

Your 2021/22 Council Tax Explained





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Foreword from the Managing Director

This time last year I wrote in my foreword there was 'now more certainty on the country's future direction' following a clear result from a General Election and the UK's departure from the EU.

Twelve months on we find that certainty is once more in doubt as we contend with a global pandemic few of us could have anticipated.

In Cannock Chase District we have seen first-hand the devastation this disease has brought with close on 250 lives lost to Covid-19 at the time of writing and families in mourning, jobs going and incomes reduced or threatened, and mental health issues across all ages coming to the fore and quite rightly being acknowledged.

However, at the same time, we have seen an amazing community spirit unleashed to support those most in need: through the work of this Council and its staff and Members, the County Council and our partners; from the voluntary sector and foodbanks; local community groups using social media in a truly positive way to mobilise help with food parcel and pharmacy deliveries and just being there as a source of comfort; the generosity of our companies providing free PPE last spring and last but not least the dedication and duty of NHS staff and key workers in the District.

Now, as we move forward to better times with the impressive vaccination rollout, the emphasis is firmly on recovery.

As a Council we started planning for recovery last summer alongside responding to Covid-19 and restoring our services. We are also looking to reshape services where it makes sense.

This has involved planning for, and beginning to implement, recovery for the local economy, the community, the Council's finances, and the way the Council organises its work and priorities. We have been doing this in conjunction with Members and our Recovery Overview Board. There are recovery plans for each of the areas mentioned. Some of the planning involves our partners, for example the need for a revised economic prosperity strategy we aim to publish this summer.

New Corporate Plan

A centrepiece of 'recovery' has been the production of a new Corporate Plan for 2021-2024. We believed it was necessary to replace our current plan considering the issues raised by the pandemic. The new plan, which we engaged Members and residents on, sets out our new priorities for the next three years which are:

- Supporting Economic Recovery
- Supporting Health and Wellbeing
- Financially Resilient Council

These priorities are underpinned by a range of specific objectives.

Our Budget

The Council has recently set its budget for the next three years, covering 2021-2024.

From its General Fund the Council aims to spend £14.667m (net income) in 2021/22 followed by £14.361m in 2022/23 and £14.520m in 2023/24. This money will be spent on providing Council services.

- 1 Our separate Housing Revenue Account has a £20m budget to fund the District Council's Housing Services and comes from the rent that tenants pay us. The Council has a 30-year sustainable Business Plan for its housing stock. An HRA Housing Investment Fund has been created amounting to £12.9m to build new Council houses for those in high priority need, and this year has been supplemented with a further £12 m for the period 2023-24 to 2027-28
- 2 Council tax will increase by 1.95% from 2021/22. This small increase will make a Band D property's Council tax charge £225.64 for the next year. We believe it is necessary to protect the services and amenities your District Council provides for you and your household.

Achievements during the past year

Here is a summary of some of our achievements, month-by-month:

April '20: Council processes business support grants (over £28m has been allocated to date).

May '20: Cannock Chase Community Vulnerability Hub, set up by the Council, in full swing to provide support for the vulnerable.

June '20: Council supports non-essential shops to re-open with advice on social distancing and hygiene measures.

July '20: Shutters of empty shop units in Cannock town centre to have a makeover.

August '20: Council helps South Staffordshire College secure government funding for new Digital Skills Academy from Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire Local Enterprise Partnership (SSLEP).

September '20: Council funding approved towards a new mountain bike trail at Birches Valley as legacy project for Commonwealth Games.

October '20: Work is underway to build 44 new homes on former Council depot land in Hawks Green.

November '20: Covid Support Team begins work to help retail and hospitality businesses with their Covid security measures in partnership with Staffordshire Police.

December '20: Pay by phone service and contactless ticketing machines introduced in car parks. Football Foundation grant announced to help cover costs of providing new artificial grass pitch in Rugeley in time for next football season.

January '21: Further £12m being invested in social housing as phase 2 works begin including major retrofit programme. First electric taxi licensed in the District.

February '21: Council supports leisure provider Inspiring Healthy Lifestyles so facilities can continue across the District.

