

## District Cllr. Paul Howitt-Cowan – November 2024 Report

<b>WLDC Budget Savings</b>	WLDC is faced with the challenge of saving £500,000 this year in its budget and a saving of £1million for the next 2 years.
<b>Gainsborough Cinema</b>	The cinema in Gainsborough and the development of the Baltic Mill site should be completed for Spring of 2025. There are changes to shop fronts in the Market Place.
<b>Food Waste Collection Service</b>	The collection of food waste begins next year with commercial food waste whereas the collection of domestic food waste begins in 2026. Residents shall be given a small plastic container for emptying into a larger bin with an orange lid. The general idea is to reduce food waste and residents will be encouraged to explore composting. The waste food will go to the biomass to generate energy. It is understood, domestic food waste collection comes with no added cost. WLDC has already commissioned the vehicles required to collect food waste.
<b>Precepts</b>	<p>The precept for District Councils is capped at 3.99%, whereas larger authorities which have a responsibility for social care are capped at 5.00%.</p> <p>As Chair of Overview and Scrutiny I have taken an interest in how much parish councils have in reserves; for example, Corringham has £30k, I know of another that has £60k and another of £100k. And yet these parish councils continue to increase their precept, for example, Corringham planned increase is 16.6% for next year. WLDC cannot take control of these reserves, but it can expose the ‘scandal’ of parish councils holding considerable reserves that are not identified for costed up projects during this cost-of-living crisis, when households are struggling to meet demands. 16.6% increase on band F is already causing concern amongst householders. One idea is for Parish Councils <i>not</i> to set a precept and reduce their reserves over a period of time. Not all parish councils have substantial reserves and an audit of those that have may be interesting. We require greater accountability in our parish councils and training to support those responsible for budget planning and precept setting.</p>
<b>West Lindsey Churches Festival 2025</b>	WL Churches Festival is to be held next year and will be including an additional 15 churches from North Lincolnshire, on an ‘experimental basis’. 15 from North Lincolnshire. There is a review of Core Funding, but this will be addressed in 2026.
	A book of the work of Karl Wood who painted watercolour pictures of many of the mills around Lincolnshire has been published. It features Hemswell’s post mill – also known as ‘Roving Molly’.