

Thame Town Council - Precept Leaflet 2021-2022

Introduction

How does the precept work?

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 (SODC) and is included in your council tax bill. In preparing its budget for 2021-22, 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 by the Town Council.

In 2021-2022 Thame Town Council will continue to...

- Support and protect local services and facilities.
- Defend and review the future continuity of the acclaimed Thame Neighbourhood Plan
- Do all it can to ensure the future prosperity of the local economy.
- Maintain the public assets of the town including its playgrounds, open spaces, and the Town Hall.
- Fund contributions to the Thame Town Music Festival, the Thame Senior Friendship Centre, a Youth Worker, the Red Kite Family Centre, and the renewal of the Thame Neighbourhood Plan.
- 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.

To assist in those expectations, the Town Council...

- Will primarily call on its Capital Reserves for capital projects, rather than funding through the precept, for the sixth year running.
- Has revised its staffing budget to take into account the Government's pay freeze for 1 year.

The proposed 2021-2022 precept

We are unable to draw down on our general reserves this year as a result of our loss of income (approx. £81,000) and additional expenditure that was incurred (approx. £20,000) due to Coronavirus. It is important that residents are aware that Thame Town Council did not receive any funding from the Government and in addition we did not receive any reductions in business rates which has meant we have had to fully absorb all losses which has greatly impacted on our general reserves. We supported market traders and other projects with free rent / no payments to help stay afloat in these times of hardship and yet we still had to pay business rates to cover market, town hall and our depot.

There are some other cost increases due to the withdrawal of funding from SODC for emptying dog bins in the Thame area plus cost incurred by supplying an additional vehicle to help deliver packages to the most vulnerable in addition to extending staff coverage to ensure market area is Covid-19 safe.

The net impact of all the above change is that for the financial year 2021-2022 the underlying precept increase for normally provided projects, functions and services is 3.79%.

In 2021-2022 Thame Town Council's precept will be £807,268.

Budget Summary

In 2021-2022 the average whole household (i.e. Band D) will contribute £163.92 per annum (£3.14 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.

Give us your feedback

Thame Town Council is committed to continuing to deliver projects and arranging functions / 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.

