



# Thame Town Council

## Budget Leaflet 2019-20

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 2019-20, 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.

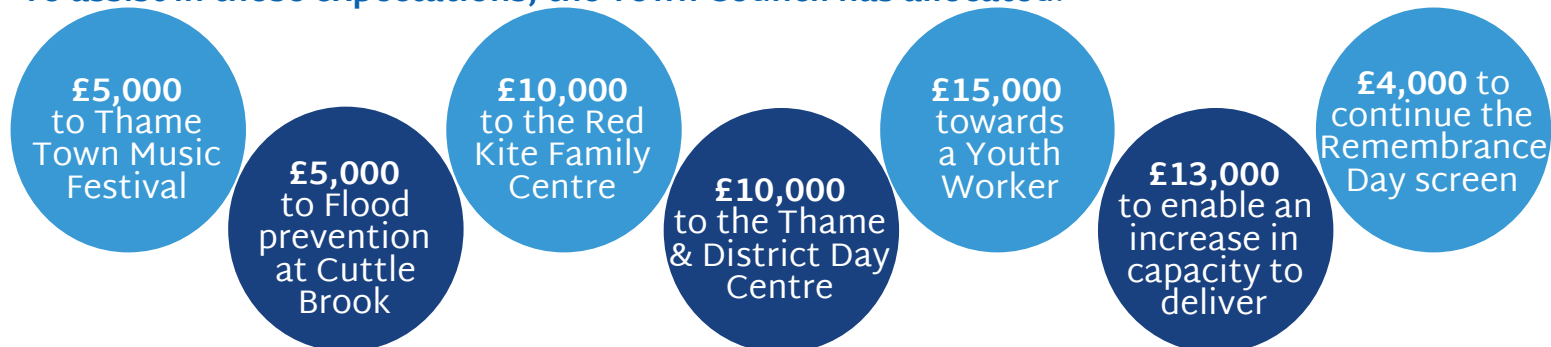
### **This year, challenges and cost pressures have included:**

- The need for a revised Neighbourhood Plan in response to the District Council's changing Local Plan above us;
- Government austerity, leading to direct cuts being made by Oxfordshire County Council to Thame based services;
- Withdrawal of the District Council's 50% funding for our Market Town Co-Ordinator, which is now being fully funded through the Town Council precept 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 the relaxing of the public sector pay cap which means an increase in salaries of 2%, through 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:**



Numerous other minor adjustments, both up and down, have been made to reflect realistic cost / revenue expectations for the coming year.

For the fourth year running, the Town Council will also primarily call on its Capital Reserves for capital projects, rather than funding through the precept, including for this year the replacement of an aging tractor. This reduced level of capital funding from the precept cannot be sustained much longer.

Given the new houses being built in Thame, the tax base has increased, which helps to keep the overall tax burden down, as it is shared more widely. The net impact of all the above change is that for the financial year 2019-20 the underlying precept increase for normally provided projects, functions and services is 1.44% but when the additional net £11,000 of funding for services formerly funded by South Oxfordshire District Council is taken into account, the full precept increase is 2.99%. This equates to an extra £4.50p per annum (for the average Band D household) and this is the lowest increase for the past 4 years.

# BUDGET SUMMARY

In 2019-20, the average whole household (i.e. Band D) will contribute a sum of £2.98 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.

## EXPENDITURE

	18-19 Budgeted	19-20 Budgeted
<b>Central Services (before recharges)</b> (including staff / member costs, office / depot costs, insurance, democratic services, civic support, professional fees, vehicles / equipment etc)	£587,103	£609,255
<b>Community Activities</b> (including meeting space, Christmas, town fairs, town maintenance, open spaces, CCTV, festival support, Remembrance, Town Centre management, Information Centre etc)	£98,574	£117,621
<b>Neighbourhood Plan</b>	£94,113	£75,307
<b>Car Parks</b> (zero budget impact as expenditure and income balance out)	£36,780	£38,600
<b>Markets</b>	£13,610	£13,870
<b>Recreational Facilities</b> (including Cuttlebrook, Elms Park, Memorial Gardens, Recreation Grounds, Skate Park, Playgrounds, St Mary's Churchyard etc)	£26,100	£27,720
<b>Investment Management Fees</b>	£16,000	£16,000
<b>Grants</b>	£20,000	£20,000
<b>Capital Projects</b>	£34,460	£24,436
<b>Devolved Services</b> (Thame and District Day Centre, Red Kite Family Centre, Thame Youth Projects)	£35,000	£35,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£961,740</b>	<b>£977,809</b>

## INCOME

<b>Central Services</b>	£9,525	£10,115
<b>Community Activities</b>	£65,268	£66,678
<b>Neighbourhood Plan</b>	£31,000	£15,000
<b>Car Parks</b>	£36,780	£38,600
<b>Markets</b>	£70,958	£69,958
<b>Recreational Facilities</b>	£5,617	£5,617
<b>Investment Income</b>	£33,000	£34,495
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£252,148</b>	<b>£240,463</b>