Looking ahead to 2021/22

We all want to look forward to better times. Over the next 12 months we will work hard to deliver services to the community and support major projects that will improve all our lives. These include:

- Responding to the economic impact of Covid-19 by promoting job and skills opportunities as we know many residents are concerned about their financial wellbeing;
- Supporting the opening of the McArthurGlen Designer Outlet where over 40 brand names have been announced;
- Working with ENGIE as Rugeley Power Station's iconic cooling towers are blown down and the site is cleared to make way for innovative new housing, a new secondary school, and leisure and business facilities;
- A continued focus on attracting developers to take forward our ambitious plans for Cannock town centre in a post Covid-19 world;
- Progressing plans for the hosting of the Commonwealth Games mountain biking event scheduled for August 2022;
- Pushing forward with our own social housing programme including the development of the former Aelfgar school site in Rugeley; and
- Actively pursuing the Council's commitment to making the District Carbon Neutral by 2030 as the UK hosts the climate change conference COP 26 in Glasgow.

We anticipate another busy year ahead and our staff and Members will continue to work hard to provide the services you expect from your local Council.

Tony McGovern, Managing Director

- Your Council Tax is based on the valuation band of your property and on two adults living in that property.
- Discounts, reductions and exemptions are available based on your circumstances.
- If you are unemployed or on a low wage, you may be able to get your bill reduced. If you think that you may qualify for this reduction, please visit our website and use the online calculator www.cannockchasedc.gov.uk/benscalc



Could I get a discount or reduction on my bill?

This depends on the number of adults in your house and their circumstances. If any of the adults are on the list below, they may not be counted for Council Tax purposes. If this takes the number of 'counted' adults below two, you are eligible for a discount.

- Full time students, student nurses, apprentices, youth training trainees and foreign language assistants
- Young people for whom child benefit is payable and 18/19 year olds who have just left school or college
- Patients resident in hospital or being looked after in care homes
- Severely mentally impaired people
- People in hostels or night shelters
- Low paid care workers usually working for charities
- People caring for a person with a disability who is NOT their partner or child under 18
- Members of religious communities such as monks or nuns
- People in detention (except for non-payment of Council Tax or a fine)
- Spouses or dependants of students who are non-British subjects and are prevented by immigration regulations from working or claiming benefits
- Members of visiting forces, certain international and defence organisations and those with diplomatic privilege or immunity.

Reduction for people with disabilities

Your bill may be reduced if you (or someone who lives with you) need a room, an extra bathroom or kitchen, or extra space in your property to meet the required needs arising from a disability.

The bill may be reduced to that of a property in the band immediately below the band of your property. If your property is in Band A, a reduction (equivalent to a band) will be given. This reduction is not based on your income or savings.

Annexe Discount

A discount of 50% may be applicable to a separately assessed annexe (or similar self contained part of a property) which is occupied as part of the main property or is the main home of a relative of the council taxpayer of the main property.

Empty and second homes

Council tax on empty or second homes in the Cannock Chase area will be payable as follows:

Type of home	Description	Discount period	Charge
Furnished and 2nd homes	Furnished and unoccupied		100%
Empty homes	Unfurnished and unoccupied for less than 2 years	Up to 28 days 100%	100% (after the 28 day discount period).
Long-term empty homes	Unfurnished and unoccupied for more than 2 years but less than 5 years		200%
	Unfurnished and unoccupied for more than 5 years but less than 10 years		300%
	Unfurnished and unoccupied for more than 10 years		400%
Uninhabitable properties: under-going major repair work or structural alterations	Unfurnished and unoccupied	Up to 12 months 100%	100% (after the 12 month discount period).
			200% (after property empty between 2 and 5 years)
			300% (after property empty between 5 and 10 years)
			400% (after property empty more than 10 years)
Empty homes: where the liable person is living elsewhere in job-related or armed forces accommodation	Unoccupied due to liable person living in job-related or armed forces		50%

The Council Tax team can give you more information about how the above charges may affect you and may be able to refer you to someone who can give you advice about bringing your property back into use.

Could I be exempt from Council Tax?

Some properties may be exempt from Council Tax.

