

NEWBURY Town Council



ANNUAL REPORT & PRECEPT LEAFLET 2017-18

How the Town Council spends your money to
provide services for the people of Newbury

www.newbury.gov.uk | 01635 35486 | Town Hall, Market Place, Newbury, RG14 5AA

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ANNUAL REPORT

“2016/17 has been an eventful year for Newbury Town Council, especially in Victoria Park with the repair works and re-development of the Park. The Park now boasts a new football pitch, bowling green and tennis courts. The repairs to the footpaths and the wall along Park Way are also imminent. It is now possible to book the tennis courts online via the Town Council’s newly launched website (www.newbury.gov.uk/tennis.php). All of these works were funded from the legal settlement won by the Council following subsidence damage caused to the Park. The Council secured grants to install the Splash Park and disabled children’s swing and both of these have proved very popular. A new play area has also been completed in St George’s Avenue, partly funded by West Berkshire District Council.

“The public toilets in the Wharf were re-opened by the Town Council in April 2016, with support from West Berkshire District Council and awarded a Gold Standard by the Loo of the Year Awards.

“2016 saw the launch of our Newbury in Bloom campaign, including our competition which saw a healthy number of entries in the 5 categories; - the winners were Lock Stock and Barrel pub, LK Hair in Kiln Road, Speenhamland School, The Friends Meeting House and a local allotmenteer. Newbury in Bloom 2017 has already been launched, with more funding and new categories, including the Community Projects category for which the Town Council have received £2000 from the Tesco ‘Bags of Help’ Initiative.

“The Town Council were pleased to re-let the former Tourist Information Office to a new tenant in the year – Soulstice Wellbeing, who offer yoga classes, treatments and a café. We also welcome the WBC Civil Enforcement Officers who will now be based in a Suite in the Town Hall.

“Sir Peter Michael has loaned his painting of ‘The Newbury Coat’ to the Council. It is now on display in the Town Hall. It is a depiction by the artist Luke Clint of the famous story of the creation of a coat from the wool on the sheep’s back in just one day on 25 June 1811. This painting joins the recently restored oil paintings of George III and his Queen on the landing and civic staircase of the Town Hall.

“The Council joined in the celebrations for the Queen’s 90th birthday last year, with a Clean for the Queen litter-pick, and a beacon lighting event and party in Victoria Park.

“In 2017-18 the Town Council will be celebrating its 20th anniversary and there will be a suitable programme of events to mark the occasion. It is also hoped that the long-awaited café and new changing rooms will be built in Victoria Park later this year. We expect to complete the review of the Town Design Statement, which aims to conserve the ‘best of the old’, and encourage sympathetic new development. This year the Council started work on the Newbury Town Plan 2019-2036. This is a major undertaking for the Council and will be further progressed in 2017-18.

“To hear more about your Town Council, please come along to the Annual Town Meeting - 7pm, Monday 20th March at the Town Hall.”

Councillor David Goff

Leader of Newbury Town Council



TOWN HALL WEDDINGS

Did you know that you can now get married in the Town Hall? The lovely Town Hall Chamber was licensed for weddings in 2016. The room, with its high hammer-beamed ceiling and historic lists of the Mayors of Newbury since 1596, has not been used for weddings since the early 1980s, when it used to be the Town's Registry Office.

If you are looking for a different wedding venue, why not consider the Town Hall? You can also have your wedding reception in The Chamber, as we have a fully fitted servery and entertainment licence. For more information please look at our website www.newbury.gov.uk/town-hall-hire.php or call 01635 35486.



DISCOVER YOUR MARKET



Newbury Market trades every Thursday and Saturday in the Market Place, Northbrook Street and Bartholomew Street. We have a wide range of quality stalls selling both traditional produce and more unusual items including fine china, crafts, ribbon and wool. We have fresh farm eggs and deli-quality olives stalls plus regular butchers selling British meat. Market pitches are available from as little as £11 per day. Please contact the Community Services Team on 01635 35486 or towncouncil@newbury.gov.uk.