ADDRESS: Town Hall, High Street, Thame, Oxfordshire, OX9 3DP

EMAIL: info@thametowncouncil.gov.uk

WEBSITE: www.thametowncouncil.gov.uk

TELEPHONE: 01844 212833

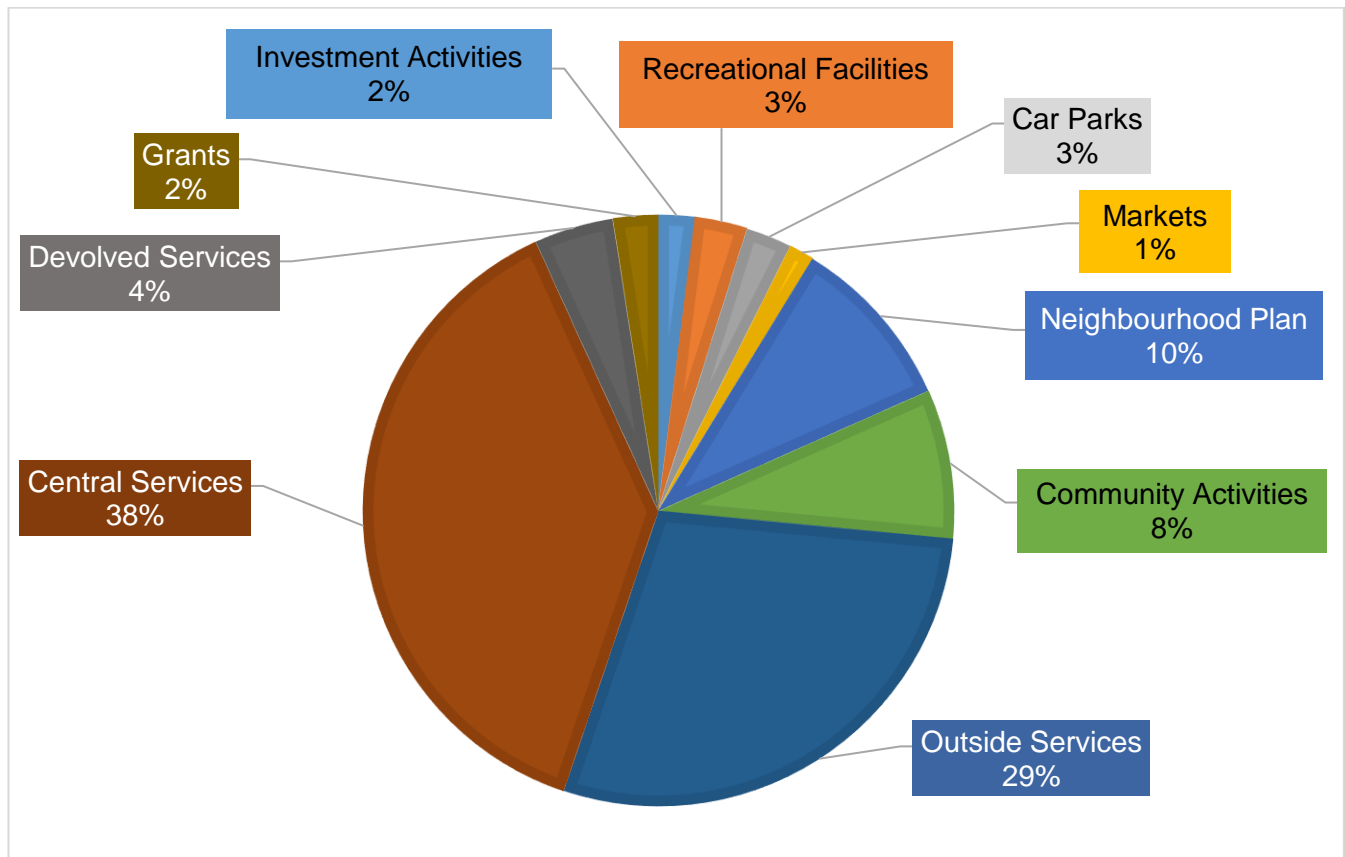
TWITTER: @ThameTC

FACEBOOK: @ThameTownCouncil



Precept Breakdown

The pie chart below shows the breakdown of the total precept raised for 2021-22, as expenditure towards the Town Council's activities and services.



Notes

Investment Activities – Management of Capital Reserves.

Car Parks – High Street & Upper High Street car parks. Zero budget impact as expenditure and income balance out.

Outside Services – Maintenance depot costs, vehicles / equipment.

Thame Town Council's 2020-21 Achievements:

Central Services

- Successfully transitioned to virtual council and committee meetings in response to Covid-19.
- Conducted the Annual Governance and Accountability Return remotely.
- Managed the loss of income and increased expenditure associated with Covid-19, as well as various staff changes and isolation, whilst continuing to deliver the Town Council's essential services and administration.
- Upgraded the IT equipment and server for staff, enabling them to work more effectively especially whilst working from home.
- Published a website accessibility statement in line with the legislative requirements and made various accessibility improvements to the website.

(‘Central Services’ also includes staff / member costs, office costs, insurance, democratic services, civic support, professional fees)

Devolved Services

- Absorbed the impact of the District Council withdrawing funding for dog bin emptying.
- Provided financial support to the Thame Senior Friendship Centre, Red Kite Family Centre, and Thame Youth Projects.

Grants

- Provided Citizens' Advice Thame with an annual grant.
- Supported Thame Shed with a seed-funding grant.

Recreational Facilities

- Ensured the town's play areas and recreation spaces were Covid-19 safe and complied with Government guidance.
- Replaced the rotator bowl at Southern Road Play Area.
- Carried out a town-wide tree condition survey.
- Held a successful community churchyard tidy-up at St Mary's Church.
- Reviewed the grass cutting regime and identified areas to trial no cutting.

('Recreational Facilities' also includes Cuttlebrook, Elms Park, Memorial Gardens, Recreation Grounds, Skate Park, Playgrounds, St Mary's Churchyard etc).

Markets

- Supported the Market to remain open with safety measures, additional staffing and by waiving rent.

('Markets' covers the weekly Charter Market and monthly Farmers' Market)

Neighbourhood Plan

- Adopted the Green Living Plan
- Responded to various local and national consultations, and the adoption of South Oxfordshire's Local Plan 2035.
- Progressed burial space discussions at Site C.
- Continued to defend the TNP and object to planning applications that were not in conformance with its policies.
- Challenged loss of employment at the former DAF Trucks site.
- Supported the Thame Community Land Trust in delivering affordable homes for local people.

('Neighbourhood Plan' also includes professional fees, consultancy, Green Living Plan support, printing)

Community Activities

- Disseminated and co-ordinated community support information relating to Covid-19 via various channels, including a new Facebook page for the Town Council.
- Supported the Love Thame Helpers, Sharing Life Trust, Thame Good Neighbour Scheme and Talking Team volunteers and various other community groups to respond to community requests.
- Supported Thame's businesses with Covid-19 measures and a recovery plan, campaigns, and a new business network.
- Held socially distant celebrations for the 75th VE Day & VJ Day anniversaries and Remembrance Event.
- Organised the well-received Thame Advent Calendar, offering a wide range of activities throughout December as the Christmas Lights Switch-On could not take place.
- Managed the cancellation of the September and October Street Fairs.
- Celebrated Thame's community through the Lockdown Love Awards in partnership with Thame Rewards Club.
- Ensured the Information Centre had appropriately safety measures in order to re-open.
- Delivered another successful Thame Art Crawl, despite restrictions, as well as various lockdown activities.

('Community Activities' also includes meeting space, Christmas, town fairs, town maintenance, open spaces, CCTV, festival support, Remembrance, Town Centre management, Information Centre etc.)