

Council Tax > 2019 - 2020

Your council tax explained.



Contents

About Your Council Tax

How is Council Tax Calculated	01
Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme	01
Could You Get a Discount?	01
Empty and Second Homes	02
Council Tax Valuation Bands	02
Reduction for People with Disabilities	03
Could You Be Exempt?	03
Can You Appeal?	04
What if You Don't Think You Should Pay Council Tax?	04
Changes in Circumstance	04
How We Use Your Information	04

About Your Council Tax Bill

Average Bill for Band D Property	05
Charge for Each Property Band	05
The Borough Council Charge	06
Why the Increased Spend?	07
Other Information	07
Parish Spending	08
Colwich Parish Council	09
Stone Town Council	10-11
The Environment Agency	12
Statement Concerning Adult Social Care Funding	13

Contact Information

Stafford Borough Council	14
Valuation Office Agency	14
Fire	14
Police	14
Staffordshire County Council	14

Welcome

Now more than ever, people are turning to their local authorities for support. It is therefore vital that we continue to provide those services that are important to you. With a continuing reduction in the funding we receive from central government, we are working hard to ensure that we retain high quality, value for money services for our residents.

This booklet outlines how we plan to spend the money raised from your council tax this year. Please take a few minutes to read through this information. You may find you are eligible to claim an exemption or discount, which could reduce how much council tax you need to pay. See pages 1 - 4 for more detail.

About Your Council Tax

How is Council Tax Calculated?

Your council tax is based on two adults living in a property.

- › If only one person lives there, they are entitled to a 25% discount.
- › Certain properties could be 100% exempt even if they are occupied. See page 3 for more detail.

Please remember, if you are waiting for the outcome of an application for a reduction, you must continue to pay your current bill.

If successful, you will be entitled to a refund of any overpaid council tax.

Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme

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.staffordbc.gov.uk/benefits

Could You Get a Discount?

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 for charities.
- › People caring for a person with a disability who is NOT a 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.

Empty and Second Homes

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

Type of Home	Description	Discount Period	Charge
Empty homes	Unfurnished and unoccupied for less than 2 years	up to 6 months 100%	100% (after the 6 month discount period)
Furnished and 2nd homes	Furnished and unoccupied		100%
Long-term empty homes	Unfurnished and unoccupied for over 2 years		200%
Vacant Properties: undergoing major repair work or structural alteration	Unfurnished and unoccupied	up to 12 months 100%	100% (after the 12 month discount period) 200% (after 2 years)
Empty homes: where the occupant is living in armed forces accommodation	Unoccupied due to occupant living in armed forces accommodation for job-related purposes		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.

Council Tax Valuation Bands

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

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.

A full list of valuation bands is available on its website at www.voa.gov.uk.

Band	Range of values as at 1 April 1991	Proportion of Band D tax payable
A	Up to and including £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	More than £320,000	2

Reduction for People with Disabilities

If you, or someone who lives with you, needs a room, an extra bathroom or kitchen, or extra space in your property to meet special needs arising from a disability, your bill may be reduced. 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.

Could You 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

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, disablement or illness

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

Occupied properties where

All the residents are students

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

It is annexed to a family home and occupied by that family's elderly or disabled relatives

Can You Appeal Against Your Council Tax Band?

Yes, you may appeal against your 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.

Any queries about appeals and bandings should be made direct to the Valuation Office Agency. See contacts on page 10.

What If You Don't Think You Should Be Paying Council Tax?

You can appeal to the council if you think you are not liable to pay council tax e.g. 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. For more details about council tax discounts see pages 1-3.

How We Collect and Use Information

Stafford Borough 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 coordinate 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.staffordbc.gov.uk/PrivacyNotice or www.staffordbc.gov.uk/nfi.

About Your Council Tax

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 Stafford Borough Council.

The Borough Council is solely responsible for collection of council tax.

