

Didcot Town Council

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Guide to the Town Council element of your council tax for the year 1st April 2021 to 31st March 2022

In 2021/2022 Didcot Town Council will receive £113.09 for each band D household. This is a small increase of £4.87 per band D property for the Town Council element of your Council Tax.

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.

The coronavirus pandemic has made this financial year even more challenging than a "normal" year. The Town Council has had a reduction in income of around £300,000 due to residents and businesses unable to hire and use the Civic Hall and the contractor that ran Willowbrook relinquishing the contract and shrinking their operations due to their financial situation. All the while the Town Council's costs have remained largely the same. This has prompted us to substantially reduce our expenditure in a bid to avoid any redundancies or depleting our reserves while the budget for next year continues to assume income will be severely reduced. During 2020/21 the Town Council has continued to integrate with the Didcot Civic Hall operation and we are working to make the venue return to the vibrant Town asset as soon as the country fully emerges from lockdown. 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 2021/22.

Budget Summary for 2021/2022

Expenditure	£
Finance and General Purposes Committee	514,502
Grant Aid	45,000
Didcot Civic Hall	219,450
Environment & Climate Committee	466,459
Projects	76,420
Total	1,321,831
Less General Income expected	(75,674)
Less expected grant income – S106/CIL	(102,104)
Equals: total expenditure to be collected via Council Tax (the precept)	1,144,053

Dividing this precept figure by the tax base of 10,115.8 gives the Town Council's component of Council Tax for a Band D Property as £113.09 per year.

In more detail, the following describes how we have spent money and how we will spend money in 2021/2022.

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. The Council continually scrutinises expenditure and works to identify potential savings as well as other sources of income, particularly accessing relevant grants for some projects. One impact of the pandemic is the loss of contract income from the Willowbrook Leisure Centre – an annual loss of around £83,000. In addition, the Civic Hall income has shrunk by around £190,000 also due to several lockdowns and a limited availability to a few clients within the national rules.

A major single cost remains the £123,000 paid 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 are earmarked for future maintenance or renewal of its buildings in recognition of the need to undertake remedial work to some of its aging assets.

There is further detail below about the Environment Committee's expenditure but otherwise the Council recognises that Didcot residents want to feel safe so there is an annual contribution towards CCTV (£9,500). The Council will continue to provide financial support to the Ladygrove Community Centre (£3,200); ear-marked funds for a summer fayre in the region of (£4,000 – due to return in 2022) and grant aid to voluntary organisations and groups that can bring benefit to Didcot's residents (£45,000).

Since April 2020 grant aid has supported:

- Home-start
- Didcot Library
- Be Free Young Carers
- Citizens Advice
- King Alfred Community Centre
- Free Christmas Dinner Project
- Plus more applications being processed
- Didcot Rugby Club
- Didcot Foodbank
- Sue Ryder (South Oxfordshire)
- Didcot Volunteer Drivers

The Environment and Climate Committee

The Environment and Climate 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 new projects for 2021/2022 the Council plans to progress the following:

- Improvements at Ladygrove Lakes
- Improvements at Kynaston Road Cemetery
- Application for planning permission for new pavilion in Edmonds Park
- Progressing the new Splash Park at Edmonds Park
- Ownership of new play area at St Anne's Court

- Wildflower and bee-friendly planting
- New sand pit with play train at Ladygrove play area
- Promotion of projects to aid the climate emergency such as solar roof for the Civic Hall

In the 2020/21 financial year, the Committee has been working closely with other standing Committees of the Council to progress the following projects:

- On-going programme of water treatment at the Ladygrove Lakes
- Identifying the budget to improve the access to Stubbings Land – works due to start in April 2021
- Installation of LED lights and de-stratification fans in the Civic Hall to save energy.
- Installation of a height restriction barrier at the Edmonds Park recreation ground.
- Trialling the use of electric vehicles and equipment for use by the Outside team.

Our sites and day to day maintenance

Our large sites are at:

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Edmonds Park • Ladygrove Park • Smallbones Recreation Park • Marsh Recreation Ground • Great Western Drive Park • Loyd Recreation Park • Stubbings Land • Millennium Wood | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kynaston Road Cemetery • Ladygrove Lakes • Allotment sites: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ New Road ▪ Broadway ▪ Wantage Road ▪ Cockcroft Road ▪ Mereland Road |
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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 beds
- Play area equipment repairs and inspection
- Sports pitch maintenance
- 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.

ANNUAL TOWN MEETING – VIA ZOOM

7.30PM ON MONDAY 22ND MARCH

Every Didcot resident is invited to attend.

Please forward your questions to the Town Council by Monday 15th March 2021