ALLOTMENTS

Have you ever considered growing your own fruit, vegetables and flowers but don't have the space? Newbury Town Council has 6 allotment sites within the Parish with around 550 allotment plots. Plots are available from as little as £8.25 a year! Please contact the Community Services Team on 01635 35486 or email towncouncil@newbury.gov.uk.



THE PRECEPT EXPLAINED

2017/18

“This budget needs to be seen in the context of the changing way that Local Government is to be financed in future. It is quite right that Local Government should be fully funded out of local resources (Council Tax, Business rates etc.) but this is a journey that is not yet complete. This journey is causing significant financial pressure for West Berkshire Council (WBC) and this is impacting on the services that they deliver. Town and Parish Councils across West Berkshire are being asked to contribute to some of these services and you will see this reflected in this budget statement.

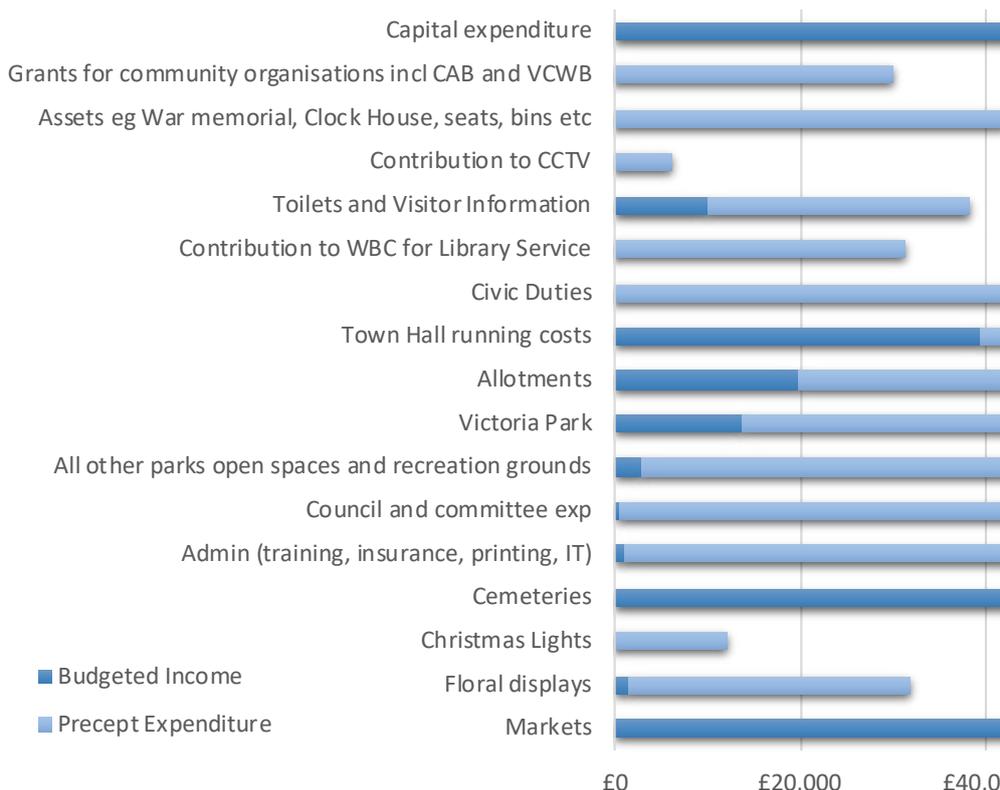
“As mentioned in last year’s statement we will receive no Precept Support Grant from WBC for 2017-18, a loss of £18,384 as compared to this year. There is the £10,000 cost of taking on the refilling of grit bins from WBC. We consider this an essential service from a road safety perspective. We are going to ensure that the Wharf toilets remain open to the public, but the additional cost of running them will be £11,350

“We have set aside £10,000 to enable Newbury to complete the Town Design Statement and also to prepare a Town Plan. This is an important strategic document for Newbury and its future development. There is also the £14,175 estimated increase in the Grounds Maintenance Contract which will be retendered in September this year. There are also additional salary costs of £16,899 allowing for pay increases, pension increases and £1,500 for some additional part-time meetings support in order to reduce staff

time lost through our current Time Off In Lieu scheme.

