

Didcot Town Council

Address: Council Offices, Britwell Road, Didcot, OX11 7HN
Email: council@didcot.gov.uk
Tel: 01235 812637
Website: www.didcot.gov.uk



Guide to the Town Council element of your council tax for the year 1st April 2017 to 31st March 2018

In 2017/2018 Didcot Town Council will receive £106.48 for each band D household (£104.95 in 2016/2017). This represents an annual increase of £1.53 for a band D property.

Didcot Town Council's part of your council tax bill is collected by South Oxfordshire District Council and this leaflet explains how the figure is arrived at and where the money goes.

Although this financial year has been quite challenging in many respects it has still been possible to meet the financial commitments and also provide much needed support for projects in Didcot. The Town Council constantly seeks and strives to improve services and provide the best value to the community for the small proportion of the total council tax bill collected by South Oxfordshire District Council.

This is a summary of our budget for 2017/18.

Budget Summary for 2017/2018

Expenditure	£
Finance and General Purposes Committee	562,121
Grant Aid	38,500
Environment Committee	368,710
Environment Projects	132,999
Total	1,102,330
Less Income expected	(141,508)
Equals: total expenditure to be collected via Council Tax (the precept)	960,822

Dividing this precept figure by the tax base of 9023.6 gives the Town Council's component of Council Tax for a Band D Property as £106.48 per year. This is a 1.46% increase from the previous year.

In more detail, the following says how we have spent money and how we will spend money in 2017/2018.

The Finance and General Purposes Committee

The Town Council draws its income from relatively few sources and the Council Tax precept is by far the biggest source of revenue. Whilst the Council continues its examination of expenditure and potential savings, it is also looking at income sources. In the past year it was recognised that there was scope to raise fees relating to the Council's cemetery so that they compare favourably with those of

similar providers. Another way in which the Council lessens the financial burden on residents is that it continues to receive contract income in the region of £78,400 from SOLL Leisure; the company awarded the management contract of Willowbrook Leisure Centre until 2023.

A major single cost going forward will still be repayments, around £123,000 annually, to service the loan of £1.83 million used to refurbish and extend the Civic Hall and Town Council offices.

The Council maintains reserves that it has earmarked for future maintenance of its buildings and projects in recognition of the need to undertake remedial work to some of its aging assets.

A squeeze on finances results in an agreed budget that will see the precept rise by 1.46%: this is slightly below the Consumer Prices Index rise of 1.6% in the year to December 2016. In order to achieve this, difficult decisions about expenditure had to be made, but important services will be maintained.

More is said below about the Environment Committee's expenditure but otherwise the Council recognises that Didcot residents want to feel safe so the annual contribution towards CCTV (£8,924) will remain as will the funding of a Police Community Support Officer (£17,343). The Council will continue to provide financial support to the Civic Hall (£37,500), provide funds for a summer fayre (£9,000) and an increase in grant aid (£38,500) to voluntary organisations and groups that can bring benefit to Didcot's residents.

Since April 2016 grant aid has supported:

- Citizens Advice Didcot
- Didcot Arts and Community Association
- Didcot & District Royal British Legion
- Didcot Twinning Association
- Didcot Volunteer Centre
- Homestart
- King Alfred Drive Community Centre
- Oxfordshire Play Association
- Restore
- Revitalise
- South and Vale Carers
- St Birinus School
- The Kings Church, Didcot
- Victim Support

The Environment Committee

Expenditure on the outdoor environment is the most visible part of the Town Council's works and accounts for 45% of the total expenditure.

The Environment Committee oversees outdoor services, which delivers the management and maintenance of parks and recreational open green spaces owned or leased by the Council and sports, leisure and recreational activities.

Amongst its projects for 2017/2018 the Council plans to spend £95,000 on the following:

- Making progress on a new pavilion and storage block at Edmonds park
- Replacing nets and slides and repainting at Ladygrove play area
- Replacing staging at Ladygrove Lakes
- At New Road allotments, replacing fencing along the footpath and Jubilee Way edges
- Removing dated play kit and returning the playground to a grassed area at Mendip Heights

The Council is grateful to WREN for its confirmation of a grant of £49,000 towards the cost of replacing play equipment at Marsh Recreation ground, which will take place shortly.

In the 2016/17 financial year, in addition to the usual maintenance the Committee:

- Updated Didcot's Christmas lights, entering into a contract that provides new LED lights in the town.
- Entered into a contract to provide Tikspac free dog bag stations, which is an environmentally friendly concept that provides free dog waste bags in parks, recreational grounds and public areas.
- Hosted the very successful "A Right Royal Affayre" to mark the Queen's 90th birthday on Saturday 2nd July 2016, receiving a grant from South Oxfordshire District Council to support it.
- As part of its continued support for the centenary of World War 1 (WW1) and the Royal British Legion, the Council has agreed to designate the Smallbones Recreation ground as a Centenary Field. To commemorate the Battle of Jutland and the Battle of the Somme, the Council invested in a WW1 seat at the edge of the garden of remembrance and has purchased a further seat for future placement in the town.

Our sites and day to day maintenance

Our large sites are at:

- Edmonds Park
- Ladygrove Park
- Smallbones Recreation Park
- Marsh Recreation Ground
- Great Western Drive Park
- Loyd Recreation Park
- Stubbings Land
- Millennium Wood
- Ladygrove Lakes
- Kynaston Road Cemetery
- Mendip Heights
- Allotment sites:
 - New Road
 - Broadway
 - Wantage Road
 - Cockcroft Road
 - Mereland Road

Including some smaller sites, the Council manages a combined land area of over 100 acres. In terms of allotments the Council administers over 420 plots in conjunction with a users' liaison group that reports regularly on problems and successes.

An excellent team of full time grounds staff, led by the Outdoor Services Manager, maintains land owned by Didcot Town Council.

The work of the team includes:

- Tree care and annual planting
- Allotment maintenance
- Litter clearance
- Cutting grass and hedges
- Maintaining flower beads and hanging baskets
- Play area equipment repairs and inspection
- Providing sports pitches
- Vehicle and machinery maintenance

Feedback

Didcot Town Council would like to hear your views and any comments you may have on the services provided or what you would like to see in the future. Comments may be emailed to council@didcot.gov.uk, or in writing to Didcot Town Council, Town Council Offices, Britwell Road, Didcot, Oxon OX11 7HN, or hand them into the Council office on Britwell Road.

In order to ensure you receive a response and so that we can verify you are a Didcot resident, please provide your name and address.