Making payments

**Direct Debit**
This is the council’s preferred method of payment, as it’s the most efficient and cost effective.

Phone 01933 231 690 or complete the instruction on your demand notice and return it to the council. For instructions set up during the payment year any outstanding instalment will be added to the first payment.

**Debit or credit card – internet or telephone**
Log on to [www.wellingborough.gov.uk](http://www.wellingborough.gov.uk) or telephone 0333 772 0789.

**PayPoint**
Take your bar-coded demand notice to make cash payments, free at all PayPoint outlets. Some may accept debit cards, but may charge for this.

**Post Office**
Take your bar-coded demand notice to pay with cash, cheque or a debit card, for free.

**Cheques by post**
Make cheques payable to ‘Borough Council of Wellingborough’, quoting the council tax account number on the back. Post to: Revenue and Benefits, Council Offices, Tithe Barn Road, Wellingborough NN8 1BN

**Option to pay by 12 instalments**
If you wish to pay your council tax over 12 instalments, rather than the 10 instalments that are shown on your demand notice, please contact the council no later than 15 April 2017.

**Having difficulty paying?** Are you getting all the help that you are entitled to? You could be entitled to a reduction if you live alone, if someone in the property is a student, or someone is being cared for. If you are unemployed or on a low income, then you could be entitled to council tax support (CTS), a local award of up to 80% of your bill. If you are already getting council tax support, there is no need to re-apply. We will write to you with details of your new entitlement. For more information please contact us or go to our website.

Council tax enquiries
Tel: 01933 231 690 Email: [counciltax@wellingborough.gov.uk](mailto:counciltax@wellingborough.gov.uk)

Benefit and council tax support enquiries
Tel: 01933 231 692 Email: [benefits@wellingborough.gov.uk](mailto:benefits@wellingborough.gov.uk)

Opening hours: Mon-Wed 8:30am to 5pm, Thurs 9:30am to 5 pm, Fri 8:30am to 4:30pm.

If you would like any Borough Council of Wellingborough documents in large type, on audio tape or translated, please contact the council offices.

Your borough council tax is just 46.1p* a day
*based on the average band D property
Message from Councillor Martin Griffiths, Leader of Wellingborough Council

The setting of the council’s budget and the council tax each year is one of the most difficult decisions councillors have to make. The need to balance the cost of providing services against the affordability and value for money of those costs is not an easy task. Council finances are in the public eye more than ever and the budget setting process for all councils is being scrutinised by residents, businesses, and the national press. It is, therefore, essential that we make sure that we focus our budget on what’s right for our area and our residents.

The pressures facing the council are still growing at a time when funding from central government is falling, and the future is increasingly more uncertain. We have again chosen to use reserves to protect services but, as we all know, these will not last forever and we have to focus on delivering a manageable and sustainable budget for future years. However, the need to make local efficiencies and savings, and to raise more income ourselves, has not gone away. We need to ensure we deliver services for the people of our borough in the best possible way, making sure these services, where possible, are protected for the future.

The Council Plan and Annual Business Plan for 2018-19 now give us the direction we need to start progressing and developing the projects that will help us do this. There will still be a need in the coming year to find more savings and efficiencies, as well as identifying and delivering more projects that will increase our income, if we are to bridge the gap in funding predicted for future years.

Some of these will be difficult decisions to make but, to ensure our continued financial stability and deliver the services the public need, we have to face the challenge head on and do what is needed to ensure the council can still meet the needs of its residents.

One of those decisions is to increase the council tax by the maximum allowed, and for this reason we have again proposed a £5 increase to the average band D council tax, which is less than 10p a week. This still provides our tax payers with excellent value for money and good quality services, supporting them when they need it whilst at the same time providing a sustainable financial future for the council.

Whatever the future holds we now have to focus on the residents of our borough and do what is right for them, to protect the vulnerable and to provide services that improve and enhance the lives and wellbeing of all those we represent.

What is council tax?

Council tax helps local authorities fund services such as schools, roads, policing, planning, bin collections, parks and lots more.

Wellingborough Council collects council tax for the borough, but also for Northamptonshire County Council (NCC), Northamptonshire Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC), and local parish councils. The borough council only keeps 11p of every pound you pay in council tax. Wellingborough Council sets its own level of council tax, but has no control over the levels set by the County Council or the Police and Crime Commissioner.

