

Cricklade Town Council Council Tax 2011/12

Your Council Tax goes towards the services provided by Wiltshire Council, Wiltshire Police Authority, Wiltshire Fire & Rescue Services and the running of your own Town Council. The proportion collected by Wiltshire Council for the Town Council is known as the precept – by far the smallest proportion and less than 10% of your overall Council Tax bill.

What you get for your money

The management of the Town Council and its budget

A Tourist Information Point

Information and guidance about Wiltshire Council services

Consultation, assessment and representation on local planning applications

Work to ensure that Cricklade is consulted and represented on proposed development strategies, traffic calming, flooding and car parking issues

Work towards securing funding and implementing new projects

Up to date information about local events through the Town Council Website, Notice Boards, the Town Guide and the Chronicle

Maintenance of the CCTV system

Ongoing maintenance of Town Council-owned assets – Thames Hall, the Museum and Chapel Workshop

Administration of burial records, spaces, memorials and plaques

Access to photocopying and other services

Grant support for a number of local community groups and organisations

And what you really notice everyday.....

Day to day maintenance and upkeep of the recreation grounds, Fairview Fields, the Millennium Wood, Saxon's Rest, Bath Road Play Area, the Skate Park, the Cemetery, the War Memorial, St Sampson's and St Mary's Churchyards and other open spaces.

High Street enhancements and award winning floral displays

A clean and tidy town

How's it all organised

Cricklade Town Council has up to 15 Town Councillors who carry out business through 4 Committees with the Full Town Council meeting every 6 weeks.

Committee	Main Responsibilities
Policy & Resources	Council policies, financial issues, assets and grant awards
Community & Leisure	Play areas, community projects, cemetery matters, Britain in Bloom and floral displays, groundsmen requirements, community competitions, street furniture, etc.
Planning Conservation & Transport	Planning applications, conservation issues, traffic/transport and parking issues, environmental issues including flooding
Personnel Sub-Committee	Personnel and staffing issues

Your Staff - There are currently 6 paid officers headed by the Town Clerk. The Town Clerk and 2 groundsmen are full time employees with 2 Assistant Town Clerks and an Administrator/Receptionist working part time hours. During the summer months in 2012 an additional grounds person will be taken on.

Some of what your Town Council been up to in 2010/11

A wide consultation exercise resulting in a mandate from local residents to apply for a loan to develop a Town Centre Car Park

A lease with Wiltshire Council transferring the management of the Town Hall Car Park to the Town Council so that free parking will be retained

The adoption of the Eastern Roundabout from Wiltshire Council

The transfer of Long Close to the ownership of the Town Council

Working with Wiltshire Council and Highways on the conclusion of enhancements and traffic calming to the High Street including the introduction of a loading bay and a 20mph limit

The establishment of a Steering Group of local people on the production of a community-led Town Plan

Working with Environment Agency and Wiltshire Council to begin long awaited ditch clearance to alleviate flooding

Support for Cricklade Bloomers towards the town's success as Best Small Town in the South West and a gold award in our entry in the Britain in Bloom competition

A civic reception for Suce-sur-Erdre to celebrate the 20th Anniversary of the Town Twinning Association

Awarded grants to the Leisure Centre, Cricklade Town Festival, St John's Ambulance, Cricklade Bloomers, Cricklade Business Association, Thames and Cricklade Pre-schools and the Leisure Centre

Community Spirit

The Town Council has also worked, often in partnership with others, to support various community events and initiatives - Cricklade In Bloom and the Children's In Bloom Competition, a very successful campaign towards new Christmas lights, a Worm Charming Competition, a new Tree of Remembrance Scheme and Memorial Benches at Saxons Rest, the Remembrance Sunday Parade, the setting up of regular Dog Warden surgeries, a Heritage Trail through the town.