Average Bill for a Band D Property for 2019 / 2020

2018/19 (£)	Authority	2019/20 (£)	Increase (£) %	
153.39	Stafford Borough Council	156.30	2.91	1.90
1,210.52	Staffordshire County Council	1,246.23	35.71	2.95
73.53	Staffordshire Commissioner (Fire and Rescue)	75.73	2.20	2.99
192.56	Staffordshire Commissioner (Police and Crime)	216.56	24.00	12.46
1,630.00	Total	1,694.82	64.82	3.98

Charge for Each Property Band

Property Band	COUNCIL TAX				Total (£)
	Borough (£)	County (£)	Fire (£)	Police (£)	
A	104.20	830.82	50.49	144.37	1,129.88
B	121.57	969.29	58.90	168.44	1,318.20
C	138.93	1,107.76	67.32	192.50	1,506.51
D	156.30	1,246.23	75.73	216.56	1,694.82
E	191.03	1,523.17	92.56	264.68	2,071.44
F	225.77	1,800.11	109.39	312.81	2,448.08
G	260.50	2,077.05	126.22	360.93	2,824.70
H	312.60	2,492.46	151.46	433.12	3,389.64

In addition a further charge is included for the spending of parish councils where appropriate (see page 8).

How the Borough Council Charge of £156.30 is Derived

The amount of money required by the Council for 2019/20 to carry out its functions and provide services (its Budget Requirement) is £12.203 million (£11.411 million in 2018/19).

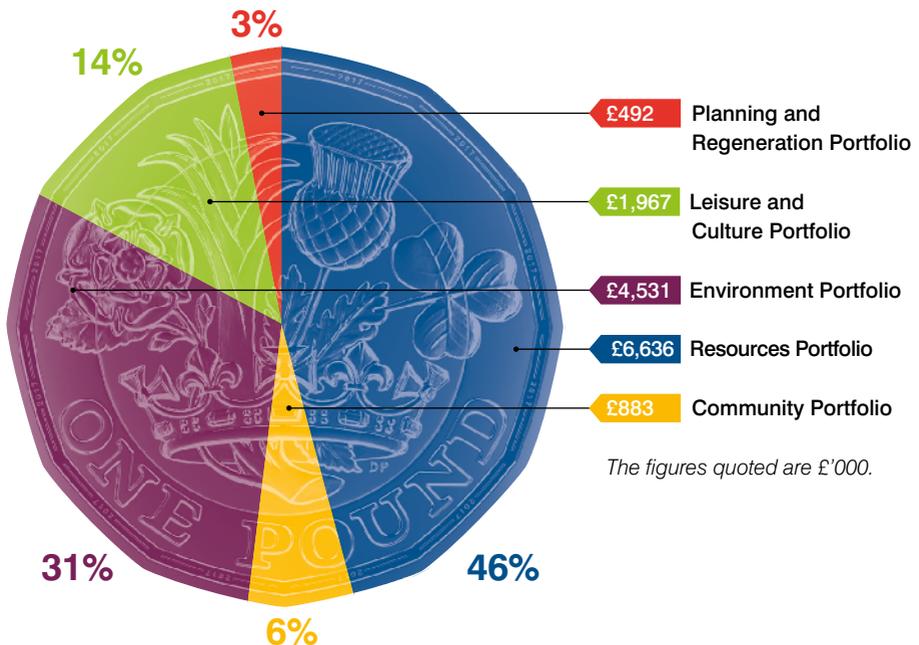
A proportion of this is met by Business Rates Retention with the balance being met from council taxpayers. (For 2018/19 Revenue Support Grant was also payable).

The table below provides an analysis of the funding of the budget requirement and illustrates how the charge of 156.30 is calculated.

2018 / 2019			2019 / 2020	
£000's	Band D Equivalent £		£000's	Band D Equivalent £
11,411	244.90	Budget Requirement	12,203	256.95
208	4.46	Less Central Government Support	0	0
4,056	87.05	Less Business Rates Retention	4,780	100.65
7,147	153.39	Council Tax Requirement	7,423	156.30

Where the Money Goes - Spending on the Borough Council's Services

(Net portfolio spending before technical adjustments)



Why the Increased Spend?

The Council's budget requirement for 2019/2020 of £12.203 million is £792,000 more than in 2018/2019. The following table identifies the major reasons for this:

	£'000
Inflation and cost increases	317
Service efficiencies	(129)
Changes in income	133
Reduced reliance on new homes bonus	487
Other changes	(16)
Increase in budget requirement	792

Other Information

Staffing

Budgeted staffing for 2019/20 is 246.3 compared to 248 staff in 2018/19 (part time staff are included as full time equivalents).