“Finally we have been asked for a new £31,275 contribution to Newbury Library over the next three years. This, in conjunction with contributions from other towns and parishes, will ensure the continuation of some library services and also enable the Town Council to have a say in how the Library service develops.

“There are also some savings that have been made. In particular the £59,000 no longer needed for the Neighbourhood Wardens. Whilst this has been a valued service in the past, since its discontinuation by Sovereign Housing no viable alternative scheme has been forthcoming. We will continue to incorporate some of the work that the Wardens



carried out in our Grounds Maintenance Contract.

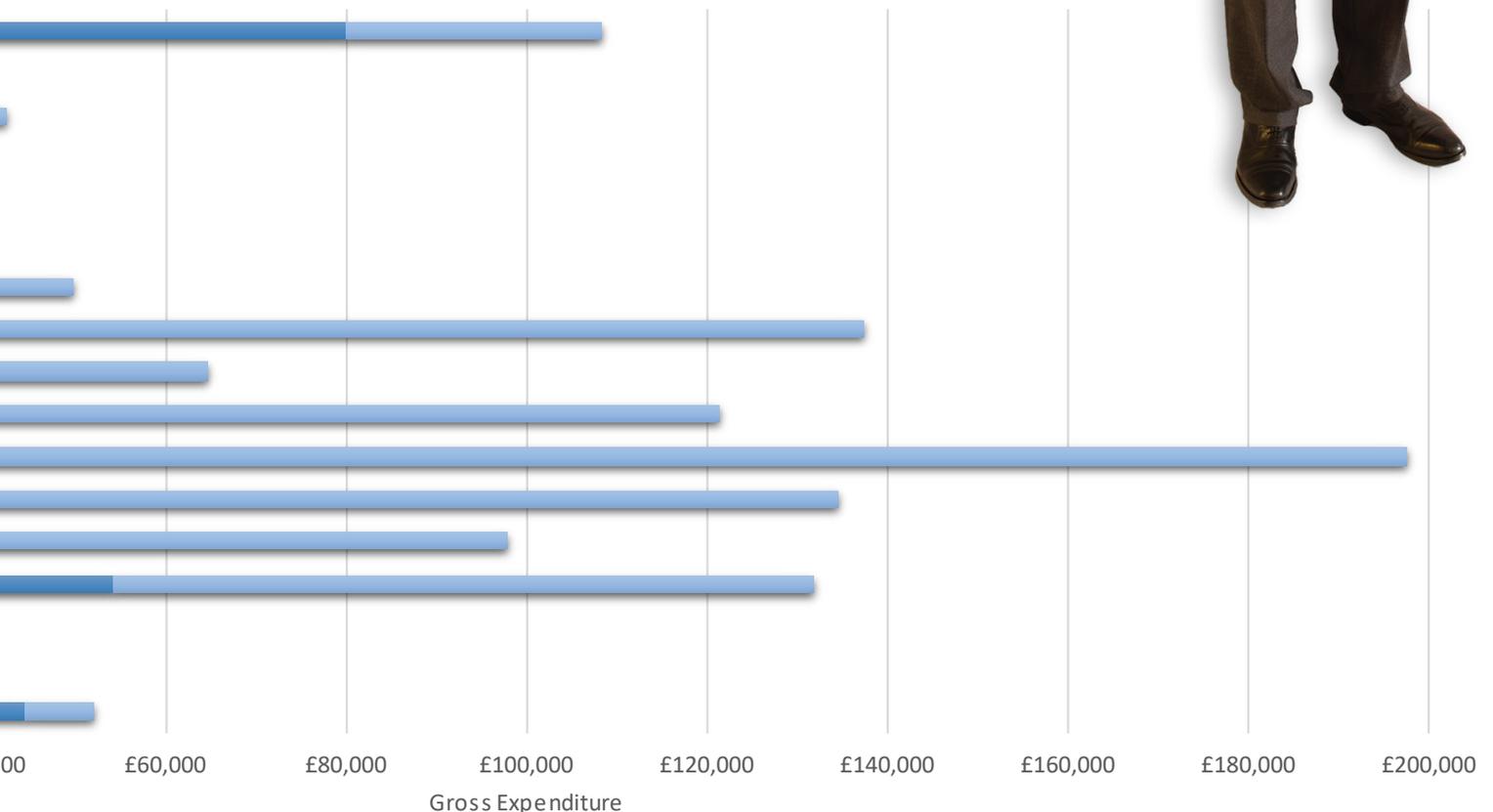
“Working with one of our Town Hall tenants we have been able to provide a Visitor Information Service at a cost of £2,000, a saving of £8,000. There is also a one-off £6,000 reduction in CCTV spending due to the delayed implementation of that project. We have additional income of £12,000 from the Town Hall’s suites.