Some of what the Town Council will try to do in 2011/12

Develop a Town Centre Car Park

Building on our town's Saxon history and working with Cricklade Bloomers, enhance the Eastern Roundabout as an impressive gateway to Cricklade which will benefit tourism

Establish a Working Party liaising with appropriate agencies and interested parties on the enhancement of Long Close as an area of public open space

Work towards a Flood Plan for Cricklade together with a network of Flood Wardens

Support the production of a Town Plan led by a Steering Group of local people

Support Cricklade Bloomers in our entry in the elite Britain in Bloom Champion of Champions 2011 competition

Seek funding to extend the Skatepark

Begin negotiations on the renewal of the lease of Ockwells (113 High Street) and its terms and conditions as a community building and home to your doctor's surgery, library and Town Council

Support, as needed, the continued improvements and future of Cricklade Leisure Centre

What we have to face up to

The coalition government has made considerable changes since May 2010 and Wiltshire Council has already had to make significant cuts to implement these. Legislation needs to be finalised before we know the full extent of how all of this will affect services to Cricklade but, they will. What is clear is that the Localism Bill will give more power and responsibility at a local level – the Big Society.

Stepping up to the mark

We are trying to offer resilient measures to maintain local services and reduce any potential threat to them where we can. When it was proposed that car parking charges would be introduced at the Town Hall affecting the economic viability of our High Street, the Town Council agreed to take over a lease and management responsibility from Wiltshire Council ensuring that no charges would be levied. Our library, though it will remain open, will have its hours significantly reduced and we are looking at ways where we can work with library staff and volunteers to retain good or better access for local people. Our own Grounds Team will take on more gritting duties in the winter months where the Highways teams are unable to cover some routes. Cutbacks to the Youth Service mean that the Youth Centre is not open as regularly – we have authorised a change to the lease allowing the Leisure Centre use of the building in return for reciprocal leisure arrangements for young people. Funding has been withdrawn to the Town Council to provide information services on Wiltshire Council's behalf but we will continue to help local residents from our Front Office on this as much as we can.

More challenges to come.....

It follows that the Town Council may need to take on more services and assets to ensure their future for local people. We know too that more will fall to volunteers to keep things going and we will support this where we can. In fact, there is a small budget increase for grants for local groups working on projects to benefit the town. Challenges include the future of Ockwells (113 High Street) owned by Wiltshire Council and housing a doctor's surgery, library and the Town Council. Its lease is due to expire in 2012 and we aim to negotiate the best, most affordable deal we can to ensure that this remains the central community hub it was intended to be.

Future Financial Planning

Retaining services and assets and making improvements come at a cost. Cricklade is a small town of less than 5,000 residents and though we continually seek external capital funding, our only source of revenue is through the local precept. In such a difficult financial environment for residents and businesses, it's vital that the real needs of the town are balanced against what is affordable and best value for money.

After many years of low average increases in line with the rate of inflation, this year the rise equates to 8.1%. This has been brought about by a 5% rise agreed through a consultation exercise asking local people if the Town Council should take on a loan to fund the development of a new car park. We are delighted that so many residents participated and gave a clear mandate to take this forward.

Councillors are unable to make decisions on some costs (tax, NI, utilities, rent, etc) but have been able, through prudent planning, to keep other planned expenditure in 2011/12 to only 3.1% - less than the rate of inflation. This brings the total precept figure to **£233,637**. This still puts us in the same relative position as in previous years when our precept level is compared with other towns in North Wiltshire.

SUMMARY	2010/11	2011/12
Annual Council Tax (Band D)*	£135.51	£146.48

For the average Band D Council Tax payer this represents an increase of 8.1% equating to £10.97 per year or 21p per week.

**Total precept figure (£233,637) is divided by the number of Band D households to calculate the Band D costs*

Where the money goes	2011/12	2010/11
Policy & Resources Committee	£211,132	£206,055
Community & Leisure Committee	£32,230	£40,805
Planning, Conservation & Transport Committee	£11,311	£6,150
Total budgeted expenditure	£254,673	£253,010

Where the money comes from	2011/12	2010/11
Precept (from Council Tax payers)	£233,637	£216,778
Income (inclusive of grants)	£10,045	£18,008
Reserves	£5,900	£14,650
Underspend	£5,091	£3,574
Total budgeted income	£254,673	£253,010

The Town Council is always pleased to receive questions, comments or suggestions from the residents. It would welcome your comments at the

Annual Town Meeting
7.00pm on Monday 11th April 2011
United Church, Calcutt Street

If you require any further information about the Town Council, we will be pleased to help. Contact details are:

Tel: 01793 751394

Fax: 01793 752515

Email: admin@cricklade-tc.gov.uk

www.cricklade-tc.gov.uk