Unoccupied properties which are:

- Owned by a charity (allowed for up to six months)
- Left empty by someone who has gone to prison
- Previously occupied by a person in permanent residential care
- Owned by the estate of a deceased person and waiting for probate or letters of administration to be granted (continuous for up to six months after being granted)
- Empty because occupation is forbidden by law
- Waiting to be occupied by a minister of religion
- Left empty by someone who has moved to receive personal care by reason of old age or disability
- Left empty by someone who has moved to provide personal care to another person
- Owned by a student and last occupied by a student
- Subject to a Repossession Order
- The responsibility of a bankrupt person's trustee
- A site for a caravan, mobile home or mooring
- Unable to be let separately because it is linked to, or in the grounds of, another property and planning conditions do not allow separate letting.



Occupied properties where:

- All the residents are students
- The property is used for UK armed forces accommodation, whether occupied or not
- At least one liable person is a member of a visiting force
- All residents are less than 18 years old
- All liable residents are severely mentally impaired
- At least one liable person is a foreign diplomat
- The property is annexed to a family home and occupied by that family's elderly or disabled relatives

Can I appeal against my Council Tax band?

There are several situations where you can appeal against the band in which your house has been placed:

- Within six months of becoming the new tax payer for the property.
- Within six months of the Valuation Office Agency making a change to the band.
- If there have been specific material changes in the property value.

What if I don't think I should be paying Council Tax?

You can appeal to Cannock Chase Council if you think you are not liable to pay Council Tax, for example because you are not the resident or owner, or because your property is exempt or you are entitled to a discount.

You should not withhold payment if you are making an appeal. You should pay as normal and a refund will be made if you are successful.

Changes in circumstances

If you have been granted a reduction you must tell the Council of any change in circumstances which will affect your entitlement within 21 days. If you fail to do so you may be faced with a penalty of £70.

How we collect and use information

Cannock Chase Council, as the data controller, will use the information that you provide to update your Council Tax account.

We want to be able to provide appropriate, timely and effective services so it is important to us that we co-ordinate what we do for you properly. To do this, we will share basic information such as name and address between services within the Council. This allows us to keep our information on you as up-to-date as possible in order to improve our services to you.

Even though our systems are joined-up, we ensure that staff within the Council can only access the information they need to do their job. Please be advised, we won't sell or give your information to any third party for marketing purposes unless we have asked for your permission.

We will only share your information, when necessary, with agencies involved in the administration of your Council Tax account, or where the law requires or allows us to, for example, to prevent or detect fraud and error within the Council Tax and/or Benefit System. For more information, please see www.cannockchasedc.gov.uk/PrivacyNotice or www.cannockchasedc.gov.uk/nfi.



Cancel your single person discount

Call the **Cannock Chase Council Tax team** on 01543 464285 or email us at counciltax@cannockchasedc.gov.uk



Council Tax valuation bands

The Valuation Office Agency which is part of HM Revenue and Customs (not your local council) has put every property into one of eight valuation bands.

Band	Range of values (based on 1991 prices)	Proportion of Band D Council Tax Payable
A	Up to £40,000	6/9
B	£40,001 to £52,000	7/9
C	£52,001 to £68,000	8/9
D	£68,001 to £88,000	1
E	£88,001 to £120,000	11/9
F	£120,001 to £160,000	13/9
G	£160,001 to £320,000	15/9
H	Over £320,000	18/9



The charge for each property band is as follows:-

Band	District £	County £	Fire £	Police £	Total £
A	150.43	907.08	52.52	159.05	1,269.08
B	175.50	1,058.26	61.27	185.55	1,480.58
C	200.57	1,209.44	70.03	212.06	1,692.10
D	225.64	1,360.62	78.78	238.57	1,903.61
E	275.78	1,662.98	96.29	291.59	2,326.64
F	325.92	1,965.34	113.79	344.60	2,749.65
G	376.07	2,267.70	131.30	397.62	3,172.69
H	451.28	2,721.24	157.56	477.14	3,807.22