<b>Precept Raised</b>	<b>£684,141</b>	<b>£726,939</b>
<b>Subsidy from General Reserves</b>	<b>£25,451</b>	<b>£10,407</b>
<b>Precept per Band D household / annum</b>	<b>£150.44</b>	<b>£154.94</b>
<b>Precept per Band D household / week</b>	<b>£2.89</b>	<b>£2.98</b>

# ACHIEVEMENTS

With the support of the local community, in 2018/19 the Town Council has:

- Organised a fantastic Remembrance Day service including a spectacular flypast and supported Thame Remembers with a variety of community projects to mark the WW1 Centenary
- Agreed a Public Arts Strategy
- Completed on schedule and within budget the replacement community pavilion at Church Meadow
- Assisted the RSA Thame Group in creating and consulting the community on a pioneer Green Living Plan
- Installed lighting provision at Southern Road Recreation Ground car park
- Made good progress in establishing and developing a Community Land Trust aiming to provide truly affordable housing for Thame
- Awarded £14,345 in grant funding to local organisations
- Cleaned the War Memorials in Thame and Moreton and planted carefully-designed bedding ahead of the WW1 Centenary
- Implemented appropriate changes to comply with the new General Data Protection Regulations
- Commenced work on a revised Neighbourhood Plan and, via a well-attended public workshop, gathered the views of local residents on the objectives and vision
- Monitored planning for strategic and windfall sites in relation to the Thame Neighbourhood Plan
- Supported the first Outdoor Cinema and Urban Race events
- Hosted a packed Annual Town Meeting in the Town Hall with a focus on Highways matters
- Continued support of the various working groups in support of the Neighbourhood Plan
- Continued working towards establishing the right public transport facilities within Thame
- Secured £1,000 towards the town's Christmas Lights by placing third in a national competition run by Blachere Illuminations
- Defined a new infographic improving clarity on the different responsibilities of the different tiers of local government
- Responded to further iterations of SODC's Local Plan and other potential impacts on the future of Thame
- Exhausted all possibilities regarding challenging the Greyhound Lane planning decision
- Conducted business and customer surveys in the Town Centre to direct the work of the Market Town Co-Ordinator
- Expanded Thame Art Crawl to include more artists and a children's competition
- Flew the flag of St George to support England's World Cup Football campaign, and decorated the Town Hall with bunting for the Royal Wedding
- Held a special Town Awards ceremony to mark the tenth anniversary of the awards, with many of the previous award winners in attendance, and presented six deserving local people with a Town Award
- Helped solve a long-term drainage issue on Lea Park
- Hosted the annual and well-received Christmas Lights Switch-on event and introduced a post-event feedback survey
- Liaised with the Police on various matters affecting the Town including parking and invited them to speak at two council meetings
- Encouraged retention and expansion of employment land to prevent Thame becoming a dormitory town
- Monitored impact of Oxford-wide planning impacts including the Growth Board and Expressway
- Participated in the national Love Your Local Market campaign – and sorted the filling of some long-standing potholes impacting on the market
- Progressed various litter and dog fouling initiatives
- Hosted another public budget forum to increase community engagement and transparency during the precept and budget setting process.
- Helped implement a Public Space Protection Order for more effective action against anti-social behaviour
- Launched an online parking fine payment portal

# ACHIEVEMENTS CONTINUED

- Provided further community loans to the cricket and rugby clubs
- Repainted the lines in the High Street car parks
- Took on direct maintenance of St Mary's Churchyard to wide praise
- Replaced town centre finger-post signage to remove the Police Station and add The Players Theatre
- Continued hosting monthly Councillor Drop-In sessions
- Said an appreciative farewell to a long serving officer of the Council – Morag Robinson – on her retirement and successfully recruited a replacement Office Administration Manager
- Successfully negotiated with the Showmen's Guild to enable the return of the September Street Fair, formally opened by the Mayor
- 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, Tidy Thame, Thame Town Charities Fair and Thame Town Music Festival
- Learnt more about the control and provision of parking
- Supported over a dozen town centre shops and businesses in staying open late on selected days in December
- Supported the annual Senior Citizen's Christmas Tea Party
- Provided support to the Cuttlebrook Volunteers in their various improvement projects
- Supported the sale of a new Love Thame calendar with all proceeds going to charity
- Took on a work experience student from Lord Williams's School for one week
- Trialled a Town Centre Business Forum and launched a business-specific monthly newsletter
- Via the Mayor's Charity, raised in excess of £5,500 charitable income for both Thame and District Day Centre and the Red Kite Family Centre
- Welcomed two continental markets to the town centre
- Provided support in a variety of ways to the annual Lord Williams's School off-timetable morning
- Enabled the installation of an artistic bench at Southern Road Recreation Ground in memory of Megan Biddle, fully funded by the community
- Grew our presence on social media, including the continued promotion of festive events via the Christmas in Thame Facebook page and the Farmers Market via their platforms
- Entered a Save Our Bees themed float in the Thame Carnival

## 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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