



THAME TOWN COUNCIL

BUDGET LEAFLET 2018-19

Thame Town Council provides public services to the residents of the town of Thame and the village of Moreton. We deal with local issues in the parish on behalf of these residents and to do this we raise our own form of council tax which is known as a precept. The precept is collected on our behalf by South Oxfordshire District Council and is included in your council tax bill. In preparing its budget for 2018-19, Thame Town Council has again looked hard at where it can make savings (both in terms of cuts and further efficiencies), while at the same time providing the projects, functions and services that the community of Thame expect to be delivered.







This year, challenges and cost pressures have included:

- The need for a revised Neighbourhood Plan in response to the District Council changing the Local Plan above us.
- Government austerity, leading to direct cuts being made by Oxfordshire County Council to Thame based services.
- Termination of the District Council's funding for our Market Town Co-Ordinator, which will be covered using the Town Council's reserves in 2018/19 in order to maintain that valuable post, which is doing so much to support the vibrancy of the town.
- Increases in staffing costs due to changes in employers' pension contribution and the relaxing of the public sector pay cap which may mean an increase in salaries of more than 1%, subject to further negotiations by the National Joint Council, the outcome of which the Town Council is legally obliged to abide by.

Thame Town Council will continue to:

- Take on more from the austerity hit Oxfordshire County Council through the Localism and Devolution Agenda;
- Protect and ensure the future continuity of the acclaimed Thame Neighbourhood Plan;
- Do all it can to ensure the future prosperity of the town by increasing still further the vitality and vibrancy of the Town Centre;
- Campaign for a small direct share of the Business Rates so that the tax burden does not fall so much on the residents of Thame.
- Maintain the public assets of the town including its playgrounds, open spaces and the Town Hall.

To assist in those expectations, the Town Council has allocated:

-  £5,000 to support the second town-wide music festival
-  £5,000 for flood prevention measures at Cuttle Brook Nature Reserve
-  £10,000 each for the Red Kite Family Centre and Thame & District Day Centre
-  £15,000 to fund a Youth Worker to help address the much publicised issues that have raised concerns in the town throughout the year
-  £5,000 to increase the size of its Grounds Team from 3 to 4 staff, so that we are in a better position to react to the increasing maintenance needs of the town and District / County Council austerity impacts
-  Additional funding to hold a larger than usual Remembrance event to mark the centenary of the end of WWI and to celebrate 10 years of Thame Town Awards.

Various savings have been identified with the main one being no necessity to set aside public transport funds this year. That need should be covered by existing s106 funds held by the County Council. Numerous other minor adjustments, both up and down, have been made to reflect realistic cost / revenue expectations for the coming year.

For the third year running, the Town Council will also primarily call on its Capital Reserves for capital projects, rather than funding through the precept, though some allowance has been made this year for grounds equipment renewal.

Given the new houses being built in Thame, the tax base has increased, which helps to keep the individual tax burden down, as it is shared wider. However, the net impact of all the above change is that for the financial year 2018-19 the full precept increase in the current draft budget is proposed to be 3.5%, which equates to an extra £5.09p per annum or around 10p per week (for the average Band D household). This is the lowest increase for the past 3 years.

In 2018-19 the average household (i.e. Band D) will contribute £2.90 per week (through the precept portion of Council Tax) towards the funding of all the projects, functions and services that Thame Town Council provides for the community.

BUDGET SUMMARY

EXPENDITURE

	17-18 Budgeted	18-19 Projected
Central Services (including staff / member costs, office / depot costs, insurance, professional fees, democratic services, civic support, vehicles / equipment etc.)	£560,799	£587,103
Community Activities (including meeting space, Christmas, town fairs, town maintenance, festival support, open spaces, CCTV, Remembrance, Town Centre management, Information Centre etc.)	£99,848	£98,574
Neighbourhood Plan	£47,433	£94,113
Car Parks	£36,765	£36,780
Markets	£13,710	£13,610
Grants	£20,000	£20,000
Recreational Facilities (including Cuttlebrook, Elms Park, Memorial Gardens, Recreation Grounds, Skate Park, Playgrounds etc.)	£23,620	£25,600
St Mary's Churchyard	£6,000	£500
Investments	£15,000	£16,000
Capital Projects	£25,838	£34,460
Devolved Services (Thame & District Day Centre, Red Kite Family Centre, Bus Transport, Youth Projects)	£25,000	£35,000
TOTAL	£874,013	£961,740

INCOME

Central Services	£8,435	£9,525
Community Activities	£73,408	£65,268
Neighbourhood Plan	£0	£31,000
Car Parks	£36,765	£36,780
Markets	£71,258	£70,958
Recreational Facilities	£2,317	£2,117
St Mary's Churchyard	£3,300	£3,500
Investments	£34,000	£33,000
TOTAL	£229,483	£252,148