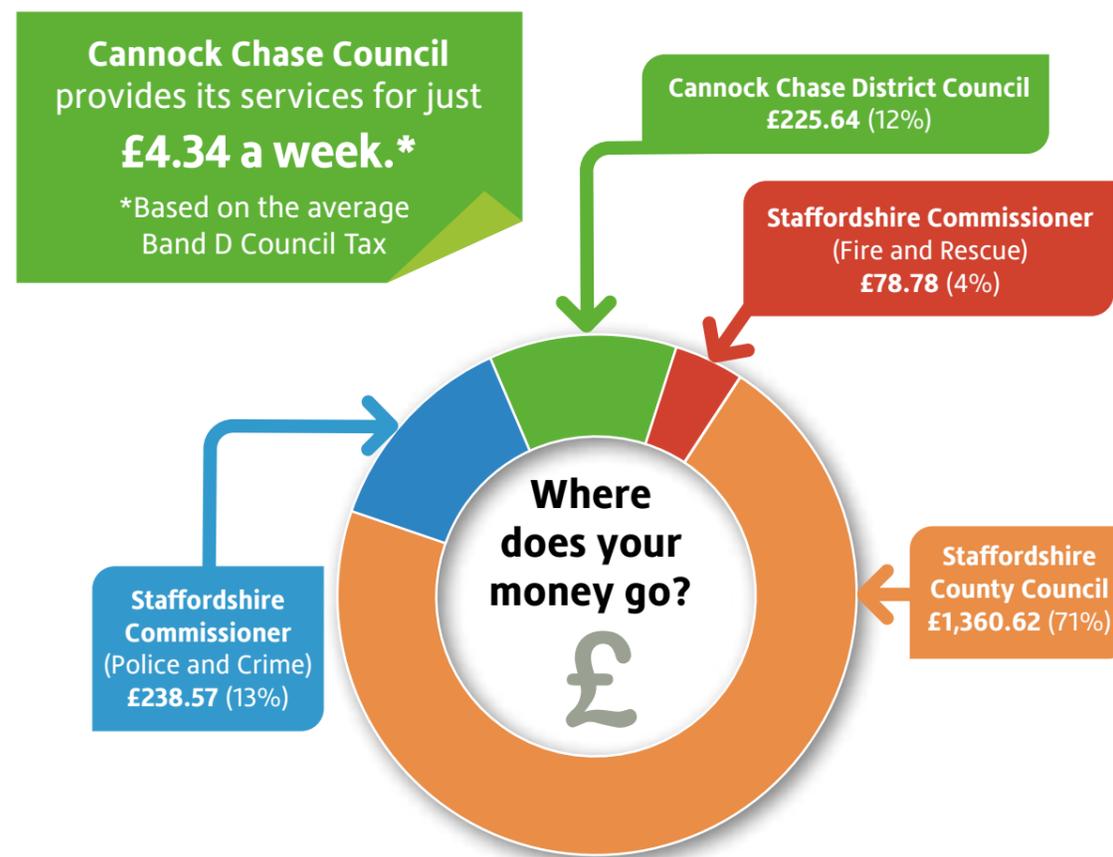
Your Council Tax bill states which band applies to your home and your home's valuation is based on an estimate of how much it was worth on 1 April 1991. Price changes since that time won't affect the valuation.

In addition a further charge is included for the spending of Parish Councils' where appropriate.

About your Council Tax Bill

Your Council Tax bill comprises charges from four principal authorities in the area, Staffordshire County Council, Staffordshire Commissioner (Police and Crime), Staffordshire Commissioner (Fire and Rescue) and Cannock Chase Council.

Cannock Chase District Council is solely responsible for collection of Council Tax.



How is your District Council charge calculated?

The amount of money required by the Council for 2021/22 to carry out its functions and provide services (its budget requirement) is £11.983 million (£11.662 million in 2020/21).

A proportion of this is met by Business Rates Retention with the balance being met from council taxpayers.

