



## Claydon & Whitton Parish Council – March 2019

We offer our sincere condolences to the family of the late Councillor Gerald James who died suddenly in January. Regrettably, Gerald only served as a member of the Parish Council for twelve months, but we record our gratitude for his contribution during that time.

**Precept** – At a time when the County and District Council and the Police & Crime Commissioner are all intending to increase council tax charges in 2019/20, Claydon & Whitton Parish Council have agreed a budget of £40,995 and a Precept (Parish council tax) of £52.55 for a Council Band 'D' equivalent property which will mean that its proportion of the total council tax charge will not increase. However, it has been able to fund all its services and projects at the same level as in 2018/19 and also increase its donations to charitable organisations who work within the local community. In particular, because of the County Council's decision to withdraw funding to Citizens Advice bureaux, the Council agreed to make a substantial increase to its annual contribution to the Mid Suffolk CAB because its free advice services are likely to be used by a wide range of residents from our local community.

**Local Elections** – Local council elections, including parish councils, will take place on 2nd May 2019. All existing Claydon & Whitton parish councillors will have to stand for re-election and in addition there are four vacancies on the Council for which we require candidates. Some frequently asked questions about becoming a parish councillor are:

- **What do councillors do?** – Parish councillors are democratically elected from the local community for four years. Becoming a councillor allows you to make a real difference in your community by engaging with residents, local groups and businesses to find out their needs; making decisions on which services and projects the council should take forward; and getting involved locally to ensure that services are meeting the community's needs.
- **How much time does it take?** – A recent survey found that councillors spend an average of three hours a week for council work which often includes attending council meetings, engaging with residents and representing the council on local groups.
- **Who can stand for election?** - To stand for election you must be a British citizen, citizen of the Commonwealth or the European Union, 18 years of age or older and live in an area that is served by the parish council (i.e. Claydon or Whitton Rural)
- **How can I get involved?** – Anyone who wishes to stand for election as a parish councillor or would like further information should contact our Parish Clerk, in the first instance.

**Paperless Billing** – Mid Suffolk District Council is promoting the use of paperless billing with a free online portal, MyAccount, with features that include:

- Paperless billing (eBilling)
- Viewing bills, reminders & notices
- Applying for discounts & exemptions
- Notification of a change in circumstances
- Updating your personal details
- 24/7 access to your account
- Printing bills if you need them for proof/evidence

To sign up (this only takes a few minutes) go to: <http://www.midsuffolk.gov.uk/ctpaperlessbilling>

**Meetings in March** - The Parish Council meeting will be held on Monday 11<sup>th</sup> March at 7.30 p.m. in Claydon & Barham village hall. Members of the community are very welcome to attend and opportunity will be given at the beginning of the meeting for them to speak on items included on the agenda or other issues about which they have concerns. Agendas will be available prior to the meeting from our Parish Clerk, Mrs C. Greenan, 129 Poplar Hill, Stowmarket, Suffolk, IP14 2AX. Telephone/text 07887459989. email [claywhit@btinternet.com](mailto:claywhit@btinternet.com)

