

What is a Precept?

The Precept is a tax that Parish and Town Council's charge their local electors to meet their budget requirements. Parish and Town Councils do not receive any direct funding from central government and rely on their Precept plus any other income they generate from services or facilities they

provide. The Parish and Town Council Precept is part of the Council Tax and is collected from local electors via their Council Tax payments.

The Precept requirement is the difference between the Parish Council's estimated income and its anticipated spending requirements for the financial year (its budget).

Function	Precept	Income	Expenditure	Transfer from reserves	Transfer to Reserve
Administration	168220	8566	168010	0	8776
Allotments	2125	4232	4815	0	1542
Cemetery	27710	116759	93528	0	50941
Grants to community groups	16500	2324	18490	0	334
Sprowston Diamond Centre	180700	43328	212299	0	11730
Parks and open spaces	220018	36831	161354	0	95495
Streetlights, Dog & Litter bins	72738	0	44300	0	28438
Viking Pub	0	0	950	950	0
Funds held for other organisations		251	90		160
Total	688011	212291	703836	950	197416



Finance Officer Retires

Pictured Town Mayor John Ward presenting a bouquet of flowers to the Council's retiring Finance Officer, Susan Formosa.

Susan joined the Council in 2017 and soon became an integral part of the team. She was heavily involved in many aspects of Council's financial activity including; numerous successful audits; the purchase and renovation of Sprowston Diamond Centre, and during the COVID-19 pandemic, taking and making payments to and from local residents and their shopping volunteers at all hours of the day, night and weekends.

Guy Ranaweera, Town Clerk described Susan as a diligent and hard-working member of staff and wished her a long, happy and healthy retirement.

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Sprowston Town Council and Sprowston Diamond Centre

Sprowston Matters

Recreational Facilities Survey

Between 1st October 2020 and 18th Dec 2020 Town Council conducted a survey to consult residents about what kinds of future recreational facilities may be needed in Sprowston.

The survey was publicised in the winter edition of Sprowston Matters, which was delivered to every address in Sprowston. Included in that edition was a paper copy of the survey along with a freepost return envelope. The survey was also publicised through Council's Facebook page and website, with residents able to take part online if they preferred.

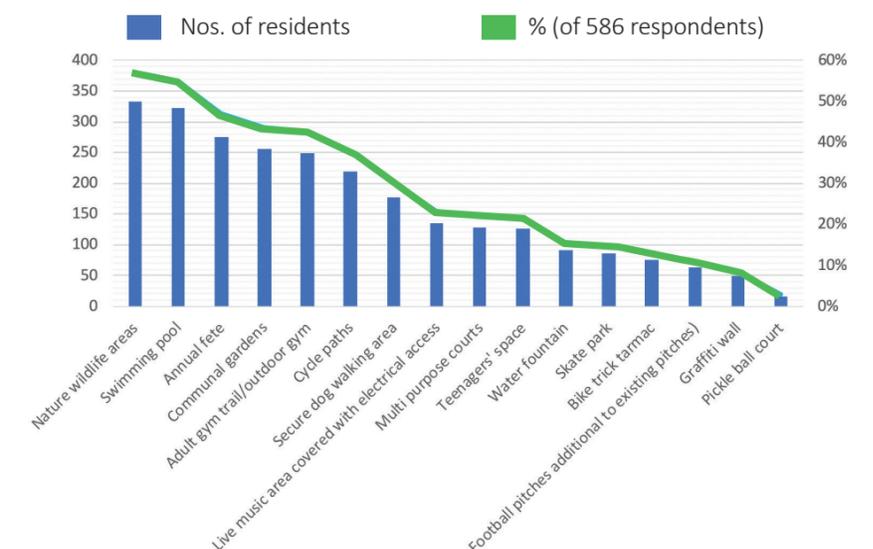
Respondents were invited to select as many options as they wished from a list of popular recreational facilities, and/or suggest new options.

Overall, 586 responses were received and these have been used to help Council draw up a list of priorities from the feasible options.

