

Borough Report 2017

The never ending quest to save money has once again dominated the work of Tonbridge & Malling this past year, with it becoming ever more difficult to make savings that do not impact on the services we provide.

Obviously, the big change this year has been the introduction of Fairer Funding of Parish Councils, removing the costs of providing services to Tonbridge from the parishes, and allowing them to raise the funds themselves for the services previously paid for by the grant from T&M. This has not only saved Tonbridge & Malling a significant sum, but also helped to keep council tax down.

The new contract for the ever popular Bulky Refuse service has meant that there has been a slight reduction in the number of collections but has enabled us to continue to collect electrical and other difficult items.

The controversial introduction of a small parking fee for the car parks in Borough Green and West Malling has certainly made it easier for the residents of the villages to find a place to park as well as raising much needed funds to pay for the Parking Service and business rates due on Car Parks.

The new local plan is still in development, the public consultations were very well attended and the comments made are now being collated, before the next stage is ready for further consultation. It is imperative that we have a robust plan in place to protect our communities from over development, and from the constant changes in government policy. In the meantime we continue to work hard to protect our villages from unsuitable development, not always easy with the relaxation of permitted development rights and other government initiatives.

Our Leisure Services continue to be popular and well used and are considered to be among the best in the country.

The council continues to search for more ways to make savings as other contracts come up for renewal, and ways to co-operate with other local councils are investigated, but the huge amounts in question make this an ever more difficult task.

It has been a great privilege to represent our communities for another year and we look forward to attending Parish Council meetings and representing you over the coming months.