

Thame Town Council - Precept Leaflet 2022-2023

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 are responsible for 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 2022-23, Thame Town Council has again looked hard at where it can make savings by reducing costs and focusing on 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 2022-2023 Thame Town Council will continue to...

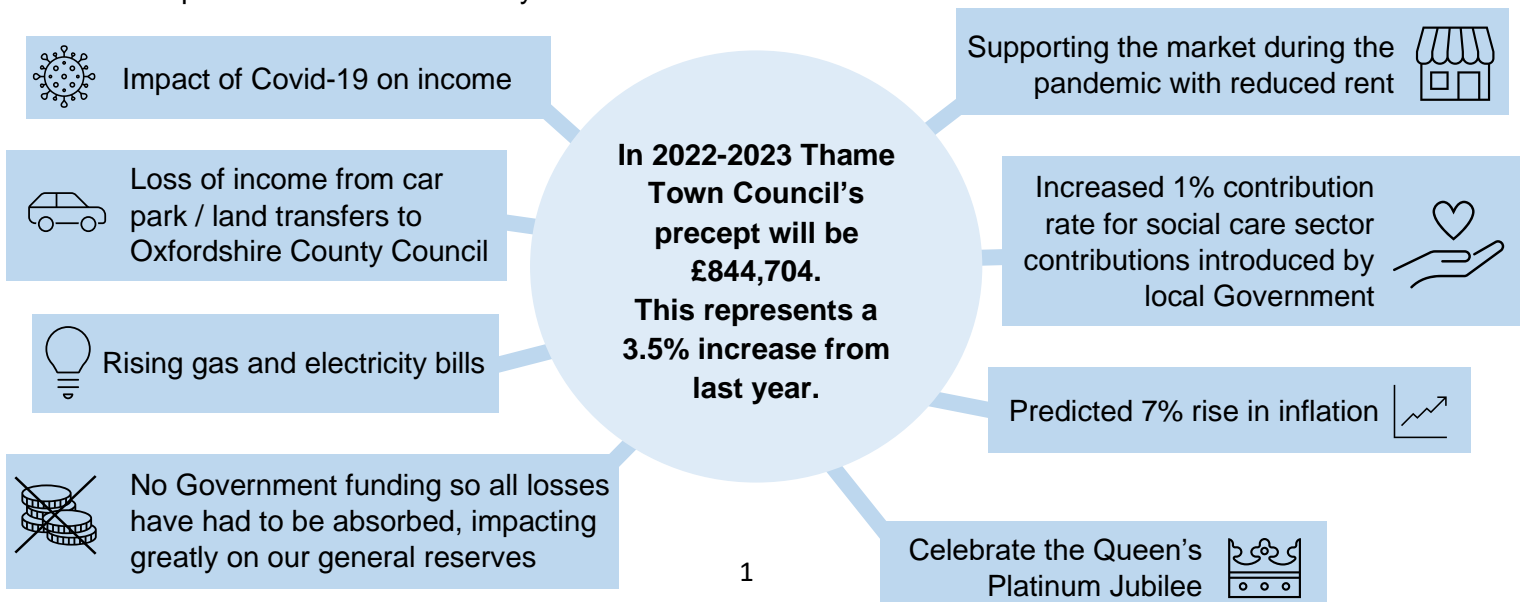
- Support and protect local services and facilities.
- Work to renew Thame Neighbourhood Plan and maintain the future prosperity of the town.
- Maintain the public assets of the town including its playgrounds, open spaces, and buildings.
- Fund contributions to the Cuttle Brook flood prevention measures, the Citizens Advice service in Thame, the Thame Senior Friendship Centre, a Youth Worker, the Red Kite Family Centre, the renewal of the Thame Neighbourhood Plan, and the Localism Fund for environmental projects.

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 seventh year running.