At a meeting on 1st March, Wellingborough councillors decided to increase council tax by £5 for the next year.

Your bill will contain a line which shows separate county council for funding adult social care. Your council tax will be a higher amount than last year because both the county council and the PCC have also increased their parts of the tax.

For every £1 we collect:

- 75p goes to NCC
- 14p goes to Northants PCC
- 11p goes to Borough & Parish Councils

For 2018-19, the money the council gets from the government has reduced by £0.275m. It is expected that there will further reductions over the next three years.

Whilst the council continues to provide or support a wide range of services at a low cost to the taxpayer, the reduction in government funding does mean that we face a challenging future.

We are propping up current funding shortfalls by using our savings, but these are rapidly diminishing. We need to become less reliant on government money, and look more towards locally-raised income and changes to spending so that we can stop using reserves to balance the books.

There are no easy solutions to the challenges we face. That is why we are producing an efficiency strategy to provide clear direction over coming years.

We’re looking at everything we provide, how we do it and options to improve. These include:

- ensure working practices are efficient, effective and good value for money;
- sharing services with other authorities;
- increasing income from charges or income generating projects;
- transforming services so they are modern and efficient;
- challenge funding of non-statutory services where others could provide them;
- reduce the cost of operational buildings;
- take advantage of technology to reduce costs and improve delivery;
- encourage the use of self-service access and contact with the council;
- reviewing and renegotiating contracts;
- developing further commercial opportunities;
- looking at other ways of providing services;
- disposing of assets with high maintenance costs and reinvesting the money.

We will be pleased to know your views as we develop proposals in more detail, so that they can be implemented where possible throughout the coming year.
Making Wellingborough a place to be proud of

How much have we been asked to raise?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Property</th>
<th>Band D council tax 2018-2019</th>
<th>Band D council tax 2017-2018</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bozeat</td>
<td>£31,099</td>
<td>£30,936</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Great Doddington</td>
<td>£25,000</td>
<td>£25,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Earls Barton</td>
<td>£122,300</td>
<td>£104,466</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Easton Maudit</td>
<td>£975</td>
<td>£975</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ecton</td>
<td>£12,229</td>
<td>£12,229</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finedon</td>
<td>£64,000</td>
<td>£55,410</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grendon</td>
<td>£14,415</td>
<td>£14,355</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hardwick</td>
<td>£1,600</td>
<td>£1,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Great Harrowden</td>
<td>£2,000</td>
<td>£1,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Little Harrowden</td>
<td>£20,802</td>
<td>£20,802</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irchester</td>
<td>£98,302</td>
<td>£89,236</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isham</td>
<td>£24,950</td>
<td>£22,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mears Ashby</td>
<td>£13,500</td>
<td>£10,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orlingbury</td>
<td>£7,697</td>
<td>£7,415</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strixton</td>
<td>£1,400</td>
<td>£1,400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sywell</td>
<td>£26,500</td>
<td>£23,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wilby</td>
<td>£9,500</td>
<td>£9,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wollaston</td>
<td>£71,865</td>
<td>£70,455</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total parishes</td>
<td>£48,134</td>
<td>£50,179</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wellingborough town</td>
<td>£865,615</td>
<td>£842,985</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1,413,749</td>
<td>1,344,764</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Why has the budget changed between 2017/2018 and 2018/2019?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Amount £'000</th>
<th>£</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Inflation</td>
<td>118</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service changes &amp; demand pressures</td>
<td>1,361</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Efficiency and other savings</td>
<td>-370</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase in the use of reserves</td>
<td>-771</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parish precepts</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change in budget requirement</td>
<td>384</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Why has the council tax changed between 2017/2016 and 2018/2019?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Amount £'000</th>
<th>£</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Change in budget requirement (see above)</td>
<td>384</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase in collection fund surplus</td>
<td>-1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Changes in government funding</td>
<td>-124</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase in tax base</td>
<td>-104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change in average council tax band D</td>
<td>155</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Council tax is paid for most types of home, whether it is a house, bungalow, mobile home or houseboat and whether it is owned or rented. There is one bill for each household.