Capital Expenditure

In 2019/20 the Borough Council will be spending approximately £4.694 million on capital investment. Areas of investment include improving Victoria Park in Stafford as part of a Heritage Lottery Scheme and upgrading facilities at Charnley Road to create a destination park. Resources will continue to be made available for disabled facilities grants to householders.

Borrowing

The Borough Council has no outstanding debt.



What is Your Parish Spending?

2018/2019 (£)	Parish	2019/2020 (£)	Band D Equivalent (£)
1,709.45	Adbaston	2,208.32	9.00
67,949.00	Barlaston	67,949.00	64.88
26,000.00	Berkswich	26,000.00	31.76
7,500.00	Bradley	9,000.00	40.78
11,000.00	Brocton	12,000.00	21.46
5,587.81	Chebsey	6,277.00	24.26
5,139.87	Church Eaton	5,511.44	18.81
190,629.00	Colwich	194,640.00	104.47
9,200.00	Creswell	10,500.00	27.42
12,615.00	Doxey	13,875.00	13.84
54,850.00	Eccleshall	58,280.00	27.12
200.00	Ellenhall	200.00	3.21
990.00	Forton	976.00	6.50
1,080.00	Fradswell	1,200.00	12.93
50,000.00	Fulford	50,000.00	20.52
2,931.00	Gayton	3,385.00	42.77
66,561.38	Gnosall	74,264.76	35.51
18,460.00	Haughton	20,040.27	41.94
4,983.24	High Offley	4,983.24	12.57
8,744.00	Hilderstone	9,765.00	34.01
30,042.00	Hixon	31,109.21	39.69
24,258.00	Hopton and Coton	31,000.00	40.60
3,967.60	Hyde Lea	4,159.22	21.62
2,000.00	Ingestre	2,000.00	23.61
Nil	Marston	Nil	Nil
2,535.00	Milwich	3,800.00	19.55
3,663.11	Norbury	3,663.11	18.88
4,127.54	Ranton	4,230.73	22.96
7,400.00	Salt and Enson	7,665.00	38.75
9,486.00	Sandon and Burston	9,535.00	56.00
12,032.00	Seighford	16,460.00	20.53
9,000.00	Standon	9,000.00	26.82
307,655.00	Stone Town	316,258.68	50.10
14,908.73	Stone Rural	15,266.54	19.39
10,957.95	Stowe by Chartley	12,302.95	63.82
25,260.00	Swynnerton	17,000.00	12.00
2,000.00	Tixall	2,000.00	16.48
28,173.00	Weston	29,828.00	61.08
1,171.00	Whitgreave	1,316.00	15.03
0	Yarnfield and Cold Meece	9,576.51	11.72
1,044,766.08	TOTAL	1,097,225.98	

Colwich Parish Council

	Revenue Expenditure 2018/19 (£)	Revenue Expenditure 2019/20 (£)
Administration	60,510	33,535
Staffing	86,860	94,460
Community Engagement	500	3,000
Parish Maintenance	22,500	30,050
Footpaths	0	0
Green Infrastructure	5,000	2,000
Mill Lane Improvements	2,500	0
Parish Centre	3,555	7,390
Jubilee Playing Field	4,904	20,405
Allotments	800	0
Grants/Donations	3,500	3,800
Earmarked Reserves	0	0
Total	190,629	194,640



Stone Town Council

Stone Town Council provides services for the people and town of Stone.

These services include the provision of community facilities, such as the Frank Jordan and Stone Station community centres, free car parks, allotment sites at Newcastle Road and Mount Road, Station Road Conveniences, and the Crown Meadow Nature Reserve and amphitheatre.

Investing in and working to promote a vibrant town and encourage visitors is a key Town Council priority. In order to support this, the Council organises regular events such as the summer Music Festival, the Town Market, the monthly Craft Market and a number of late night shopping evenings. Christmas lights are provided in the High Street and at Walton, with the Council's annual switch-on event becoming one of highlights of the town year. The High Street environment is enhanced by the Council's provision of hanging baskets along the High Street, and the next year should see the full refurbishment of noticeboards and fingerposts throughout the town.