Precept Raised	£644,530	£709,592
Subsidy from General Reserves	£0	£25,451
Precept per Band D household / annum	£145.35	£150.44

ACHIEVEMENTS

In 2017-18, the Town Council spent significant time and effort in reacting to issues that impacted on the town while progressing longer term initiatives. In spite of that, there were still various achievements, in no particular order:

- Supported the first ever town-wide Music Festival
- Continued support of the various working groups in support of the Neighbourhood Plan
- Commissioned the build of the replacement community pavilion at Church Meadow – a capital project in excess of £1m, with appropriate governance implemented
- Recruited an additional Maintenance Assistant to support the increasing maintenance needs of the Town
- Conducted business and customer surveys in the Town Centre to direct the work of the Market Town Co-Ordinator
- Continued hosting monthly Councillor Drop-In sessions
- Consulted the residents of Thame on a proposed telecommunications mast at Southern Road Recreation Ground
- Awarded £14,750 in grant funding to local organisations
- Shared the disappointment and managed the implications of the cancellation of the September fair, directly caused by brinksmanship and miscommunication within the Showmen's Guild.
- Enabled the October Charter Fair to go ahead
- Improved the website including integrating a business element
- Supported the continuing annual Thame Town Charities Fair
- Held a successful community town flag competition, and raised the new flag in July 2017, which now flies daily in the town centre
- Hosted a public budget forum to increase community engagement and transparency during the precept and budget setting process.
- Increased town centre shops engagement with community events through window dressing display competitions
- Liaised with the Police on various matters affecting the Town including anti-social behaviour, the Light & Life festival; and supported them with the Shopwatch scheme and a Community Cafe
- Monitored planning for strategic and windfall sites in relation to the Thame Neighbourhood Plan
- Organised the Remembrance Day service including a spectacular flypast
- Hosted the annual (and constantly changing) Christmas Lights Switch-on event
- Participated in Small Business Saturday with a town centre Christmas Shopping initiative engaging 60 shops and businesses.
- Presented five Town Awards and three special awards for service to the town at the annual Thame Town Awards
- Recorded regular Town Council features on the new local radio station
- Responded to further iterations of SODC's Local Plan and other potential impacts on the future of Thame
- Supported Music in the Park, Thame Carnival, Thame Arts & Literature Festival, Midsomer Murder walking tours, Sports in the Street, Merchant Navy Day, Armed Forces Day and Tidy Thame
- Supported the annual Senior Citizen's Christmas Tea Party
- Created a Facebook page dedicated to promoting the Christmas events and activities taking place in the town through a digital advent calendar
- Took part in the national Love Your Local Market campaign – and sorted the filling of some long-standing potholes impacting on the market

ACHIEVEMENTS CONTINUED

- Welcomed two continental markets to the town centre
- Delivered additional burial space to St Mary's Church and worked on improving maintenance of the wider churchyard
- Grew our presence on Twitter and number of followers by 50% to around 1,200
- Launched Thame's first ever Art Crawl which involved 16 venues and was integrated with the established Thame Arts & Literature Festival
- Supported the creation of a new Moreton Residents Association
- Progressed various litter and dog fouling initiatives
- Learnt more about the control and provision of parking
- Planned lighting provision at Southern Road Recreation Ground car park
- Commenced work on a revised Neighbourhood Plan
- Hosted a well-attended Annual Town Meeting
- Boosted the profiles of Thame's Charter and Farmers' market through social media, additional events and branding
- Received the first Community Infrastructure Levy payments
- Continued working towards establishing the right public transport facilities within Thame
- Ensured additional readiness for the impact of winter weather – and delivered when it happened
- Updated data relating to the demand for a new Community Facility within Thame
- Supported the RSA in their work on the Green Living Plan
- Instigated work towards establishing a Community Land Trust
- Said an appreciative farewell to two long serving officers of the Council – Ady Williamson and Roy Edwards
- Prepared for new General Data Protection Regulations
- Entered a Dads Army themed float in the Thame Carnival
- Provided support to the Cuttlebrook Volunteers in their various improvement projects
- Achieved an Investors in Education Award through close working with Lord Williams's School
- Celebrated the Thame Good Neighbour Scheme second birthday
- Improved processes around pavement cafes / footway obstructions
- Via the Mayor's Charity, raised in excess of £7,000 charitable income for both Thame and District Day Centre and the Red Kite Family Centre
- Supported Thame Sports Club in funding applications for their proposed new pavilion

GIVE US YOUR FEEDBACK

Thame Town Council is committed to continuing to deliver the projects, functions and services that residents, workers, and visitors to the town expect, at a price that the residents are prepared to pay, and we thank everyone for their ongoing support in that work.

Your Town Council would like to hear your views and any comments you may have on the services that are provided or what you would like to see provided in the future.

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