The Valuation Office Agency (part of HM Revenue & Customs) has allocated a band to each house in the borough according to its market value on 1 April 1991. When ownership of the property changes, the band can be increased if the property has been extended or improved since 1993.

Valuation band

Range of values (as at 1 April 1991)

A Up to £40,000
B £40,001 to £52,000
C £52,001 to £68,000
D £68,001 to £86,000
E £86,001 to £120,000
F £120,001 to £160,000
G £160,001 to £320,000
H More than £320,000

If you think the band is wrong, write to the Valuation Office Agency, Princess House, Cliftonville Road, Northampton NN1 5AE (03000 501 501 (see above)). They will tell you how to appeal.

Council tax exemptions

A property may be exempt from council tax, however some of the exemptions are time restricted. A list of exemptions appears in the next column, for you to check whether your property qualifies. If you do not think your bill is correct, please contact the council tax team for help and advice on 01933 231 690.

Properties are exempt when they are:

- repossessed by the lender eg bank;
- held for charitable purposes and unoccupied for up to six months;
- unoccupied while the liable person is in prison or otherwise detained by law;
- unoccupied because the person who would be liable is permanently resident in hospital or in a residential care home;
- unoccupied and held for a minister of religion;
- unoccupied as liable person deceased and awaiting probate or within six months of probate;
- unoccupied because the liable person is away, giving or receiving care;
- unoccupied and previously occupied by students;
- unoccupied and undergoing structural alterations or major repair (up to six months);
- subject to a demolition order, compulsory purchase order or other prohibition of law;
- a bankrupt's trustee;
- occupied entirely by students (including student halls of residence);
- occupied by at least one liable person who is a member of a visiting force;
- occupied only by residents under 18 years of age;
- occupied only by residents who are severely mentally impaired;
- occupied only by at least one liable person who is a foreign diplomat.

These categories are only broad descriptions of the available exemptions. Further information is available from the council tax team.

Exemptions are reviewed at least once a year. You may be required to provide information that supports your exemption application. Failure to supply this information could mean any entitlement is cancelled.

You must tell the council of any changes that affect your entitlement, within 21 days of the change.

More information on the council’s budget is available from the Assistant Director of Finance, Swanspool House, Wellingborough NN8 1BP, telephone 01933 229 777.
Discounts
The council tax demand assumes that there are two or more adults living in each property. If only one adult lives in the property, a single person discount of 25% can apply. You must tell us about any changes to your household which could affect your entitlement, within 21 days of the change. If you fail to do so, you may be required to pay a penalty.

When deciding how many adults are living in a property, the following are disregarded for council tax:
• full-time students, student nurses, apprentices and Youth Training trainees;
• patients resident in hospital;
• people who are looked after in care homes;
• people who are severely mentally impaired;
• people staying in certain hostels or night shelters;
• 18 and 19 year olds who are at, or have just left, school;
• care-workers working for low pay, usually for charities;
• people caring for someone with a disability, who is not a partner or child under 18;
• diplomats, members of visiting forces and certain international institutions;
• members of religious communities;
• people in prison (except those in prison for non-payment of council tax or a fine).

Council tax support (CTS)
Support of up to 80% of the council tax bill may be available for people of working age who are on a low income, even if they are working.

If the council tax payer is of pension age, full support may be available. A second adult rebate may apply where a person of pension age shares their home with other adults on low incomes.

If you think you may qualify for council tax support, please contact the council on 01933 231 692. We can offer you help in managing your payments while your application is being assessed.

People with disabilities
If you, or someone who lives with you, needs a room, an extra bathroom, a kitchen, or the use of a wheelchair around the house to meet the needs of disability, you may qualify for a reduction in your council tax. Council tax payable may be reduced to a lower valuation band.

Who has to pay?
Only people aged 18 years or over are liable to pay.
You have to pay if you:
• own your home;
• are a tenant;
• have a contract to live in the property;
• are a resident;
• own a home which is unoccupied.

Appeals
You may appeal if you consider that 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 that we have made a mistake calculating your bill. If you wish to appeal on these grounds you must notify us in writing, and we will readily review the situation.

Long-term empty properties
Properties which have been empty for longer than two years will be charged at 150% of the council tax for that property band. This applies from the date the property became empty regardless of any change of ownership.

Making Wellingborough a place to be proud of