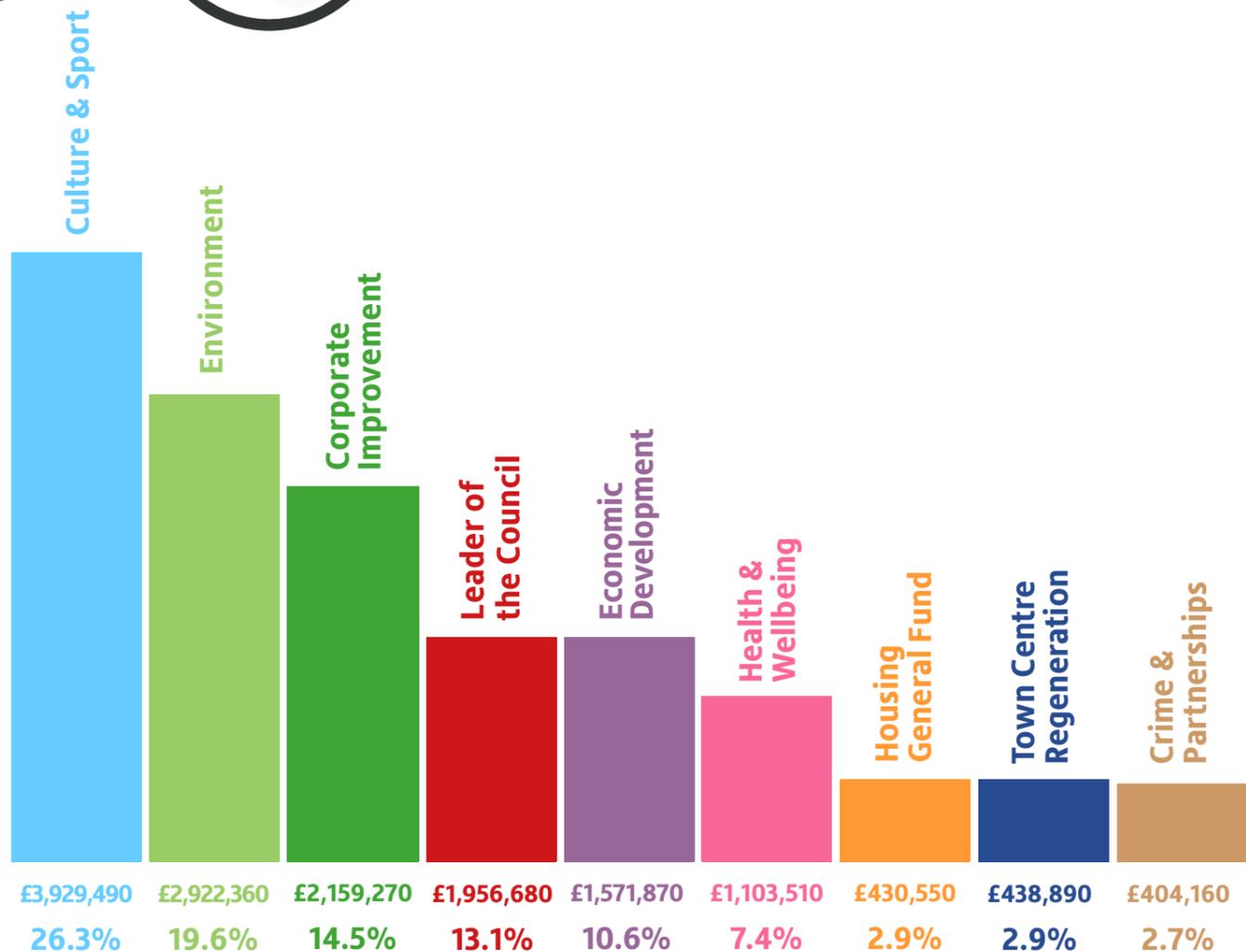
The table below provides an analysis of the funding of the budget requirement and illustrates how the charge of £225.64 is calculated.

2020-21 £'000s £	Band D Equivalent £		2021-22 £'000s £	Band D Equivalent
11,662	398.80	Budget Requirement	11,983	411.28
0	-	Less Central Government Support	0	-
5,190	177.48	Less Business Rates Retention	5,409	185.64
6,472	221.32	Amount to be raised from Council Tax	6,574	225.64

Where does your money go?

Spending on Council Services

(Net spending before technical adjustments)



Why the increase in spend?