Continued on page 2

Results are presented in the graph below:

Which of the following recreational facilities would you like to have in Sprowston? (Respondents may select multiple options)



Re-election of Chairman and election of Vice-Chairman

At the Annual Town Meeting in May Cllr. John Ward was re-elected Town Mayor of Sprowston having held this position for two years. Always trying to do his best for the people of Sprowston and in this most difficult year facilitating aid to the most vulnerable. John has served the residents of Sprowston for the last 12 years as County, District and Town Councillor. Born in NR7, John knows the area very well, is a local school governor and continues to look at ways to improve the environment.

He said "The coming year promises to be an exciting one for our Town with lots of housing development and the investment it will bring. One of our major projects, to be funded from this investment, will be the redevelopment of the former Viking Public House into a Community Facility.

We also look to increase our support for the Sprowston Youth Engagement Project."

Cllr. Judy Leggett was elected as Vice-Chairman having been a member of Sprowston Town Council since 2015. Judy is a volunteer at the Dementia Café, a strong supporter of the work of Sprowston Youth Engagement Project and a member of Sprowston Grow your own Community Group. Since the first lockdown Judy has been an active member of Sprowston Supporting our Community Together helping to answer phone calls and ensuring the smooth running of the group.

She said "I am looking forward to working with residents to develop the former Viking Public House as a community facility."



Continued from front page

Priorities

Residents' survey responses have been used as a starting point for a top 5 priority list of future recreational facilities. In drawing up the list, Councillors also took into account available land, finances and the extent of Council's legal powers. The list is in addition to any projects that are already underway (such as the Sproston Skate Park or refurbishment of the former-Viking Public House on Tills Road).

Options that didn't make it onto the priority list will be kept in mind for any future opportunities that may come up. Notably, building and maintaining a swimming pool is unfortunately not feasible for Sproston Town Council. Instead, Town Councillors are liaising with Broadland District Council if there is any opportunity to work with partners to provide a pool in the Broadland area, with good access from Sproston.

Priority	What are we going to do about it?
1. Nature wildlife areas and communal gardens	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exploring participation in the 'Tiny Forests' tree planting initiative. Exploring the managed rewilding of some roadside verges, and increasing wildflower areas. Consulting on future use of the Cannerby Lane Green. Supporting Sproston Youth Engagement Project's Urban Garden project on Church Lane.
2. Summer fete 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Preparations for a Summer Fete in 2022 are underway.
3. Adult gym equipment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Providing adult gym equipment at the future Skate Park. Identifying if some equipment can be placed on suitable unused grassed areas around Sproston.
4. Cycle paths	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advocating for more cycle paths and walking routes, where suitable, in new housing developments and highway planning applications.
5. Secure dog walking areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A dog-safe gate will be fitted to the main entrance to Barkers Lane field, to prevent dogs running onto the main road.

Look out for updates over the coming year!

The Chairman of Sproston Town Council Mr John Ward, presented the Annual Report of the Council for the year ending 31 March 2021

"The Town Council's municipal year has once more drawn to a close and it gives me great pleasure in presenting my annual report.



This has been an extraordinary year such as I have never encountered in my political or personal life and very challenging for the Council in a number of ways, primarily because of the successive lockdowns.

During these unprecedented times everyone has had to adapt and the Council is no exception. Since April 2020 all meetings have been held on-line via Zoom with an opportunity for public participation by remote attendance.

Our grounds staff changed their shift patterns and worked throughout the pandemic maintaining the parks and open spaces, which received unprecedented usage. They continued to facilitate burials at our Church Lane cemetery albeit with limits on mourners in attendance.

Whilst the office was closed to visiting customers staff were still available via telephone and email to assist with residents' enquiries.

Throughout the pandemic the Council has supported Sproston Coronavirus Help Group, now known as Sproston Supporting Our Community Together, acting as a financial go between for shopping purchases, facilitating 643 transactions totalling £21,049.45, printing leaflets, sourcing exercise kits, hand sanitisers and face masks, and advertising contact details.

