

Your Local Council Tax

The Council Tax you pay helps towards a variety of services. The largest proportion is for those provided by Wiltshire Council - education, roads, car parks, bin collections, social services and planning right across the county. Then comes your contribution towards Wiltshire Police Authority and Wiltshire Fire & Rescue Services. A small proportion of your Council Tax, less than 10% of the overall annual bill, is for the running of your own Town Council which provides your most local services.

What you get for your money

- Maintenance and management of Town Council-owned assets – Town Hall, various commercial and residential properties, Marlborough Common, The Green, Salisbury Road Recreational Ground, Elcot Lane Playing Fields, Skate Park, Children's Play Areas, The Priory Gardens, Wye House Amenity Gardens, St. Mary's Churchyard, Stonebridge and Coopers Meadows, The Allotments, War Memorials, Town Floral Displays, Football Pitches and the Cemeteries.
- Consultation and assessment of all relevant planning applications
- Administration of burial records, cemetery space, plaques and memorials
- Christmas lights
- Event management
- Administration of a Small Grants Scheme
- Trustee for a small number of Charities
- Local communication via notice boards, website, social media and newsletter
- Work towards securing external funding and implementing new projects
- Information on Wiltshire Council services
- Liaison with other external agencies
- Civic work around Military links, Remembrance Day Parade, etc

How is it all organised?

Your Town Council has 16 Town Councillors – all volunteers and not paid – who carry out business through Full Council and Committees which meet regularly. They also represent the Town Council at more than 20 different local organisations. Councillors are supported by a small team of staff members.

The Council works with a number of different organisations, supporting various events and initiatives – Action for the River Kennet, Chamber of Commerce, Kennet Valley Arts Trust, Richmond Fellowship, Royal British Legion, Transition Marlborough, the Marlborough Brandt Group, Merchants House, the Golf Club, the Tennis Club, Rugby Club, Common Users Group, History Society, 4th Military Intelligence Battalion, the Air Training Corp, schools and many more.

TOWN COUNCIL GRANTS

In the last couple of years it has awarded grants to local groups including the Community Market, Transition Marlborough, Greatwood Charity, Marlborough Junior Athletics Club, Jubilee Centre, Bobby Van Trust, Home Start, the Scouts, Inside Out, Alzheimer's Society, The Bruce Trust, Splitz, B J Richards Trust, Carer Support Wiltshire and more.

Plans for 2014/15

Some of the projects the Town Council will be working on in 2014/15

- Installation of CCTV
- Work towards a Neighbourhood Plan for Marlborough – a way of ensuring that local people have a say in future development
- Entry into the Royal Horticultural Society's South West in Bloom competition
- First World War Commemorations with a re-furbishment of the War Memorials
- Civil War Re-enactment on The Common
- Path to the Cemetery

Financial Planning

Each year, Councillors scrutinise Town Council budget lines carefully to ensure best value but, there are costs over which there is little or no control – tax, superannuation, national insurance, utilities, business rates, etc. Forecasting expenditure has now been made more difficult due to the Localisation of Council Tax.

Central government has made some changes to Council Tax Support (formerly known as Council Tax Benefit) so that benefit claimants no longer receive funding support for council tax payments. Instead, their council tax bills are reduced at a local level under a scheme known as Council Tax Reductions. This has the effect of reducing the Band D Tax Base (number of Band D households in an area) and the figure used by town and parish councils to calculate the precept (local council tax). So, last year when Marlborough Town Council decided on what budget it needed for 2013/14, there weren't as many households to help raise it leaving it with a shortfall of £31,253. Wiltshire Council passed a Support Grant from central government down and as it was not sufficient to meet all shortfalls, it made up the difference from its own funds.

For 2014/15, WC itself is receiving a much reduced grant from central government which, like other public sector funding, will reduce more over the coming years. The knock-on effect is that less will be passed on to towns and parishes and this will continue year on year. (For 2014/15 this equates to a reduction of 35%). This shortfall will have to be met by the Town Council as it receives no direct grant from central government nor does it have a share of business rates.

This together with the likelihood that town and parish councils will be capped with regards to the level of increase over the course of the next 1-3 years has led to towns and parishes having to calculate next year's precept assuming they receive no Support Grant from Wiltshire Council. This allows Marlborough Town Council to work within a capped allowance in the future.

In order to cover this and meet budget requirements, Councillors have had to make the difficult decision to raise the precept by 15.49% for 2014/15.

What about use of General Reserves and savings?

The Council could have used reserves to meet costs or keep down the precept but this could not be sustained year on year. Under audit regulations, general reserves must be kept at a certain level. Currently our reserves stand at £233,519 with £100,000 ear-marked for projects. Savings of £12,260 were identified and shaved from budget lines. No increase in the precept would mean Councillors having to consider withdrawing planned projects, reducing services (less litter picking, cutting back on mowing, planting, etc) and events.

What does this mean for your pocket in 2014/15?

MARLBOROUGH TOWN COUNCIL 2014/15	
Total Planned Expenditure	636,692
Less Planned Income	158,933
Net Expenditure to be funded	477,759
Less Local Tax Support Grant	20,314
Precept	457,445
Tax Base for 2014/15	3137.05
Tax per Band D Property	145.82

To calculate the annual amount to be paid, the precept figure is divided by the number of Band D households in the town (3137.05). So, £457,445 is divided by the number of Band D households to calculate the Band D costs - £145.82.

For an average Band D property, this equates to a rise on the 2013/14 precept of 15.49% which will mean an increase of £19.56p per year, £1.63 per month or 37p per week. The table of Bands A – H sets out what this will mean for all bands of households. The lowest is looking at a rise of £13.04 per year, £1.08p per month or 25p per week. The highest rise is £39.12 per year, £3.12p a year or 75p a week.

Year	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
2013/14	£84.17	£98.20	£112.23	£126.26	£154.32	£182.38	£210.43	£252.52
2014/15	£97.21	£113.42	£129.62	£145.82	£178.22	£210.63	£243.03	£291.64
Difference for each Band £	£13.04	£15.22	£17.39	£19.56	£23.90	£28.25	£32.60	£39.12
% difference for each Band	15.49%	15.50%	15.49%	15.49%	15.49%	15.49%	15.49%	15.49%

Further details can be obtained from the Town Clerk, at Marlborough Town Council,
5, High Street, Marlborough, Wilts, SN8 1AA
E-mail townclerk@marlboroughtowncouncil.gov.uk
Telephone: 01672 512 487