“Turning now to some other items of note. We are budgeting £12,000 towards a contribution to the Newbury BID for this year’s Christmas lights. We have increased the Grants Subcommittee budget by £3,000 to £10,000 which can then be match-funded through the Good Exchange. We have maintained the CAB grant at £17,500 but will explore means by which we can obtain some match funding from the Good Exchange to increase its value.

“So the big question is what does this all mean for the precept? Well I am very pleased to say that the above savings, together with

an increase in the Tax Base (the number of properties in the parish paying Council Tax) have enabled us to produce a budget with no increase in the amount Council tax payers will have to pay to Newbury Town Council.”

***“No increase
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SERVICES PROVIDED BY NEWBURY TOWN COUNCIL

- Maintaining parks, recreation grounds and open spaces – including Victoria Park, renting football pitches and changing rooms. A full list of all the Council's playgrounds and leisure facilities can be found at www.newbury.gov.uk/playgrounds
- Maintaining Newbury Town Hall – the chamber is available for public hire and charity coffee mornings
- Shaw Cemetery and Newtown Road Cemetery
- Six allotment sites around the town, totalling around 550 individual plots
- Running Newbury Charter Market on Thursday and Saturday
- Civic events and the office of the Mayor
- Hanging baskets and floral displays
- Bus shelters
- Footway lighting
- Seats, litter bins, dog liner bins and grit bins around the town
- Maintaining The Clock House
- Maintaining the War Memorial

NEWBURY TOWN COUNCIL COMMITTEE MEETINGS

We carry out most of our business through the work of four main Committees, which the public are welcome to attend. Details of these meetings are displayed on the noticeboard outside the Town Hall and on our web site www.newbury.gov.uk

The Council

Sets the precept, elects the Town Mayor and Leader of the Council, approves the Council's strategy and delegates most of the rest of its powers to its Committees:

The Planning and Highways Committee:

Comments on planning applications and highway matters in the Newbury area and meets every 3 weeks.

The Policy and Resources Committee:

Responsible for the financial, human and property resources of the Council.

The Community Services Committee:

Responsible for the maintenance of property assets and the provision of direct services to the public.

The Civic Pride, Arts and Leisure Committee:

Promotes and co-ordinates arts and leisure facilities and activities for the community.

Grants Sub-Committee:

Newbury Town Council awards grants to community organisations, leisure and the arts. For further information visit our web site in April at www.newbury.gov.uk call us on 01635 35486, or come along to the Town Hall.

Newbury Youth Council (NYC):

If you are aged between 12 and 21 and are interested in local issues for youth, please contact the Town Hall for more information.



Town Hall Open Day

10am - 4pm Saturday 9th September 2017

Displays include the 20th Anniversary of
Newbury Town Council - What We Have Achieved

Refreshments available all day (sold in the aid of The Mayor's Chosen Charity)



COUNCILLOR INFORMATION

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