Individual Councillors assisted with manning the helpline, shopping and prescription collections.

With regard to our community building this was set to be Sproston Diamond Centre's busiest year with increased interest from a range of hirers. However, the building closed in March as a result of the pandemic followed by limited opening during varying degrees of restrictions.

On a more positive note, since March this year we have been slowly welcoming back our regular customers in line with the Government Road map and hope to resume our monthly cinema, which has been running for 12 years screening recent or award-winning full-length movies.

As to financial matters this Council has always tried to provide the best services whilst keeping expenditure at realistic levels. In December, Council approved the 2021/22 budget and precept.

The total agreed expenditure budget was £886.402 (which included £20,000 transfer from play equipment reserves for a new play tower and slide at Sparhawk Park) and the precept was agreed as £708,544.00 a 2.98% increase on 2020/21.

To meet the Councils funding requirement, sports, venue, cemetery and memorial fees were increased by 3%.

Allotment rents and water charges remained unchanged.

Due to the uncertain financial outlook caused by the coronavirus pandemic most discretionary spending in financial year 20/2021 was paused. With the pandemic now receding and the financial outlook becoming more stable, those projects previously put on hold will be restarted in this financial year.

To make remote payments easier during lockdown and to give our customers more choice the Council introduced a PDQ payment machine and now have the facility to receive credit and debit card payments.

The Town Council has continued to support local community groups and good causes which much needed funding and given £16,190 in grants. Beneficiaries include:

- Broadland Tree Warden Network - £30.00
- Dementia UK - £60.00
- Sproston Foodbank - £100.00
- National Accidents Rescue Services - £100.00
- Norfolk Citizens Advice Bureau - £200.00
- The Royal British Legion - £300.00
- Norwich 45th Scout Group - £400.00
- Sproston Youth Engagement Project - £5,000
- Sproston Youth Engagement Project (Outreach Worker) - £10,000

One of the most significant decisions of the Council this year has been to progress with the acquisition of the former Viking Public House / Bengal Restaurant on Tills Road.

Whilst Council was looking at recreational provision in Sproston it became noticeable that whereas other areas of Sproston had cafes, church halls, public houses, members' clubs and a community centre the west of the Town lacked these amenities.

Feedback from a survey of local community groups, and changes in society resulting from the Coronavirus Pandemic suggested a need for a building that could act as a community hub and facilitate community groups which support vulnerable members of society.

Following satisfactory surveys for structural defects, land contamination and asbestos the Council agreed to purchase the property and completion took place on 21 May 2021.

With regard to streetlighting we have received over 270 street lighting fault reports in the last 12 months a visible sign of an ageing stock, some being close to 30 years old.

Postponed work to replace over 400 street lights with energy efficient LED's is hoped to be re-instigated later this year at an approximate cost of £520,000.

Moving on to the cemetery in September a socially distanced Consecration was conducted by the Bishop of

Norwich, the Rt Revd Graham Usher in preparation for opening of the extension.

As to other matters of interest in the parish, the Town Council has submitted observations on 98 planning applications in accordance with policies in the Sproston Neighbourhood Plan.

Additional wooden posts have been installed on the grass verge opposite Falcon Road school following requests from the head teacher and concerned parents. Whilst this was funded from my County Councillor Highways budget the Town Council was instrumental in liaising with all parties and progressing this project to address dangerous parking issues outside the school.

With ongoing major housing expansion at Home Farm and Salhouse Road the Council has been consulting with developers on the provision of street lighting, potential play areas, open space and sports facilities.

We have requested the open spaces be seeded and accessible to residents whilst waiting for developers to order and install equipment.

Work has started on upgrading our website to improve clarity, incorporate new accessibility regulations and be more user friendly. Together with telephone, email, Facebook, noticeboards and the return of counter enquiries we aim to ensure as much information as possible is available to our residents on the administration of the Council.

I would like to conclude my report by thanking Councillors and staff for their hard work and support in a particularly difficult and unpredictable year.