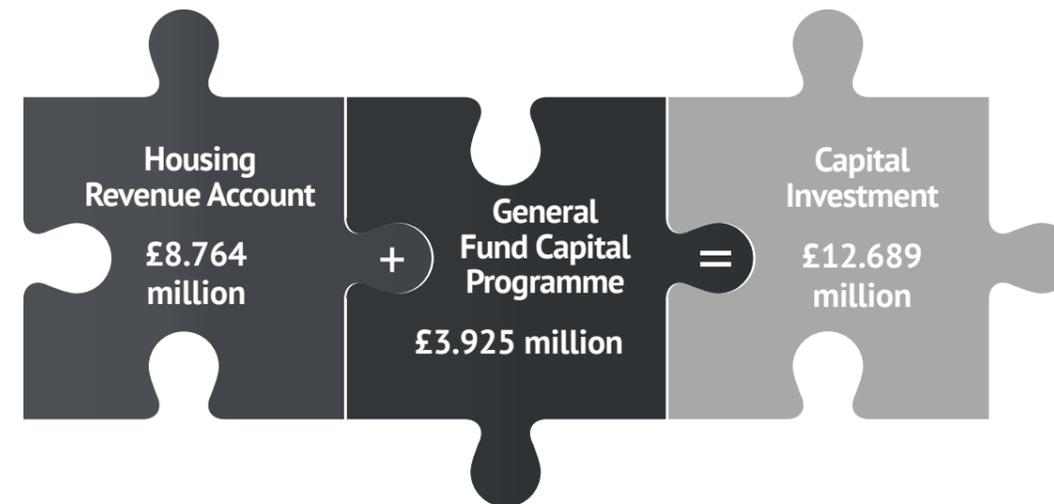
The Council's budget requirement for 2021/22 of £11.983 million is £321,000 more than in 2020/21. The adjacent table identifies the major reasons for this:



	£'000s
Inflation and price increases	122
Changes in income	(596)
Covid (net of additional grants)	906
Other variations	(111)
Increase in budget requirement	321

Capital Expenditure

In 2021/22 Cannock Chase Council will be spending approximately £12.689 million on capital investment, which is split £8.764 million on the Housing Revenue Account and £3.925 million on the General Fund Capital Programme.



Areas of investment in the Housing Capital Programme include new building on the Hawks Green and Aelfgar site to provide additional council houses. Improvements to existing council housing including upgrading of central heating, kitchens, bathrooms and electrical systems. Funds have also been set aside for external and environmental works, disabled housing adaptations and sheltered scheme works.

Areas of Investment on the General Fund Capital Programme include works to Rugeley ATP, Stadium development, play areas (including £50,000 annual contribution) and the purchase of replacement wheeled bins. Resources will continue to be made available for disabled facilities grants to private householders.

Borrowing

The Council's total outstanding debt at 31 March 2021 is estimated to be £82 million.

Staffing

Budgeted staffing for 2021/22 is shown in the adjacent table with the previous year's figures as a comparison (part time staff are shown as full time equivalents):

	Full time equivalents 2020-21 £	Full time equivalents 2021-22 £
General Fund	325.2	326
Housing Revenue Account	119.3	121.8
Budget requirement	444.5	447.8

Parish Councils

Parish Councils tell Cannock Chase Council how much income they need from Council Tax (their 'precept'). This is paid for from the District Council's General Fund and is recovered by setting a parish tax for each Parish Council.

The detailed analysis has been provided by Rugeley/Hednesford Town Council in line with the Local Government Act 1992 which requires all Parish/Town Councils with a precept in excess of £140,000 to provide details of expenditure and income to Council Tax/National Non-domestic Rate Payers.

What is your Parish spending?

2020-21 £	Parish	2021-22 £	Band D Equivalent
62,969	Brereton and Ravenhill	62,969	32.01
7,400	Bridgtown	7,500	11.87
4,400	Brindley Heath	4,000	16.10
11,400	Cannock Wood	11,400	28.28
75,000	Heath Hayes and Wimblebury	110,000	27.30
194,500	Hednesford	196,850	35.33
91,274	Norton Canes	96,063	39.15
303,634	Rugeley	303,634	57.70

Rugeley Town Council Precept

	Revenue Expenditure 2020-21 £	Revenue Expenditure 2021-22 £
Administration	62,225	91,525
Charter Fair	10,000	0
Christmas	39,000	39,000
Council office	31,771	32,406
Elections	5,000	0
Small grants	4,000	4,000
Other services	24,476	41,706
Neighbourhood Plan	2,030	5,000
Community events & regeneration	36,800	22,500
Rugeley Rose	149,017	169,711
Total gross expenditure	364,319	405,848
Income	80,909	58,288
Total net expenditure	283,410	347,560
Total precept	303,634	303,634



