What is a Precept

Parish councils may raise a 'precept' on the council tax bills produced by their local billing authority (unitary authority or district council). This is essentially a demand for a sum to be collected through the council tax system.

Council tax-payers cannot refuse to pay it, and the billing authority cannot refuse to levy it. It is the only source of tax revenue available to parish councils.

Historically, parish councils were able to raise a 'rate' from the time of their establishment in 1894: this was linked to their then duties under the Poor Laws. Rates were levied on non-domestic and domestic property until 1990, when the rates were replaced by the Community Charge and the National Non-Domestic Rate. Since then, parishes have precepted on domestic property only, via the Community Charge and then the council tax.

What Does the Precept Pay For:

- All Parish Council running expenses, insurance and risk assessments
- Managing the grass cutting
- Cutting the hedges
- Organising tree safety inspections
- Supporting the Playing Fields Committee to run the playground
- Organising events
- Provide and manage the defibrillators
- Manage the Cemeteries (old and new) involving Mowing and maintaining the cemetery, Administration including booking of plots, liaising with resident, bereaved, undertakers and stone masons and marking out plots for burial
- Provide allotments
- Planning – assessing, listening to residents and responding to all planning applications
- Liaise with District and County Councillors to ensure that Ryhall's voice is heard
- Highways – periodic meetings with local Highways Officers Pressing for speed monitors and road safety
- Councillors and Clerk to represent the Council and village at external meetings as appropriate
- Emergency Plan
- Hold regular Parish Council meetings throughout the year including an Annual Meeting, open to the public
- Hold an Annual Parish meeting
- Keep accurate accounts, monitors the budgets, produce reports for each meeting, publish the payments, arrange internal and external audits within the stated timescale
- Respond to correspondence from villagers
- Funding Election Costs as necessary

How the Parish Council set the Precept:

The Parish Council start to produce a budget in October each year. A draft is presented to Full Council during the parish council meetings in November and December. The final version is resolved upon for adoption in January for the following financial year.

The preparation of an annual budget is the review the current year budget and spending; to determine the cost of future spending plans; assess levels of anticipated income; to provide contingencies and the need for reserves.

2025/26 Financial Year

Ryhall Parish Council assessed expected expenditure in the coming year. To achieve a balanced budget (to avoid slipping into deficit)over an increase of over £10,000 was needed in the precept.

The main areas of unavoidable expenditure increase which have contributed to this are :

Grass Cutting	+£4379
Clerk Salary	+£1311
Neighbourhood Plan	+£1000
General Maintenance.	+£1500

[*Note: the cost of the clerk has had to bear the central government's imposed National Insurance increase*]

In 2021/22 the precept was unchanged from the previous year's demand conscious of the cost-of-living crisis and adverse impact of Covid. This was only possible by drawing down from reserves

to cover the high inflationary cost increases which were still being incurred.

In the following 2 years the increase in annual precept requested was below inflation at 3.2% and 3.9%. We were able to minimise the impact of cost increases in these 2 years by further drawdowns of reserves ... and in the current 2024/25 year by a further £9,481.

Continually subsiding the costs of running the parish for ever by drawing on the reserves was not sustainable

We are aware that a 26.6% increase can look alarming but I would urge you to look at what it actually represents in cash terms as this is a much lower figure. The cash increase for a Band D property is £16.95 per year which amounts to an additional 32p per week. (for a larger band F property the increase is only 46p per week).

Ryhall precept makes up only 3% of the total Council Tax demanded by Rutland County Council which represents the biggest cash increase for us all to pay.

For those struggling to pay Council Tax, help is available from Rutland County Council and information about how to access this benefit can be found by clicking on this link https://www.rutland.gov.uk/benefits-support/council-tax-support