

## ***Woolaston Parish Council***

**Report to Parishioners** on the Special Meeting held Wednesday 12 January 2005:

- To consider an application from the Woolaston Memorial Hall Trust for grant support towards the costs of constructing a Community Centre
- To set the 2005/6 parish precept

The attendance of over 60 people reflected the level of public concern about the impact on council tax payments of any Parish Council support for the Community Centre project. The Parish Council meeting was convened and then adjourned to allow discussion in an open meeting.

David Harris, as Chairman of the Woolaston Memorial Hall Trust, outlined the history and current situation regarding the Community Centre plans, explaining that the deadline for completing on the contract with Forest of Dean Housing was Friday 14 January by which time all funding had to be in place. In order to meet the shortfall of £50,000 the Memorial Hall Trust had negotiated a bank loan and were applying to the Parish Council to underwrite this loan by making an annual grant to cover the loan repayments (£10,000 a year for seven years, to include interest payments). He illustrated the effect this would have on the parish precept.

(i.e. the element of Council Tax paid to Woolaston Parish Council).

However, he made it clear that most, if not all, of the £50,000 might be raised by donations and grants. Several grant applications were in process and although the outcome was not guaranteed, the indications were favourable. It was hoped that the actual amount of loan required would be substantially less, thereby reducing or removing the need for a higher parish precept in subsequent years. In that case, any surplus from the first £10,000 would be used to furnish the build

David Harris responded to extensive questioning from the floor regarding many aspects of the Community Centre project, the financial arrangements regarding the loan and the precept. There was the opportunity for many views and concerns to be aired.

Having gauged the feeling of the meeting, the Parish Council reconvened. Members who had declared an interest in the agenda items left the room. After a brief exchange of views a vote was taken to support the application for a grant. The parish precept for 2005/6 was set at £13,000; allowing £3,000 for annual parish costs (topped up with money from reserves) and £10,000 for the grant to the Memorial Hall Trust for loan repayments.

### Illustration of the additional cost of the new precept per household for 2005/6

COUNCIL TAX BAND	2004/5	2005/6		Additional cost	
	Woolaston Precept set at <b>£4,900</b> <i>(i.e. the element of Council Tax paid to Woolaston Parish Council)</i> £	Woolaston Precept set at <b>£13,000</b> <i>Reduced to £3,000 for annual parish costs (but including an element for £10,000 grant)</i> £		Per year £	Per week £
A	6.48	<b>17.16</b>	<i>(13.20)</i>	10.68	0.21
B	7.56	<b>20.02</b>	<i>(15.40)</i>	12.46	0.24
C	8.64	<b>23.14</b>	<i>(17.80)</i>	14.50	0.28
D	9.72	<b>25.74</b>	<i>(19.80)</i>	16.02	0.31
E	11.88	<b>31.46</b>	<i>(24.20)</i>	19.58	0.38
F	14.04	<b>37.18</b>	<i>(28.60)</i>	23.14	0.45
G	16.20	<b>42.90</b>	<i>(33.00)</i>	26.70	0.51
H	19.44	<b>51.48</b>	<i>(39.60)</i>	32.04	0.62

#### **FOOTNOTE:**

The Community Centre project is now secured and the building contract will be completed within this year. The Parish Council looks forward to the central role this will have in village life.

See local press for further coverage of the meeting and the issues involved.