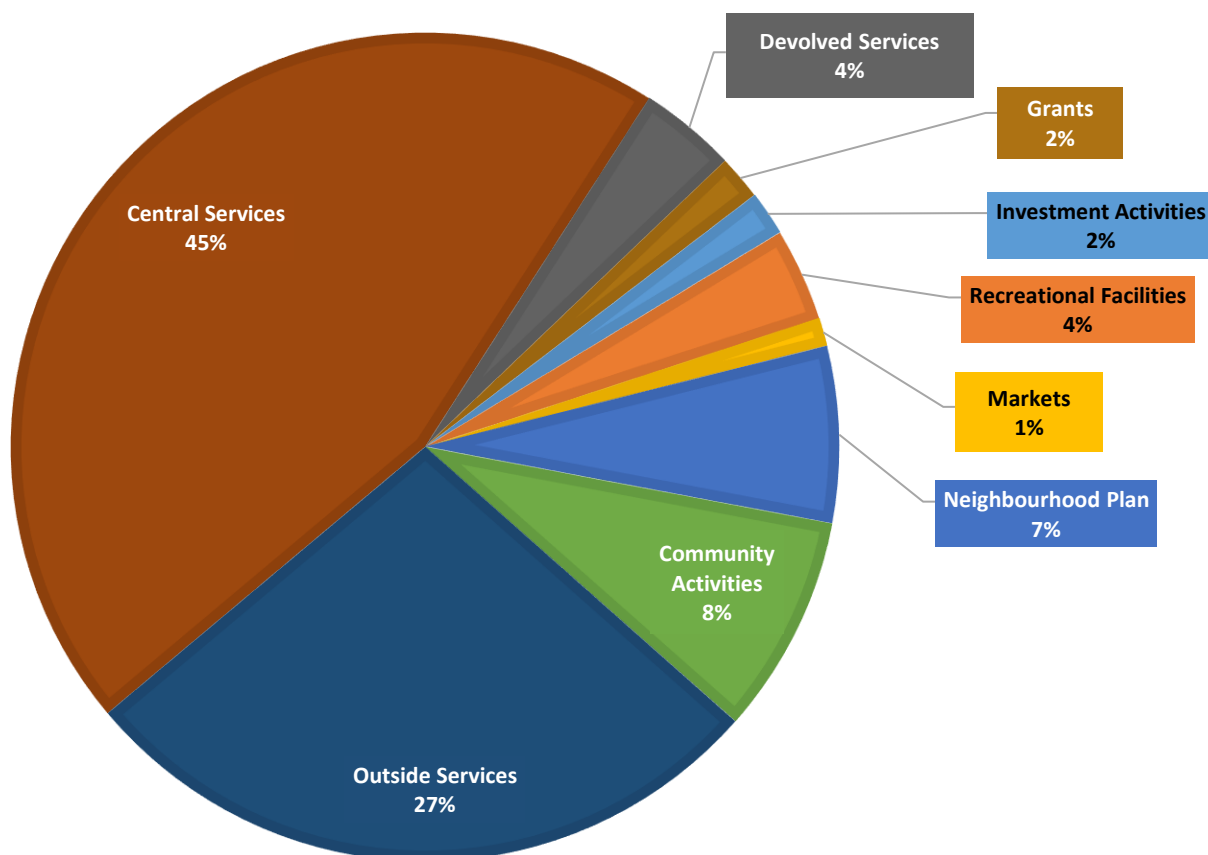
The proposed 2022-2023 precept

The average whole household (i.e., Band D) will contribute £169.66 per annum 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.



Precept Breakdown

The pie chart below shows the breakdown of the total precept raised for 2022-23, as expenditure towards the Town Council's activities and services.



Notes

Investment Activities – Management of Capital Reserves.

Thame Town Council's 2021-22 Achievements:

Central Services

(A large portion of this covers the salaries of staff, who the Town Council employ to deliver the functions, projects, and services, such as the achievements listed below. 'Central Services' also includes member costs, office costs, insurance, democratic services, civic support, professional fees)

- Welcomed Councillor Helena Richards onto the Town Council following a casual vacancy and subsequent by-election.
- Appointed a new Town Clerk.
- Returned to in-person council meetings from May 2021 in line with legislative requirements.
- Marked the death of HRH The Duke of Edinburgh.
- Said an appreciative farewell to Thame's car park attendants on their retirement and pastures new.
- Conducted internal and external audits remotely.



- Presented two members of the Maintenance Team with a Long Service Award for 20 years' service each.
- Undertook repairs to the Thame Museum roof.
- Improved the working environment by upgrading to energy efficient lighting in the office space.

Devolved Services

- Provided financial support to the Thame Senior Friendship Centre, Red Kite Family Centre, and Thame Youth Projects.
- Commissioned a feasibility study for a Community Youth Centre which identified Southern Road Recreation Ground as the optimum site and subsequently appointed an architect to begin design work on a new Community Youth Centre for Thame.

Grants

- Supported Citizens' Advice Thame with an annual grant.
- Awarded £15,000 in grants to eleven local organisations through the Town Council's annual grants scheme.



Recreational Facilities

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

- Installed a silhouette in the Memorial Gardens to remember those lost to Covid-19 and acknowledge keyworkers.
- Refurbished the ponds at the Memorial Gardens and repair the Pearce Memorial fountain.
- Managed ongoing various issues at the town's recreational areas including vandalism, dog poo, litter, and out-of-control dogs off leads.
- Supported Thame Green Living and Cuttle Brook Conservation Volunteers in planting trees and hedges at Rycote Meadow as part of a project to protect a valuable nature corridor and create a footpath connecting the Thame Meadows estate to the town centre.