Hednesford Town Council Precept

	Revenue Expenditure 2020-21 £	Revenue Expenditure 2021-22 £
Council administration	156,966	32,922
CCTV	24,000	24,000
Town Centre maintenance	4,000	4,000
Christmas lights	5,000	5,000
Community events	9,000	21,500
Citizens Advice Grant	5,000	5,000
Community Grants	11,000	6,000
Pye Green Community Centre	24,050	94,567
Town Regeneration	0	56,139
Community Engagement	0	22,412
Town Magazine	0	8,000
Total gross expenditure	239,016	279,540
Income	44,580	23,070
Income from Pye Green Community Centre		28,000
Contribution from reserves		31,620
Total precept	194,500	196,850
Total gross income	239,080	279,540
Total net expenditure	-64	0

Hednesford Town Council provides services for the residents, businesses and town, additional to those already provided by the District and County Council. These additional services are funded through the local precept or council tax payment.

As well as running an efficient and financially responsible organisation, your Town Council is focused on the residents of Hednesford feeling the positive impact of having a non-political, independently run authority through the energy and excitement of a town on the rise. Your Town Council seeks to achieve these outcomes through a focus on regeneration, community cohesion and better facilities, including the community centre, all delivered through value for money from this portion of your council tax.





The regeneration agenda will build upon the longstanding agreement with the District Council to provide free short and long stay car parking in the shopper car park on Anglesey Street and in the parking bays along Market Street. We consider this as vital support for the town centre and local businesses which will help to encourage residents to shop locally. The cost of this is offset by a contribution to the expense of the CCTV provision and monitoring in the town centre, helping to ensure that Hednesford is a safe place to visit day and night.

2020 saw the appointment of a Regeneration Manager working full time for your Town Council to build on these foundations and already sees the profile of Hednesford and local businesses being raised through the Visit Hednesford social media platforms, regular press releases and the maintenance of the Hednesford Town Council website to keep you up to date on local plans and news. A monthly Farmers and Craft Market on the last Saturday of the month in the town centre is building a high profile event that helps to boost footfall which also benefits local businesses.

Grant funding support provided directly from your Town Council for 20 local businesses to assist with the journey out of Covid restrictions is a demonstrable action in support of local, small business.

2021 already has an amazing year planned to help the town with the recovery from the impact of Covid, as a brand new Hednesford Business Forum is established to create a single business voice for companies across all sectors. A new Pop-up shop scheme will be launched to encourage new business start-ups in the town centre and reduce the number of void premises. The environment in the town centre will be enhanced further with more floral displays including new hanging baskets and flower towers and regular graffiti removal helping to ensure that Hednesford is an attractive place to visit.



This year Hednesford Town Council will also be undertaking projects such as the installation of new cycle storage in the town centre to encourage cyclists to visit Hednesford, new way-finding signage to raise the profile of the location of the town centre and a new collective outdoor food court to enable local eateries to offer alfresco dining. These projects will be funded from the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and Section 106 funding from the historic Tesco, Aldi and housing developments in Hednesford.

Fantastically organised and supported events have grown to be a key feature of our town and these will continue with your Town Council remaining as the principal sponsor for the annual Summer Festival in Hednesford Park and the town's Christmas lights display and switch-on event. Both of these popular events attract visitors and families alike to boost the local economy and brings the community together for all ages. Your Town Council is building the community events diary further with a 3-day Open Air Cinema in Hednesford Park. This is new for 2021 and aims to raise the profile of the town whilst also creating an event for the whole community.

Connecting this through our amazing community groups is essential to achieve a connected town where a huge amount of work, effort and energy goes in to supporting each other. Your Town Council has further invested in a Community Officer to help join these groups together and deliver on projects and volunteering in our community. The annual grant pot in 2020 supported 25 community organisations and projects, the highest number in the Council's history, and grant funding will again be available for 2021. All this work bringing our community together builds on the ongoing support for the Citizen's Advice Bureau which holds a weekly outreach at Pye Green Community Centre.