The Council provides bus shelters, benches and dog bins throughout the area and takes responsibility for the upkeep of many local amenities and planted areas. It also provides grants to help charitable and community organisations such as the Stone Community Hub, supports various festivals, and the office supplies daily support and advice to local residents.

By considering the impact of every planning application, the Council seeks to develop and conserve the town, and is currently preparing a Neighbourhood Plan that will help to shape and protect the future of Stone for years to come.

This year, provision has been made for the setup and running costs of the new Heritage Centre, which will form part of the exciting redevelopment of Crown Wharf.

At its monthly meetings the Council welcomes questions from the public and sets aside time to listen and respond. Assistance with public questions will gladly be given by the Council's staff.



Stone Town Council

	Revenue Budget 2018/19 (£)	Revenue Budget 2019/20 (£)
Community and Heritage Centres	47,000	150,300
Town Market	1,500	-13,200
Car Parking	6,000	4,500
Public Conveniences	6,400	6,600
Town Maintenance	5,600	6,500
Grounds Maintenance	14,500	18,200
Crown Meadow Improvements	3,100	1,900
Westbridge Park	0	0
Allotments	-500	2,500
Christmas Lights	15,000	15,000
Tourism and Town Promotion	27,200	21,100
Grants	9,500	9,800
Salaries and Employment Costs	140,200	145,400
Insurances	8,400	8,500
Administration and Civic Costs	31,400	39,200
Town Council Elections	0	28,000
Neighbourhood Plan	11,400	9,900
Grants Received	-11,500	-11,500
Contributions from Reserves	-7,545	-126,441
Precept (incl. Local Council Tax Support Grant)	307,655	316,259

Environment Agency

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		
	2018/2019 000's	2019/2020 000's
Gross Expenditure	£46,438	£74,586
Levies Raised	£2,054	£2,095
Total Council Tax Base	1,792	1,821

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.

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%

The total Local Levy raised has increased from £2,054,297 in 2018/2019 to £2,095,383 for 2019/2020.

Statement Concerning Adult Social Care Funding

The Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government has 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 is the option of an adult social care authority being able to charge an additional 'precept' on its council tax for financial years from the financial year beginning in 2016 without holding a referendum, to assist the authority in meeting expenditure on adult social care. Subject to the annual approval of the House of Commons, the Secretary of State intends to offer the option of charging this 'precept' at an appropriate level in each financial year up to and including the financial year 2019-20.



Contact Information

This information can be produced on request in other formats and other languages. Call 01785 619 000

Stafford Borough Council

www.staffordbc.gov.uk

Civic Centre, Riverside, Stafford, Staffordshire ST16 3AQ

24 hour telephone payment line	0161 621 4111 or 01785 619 271
To pay online	www.staffordbc.gov.uk

Business rates helpline	01785 619 282
Business rates e-mail	revenues@staffordbc.gov.uk

Council tax helpline	01785 619 279
Council tax e-mail	revenues@staffordbc.gov.uk

Benefit helpline	01785 619 478
Benefit e-mail	benefits@staffordbc.gov.uk
Benefit overpayment e-mail	debtrecovery@staffordbc.gov.uk

Main switchboard	01785 619 000
Main fax	01785 619 119

Valuation Office Agency

www.gov.uk/voa/contact

Listing officer, Valuation Office Agency	03000 501 501
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Fire

www.staffordshirefire.gov.uk

Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire Fire and Rescue, Pirehill, Stone, Staffordshire ST15 0BS

Fire Headquarters	08451 221 155
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Emergency number	dial 999
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Police

www.staffordshire.police.uk

Police Headquarters, PO Box 3167, Stafford, Staffordshire ST16 9JZ

Police non emergency number	101
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Emergency number	dial 999
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Staffordshire County Council

www.staffordshire.gov.uk

St Chad's Place, Stafford, Staffordshire ST16 2LR

Main reception	0300 111 8000
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CONTACT

01785 619 000

revenues@staffordbc.gov.uk

STAFFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL

Civic Centre, Riverside, Stafford ST16 3AQ

www.staffordbc.gov.uk

If you need this information in
large print, Braille, other language
or in **audio format** please contact:

info@staffordbc.gov.uk

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