Markets

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



- Promoted the markets through weekly 'Meet Your Traders' articles in the Town Council's newsletters and social media.
- Continued to support the market through the challenges of Covid-19 with operational support and reduced rent.
- Supported Thame Farmers' Market with their rebrand to Thame Local Produce Market.

Neighbourhood Plan

- Defended the Thame Neighbourhood Plan (TNP) by considering and referencing its policies when responding to planning applications.
- Appointed consultants to support the Town Council in reviewing the TNP.
- Initiated the process of reviewing the TNP, holding two public consultations to understand the public's views on the TNP's vision & objectives, character areas, and preferences on housing and employment land allocation.
- Challenged the loss of employment at the former DAF Trucks site, resulting in an unsuccessful legal challenge against the Planning Inspector's decision to grant planning permission at appeal.
- Challenged the granting of planning permission at Land at The Elms.

- Conducted a survey in relation to the town's specialist housing needs (such as affordable housing and housing for older people)
- Investigated a Hopper Bus for Thame by funding a survey to identify local transport needs.
- Celebrated Thame Community Land Trust reaching a major milestone in securing planning permission to build affordable homes for Thame people.
- Agreed in principle to take on the ownership and management of the new allotments at Hode Garth (Bellway) and Purser Crescent (Persimmon) and of the new burial space off Thame Park Road.

Community Activities

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



- Continued to disseminate and co-ordinate community support information and updates relating to Covid-19 and the local vaccination programme via various channels.
- Organised the twelfth Thame Town Awards ceremony at which six worthy winners were presented with an award.
- Welcomed back and successfully held various town centre and community events in line with Covid-19 guidance once restrictions were eased including continental markets, the two Street Fairs, the Remembrance Service, and Senior Citizens' Tea Party.



- Trialled a smaller Christmas Lights Switch-On event, which was well-received, alongside a selection of activities that ran throughout December and pop-up events on weekends, which were all promoted through a booklet that was delivered to every home in Thame.
- Enabled the local policing team free use of the Town Hall to hold monthly drop-in events.
- Supported initiatives, such as Love in a Bag and the Big Gift Give, which supported those in need over the festive period.
- Produced another Town Guide, following the success of the previous guide created in-house, which adopted a ‘Green Living’ theme to showcase the many organisations in Thame working hard responding to climate challenges on a local level, as well as promoting outdoor activities and connections to the environment.
- Progressed new public art in Thame by appointing an artist to undertake two 2-day ‘Art leading Wayfinding’ community engagement workshops, resulting in 5 totem designs and accompanying stories.
- Launched two walking routes (Thame Outer Circuit and Thame Inner Circuit) with associated publicity in partnership with Thame Green Living, Thame & Wheatley Ramblers and Lea Park Residents Association.
- Reopened the Information Centre.
- Organised the fifth Thame Art Crawl event.
- Supported 21st Century Thame and Thame.net in the launch of monthly Volunteer Fairs.
- Updated the Commemorative Plaques leaflet to include the newly installed blue plaque on the High Street.
- Conducted a public survey on the future of Elms Park to understand public opinion on how to make the park a better and more enjoyable place to be.
- Supported Thame Green Living with the first Thame Drive Electric event.



- Purchased three speed-watch radar guns and supported community groups in hiring the radar guns to undertake speed-watch checks in their area.
- Administered the Thame Good Neighbour Scheme with assistance from the Love Thame Blue Hearts.



Credit:
 @lukemarriner249 via
 Twitter

Outside Services

(‘Outside Services’ includes Maintenance depot costs e.g., vehicles, equipment, insurance, and utilities.)

- Changed the management of several grass-cutting areas to cultivate natural wildflower meadows and biodiversity, and leased a cut and collect mower to enable this.
- Maintained seven play areas, providing a safe, clean environment for children to play.
- Daily litter picks at Southern Road Recreation Ground, Elms Park, Queen Elizabeth Circle, Skate Park, the Memorial Gardens, and play areas at Churchill Crescent, Pickenfield and Pearce Way.
- Provided support and equipment for town events including the French Market, Christmas Light Switch On, Remembrance Sunday and Armistice Day, and September and October Fairs.
- Cut approximately 102,924m² of grass within the parish boundary.
- Purchased, planted, and nurtured over 5,600 summer and winter bedding plants, together with 48 summer and 32 winter hanging baskets.
- Provided extra equipment to allow the Tuesday Market to operate safely during the pandemic.



Give us your feedback

Thame Town Council is committed to continuing to deliver projects and is supporting the Thame Youth Community Project as well as 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.

Thame 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