This Council inherited a fantastic but underutilised facility in Pye Green Community Centre and during 2021 your Council is undertaking a root and branch review of the facility, its use and value to the community.

Finally, communication with, to and from residents is of critical importance to your Town Council as an independent, non-political council which takes its priorities from the priorities of the community. A quarterly town magazine was launched known as "Hednesford Life". This is delivered for free to every household in the town and supported by advertisements from the businesses in the town to keep residents up to date on news and information. The content will build further as it becomes an established part of life in Hednesford through 2021. Further up to date information can be found through your Town Council's social media presence, in particular its two Facebook Pages "Visit Hednesford" and "Hednesford Town Council" and for a copy of the 2021/22 events guide please see www.hednesford-tc.gov.uk

The Environment Agency - Midlands Region

The Council Tax (Demand Notices) (England) Regulations 2011.

The Environment Agency is a levying body for its Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Functions under the Flood and Water Management Act 2010 and the Environment Agency (Levies) (England and Wales) Regulations 2011.

The Environment Agency has powers in respect of flood and coastal erosion risk management for 2369 kilometres of main river and along tidal and sea defences in the area of the Trent Regional Flood and Coastal Committee. Money is spent on the construction of new flood defence schemes, the maintenance of the river system and existing flood defences together with the operation of a flood warning system and management of the risk of coastal erosion. The financial details are:

Trent Regional Flood and Coastal Committee

Parish	2020-21 £'000s £	2021-22 £'000s £
Gross expenditure	75,473	58,034
Levies raised	2,137	2,180
Total Council Tax base (Band D property equivalents)	1,848	1,842

A change in the gross budgeted expenditure between years reflects the programme of works for both capital and revenue needed by the Regional Flood and Coastal Committee to which you contribute. The total Local Levy raised by this committee has increased by 2.0%.

The majority of funding for flood defence comes directly from the Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra). However, under the new Partnership Funding rule not all schemes will attract full central funding. To provide local funding for local priorities and contributions for partnership funding the Regional Flood and Coastal Committees recommend through the Environment Agency a local levy.

The total Local Levy raised has increased from £2,137,291 in 2020/2021 to £2,180,037 for 2021/2022.

Statement concerning adult social care funding

The Secretary of State made an offer to adult social care authorities ('Adult social care authorities' are local authorities which have functions under Part 1 of the Care Act 2014, namely county councils in England, district councils for an area in England for which there is no county council, London borough councils, the Common Council of the City of London and the Council of the Isles of Scilly.)

The offer was the option of an adult social care authority being able to charge an additional 'precept' on its council tax without holding a referendum, to assist the authority in meeting its expenditure on adult social care from the financial year 2016-17. It was originally made in respect of the financial years up to and including 2019-20. If the Secretary of State chooses to renew this offer in respect of a particular financial year, this is subject to the approval of the House of Commons.

Handy Contacts

Cannock Chase Council Contact Centre	01543 462621
Main fax	01543 462317
Web address	www.cannockchasedc.gov.uk
24 hour telephone payment line	0161 621 4113 or 01543 215020
To pay on-line	www.cannockchasedc.gov.uk/payonline
Business Rates enquiries	01543 464282
Business Rates email	businessrates@cannockchasedc.gov.uk
Council Tax enquiries	01543 464285
Council Tax email	counciltax@cannockchasedc.gov.uk
Benefits section	01543 464292
Valuation Office Agency website	www.gov.uk/voa/contact
Listing Officer, Valuation Office Agency	03000 501501
Staffordshire Commissioner (Fire and Rescue)	Fire HQ, Stoke-on-Trent and Fire Staffordshire and Rescue, Pirehill, Stone, ST15 0BS www.staffordshirefire.gov.uk
	08451 221155 In an Emergency Dial 999
Staffordshire Commissioner (Police and Crime)	Police Headquarters, PO Box 3167, Stafford, ST16 9JZ www.staffordshire.police.uk/
	Police single non emergency number 101
	In an Emergency Dial 999
Staffordshire County Council	St Chad's Place, Stafford, ST16 2LR www.staffordshire.gov.uk Main reception 0300 111 8000

If you would like to speak to a member of staff,
please contact **01543 464285**

