish Council. This is the only source of the Parish Council’s income other than donations to finance specific projects.

In the U.K. we currently have a tax loophole that allows owners of holiday lets to have 100% business relief available on properties with a rateable value of £12,000 or less. In Bamburgh a high proportion of properties are now being used as holiday lets and many of these are registered as commercial properties paying business rates. This has major financial implications for the Parish council which finds itself with greatly reduced income when compared with several years ago. This is a national problem within the U.K. with similar problems being reported in areas where the number of holiday lets is significant such as Cornwall, Suffolk, and the Lake District.

The limited financial resources of the Parish Council fund the Parish Clerk, our Village Warden to keep the village clean and tidy, upkeep of our children’s playground, grass cutting, Christmas lights, maintenance of the war memorial, and general upkeep of the village. These ongoing commitments have grown in response to the village’s increased popularity with a direct impact on the hours worked by the Parish clerk and the Village Warden.

In addition to its on-going financial commitments the Parish Council has initiated several other projects such as renewal of the playpark, making available wheelchair access to the beach (including construction of related storage facilities with electrical connections), replacing steps up from the lighthouse, installing posts and chains around the triangle next to the Grove and installing bike racks. Although these projects are largely financed by generous donors the Parish council also contributes financially.

 Bamburgh is a special place which we all hold very close to our hearts. We, the Parish Council, are charged with the responsibility of helping to maintain this beautiful village. We would be extremely grateful if holiday let property owners would consider/continue making an annual voluntary contribution to the upkeep of the village. The precept has increased this year for all permanent residents of Bamburgh and we would very much appreciate any increase on the £25.00 that was suggested last year.

We would like to thank all those who contributed to the Parish Council last year during this difficult time, we raised £865.00. Some of you very kindly set up a standing order to align payments with those made by residents.

Many thanks for taking the time to read this and considering contributing, which will help enormously with active parish funding.

Kind regards Bamburgh Parish Council

Any queries please contact our parish clerk: Joan Mitchell - Email address: bamburghcouncil@gmail.com

**Payment directly from your bank account to Bamburgh Parish Council OR Annual Standing Order:**

**Account number – 00164887 Sort Code – 20-58-17 Ref: Your business name.**